

Family Worship

Blessed Are The Persecuted

31.1.2021

Opening Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, thank you for our family.

And thank you for the privilege of coming together for worship.

Help us to understand Your Word and obey it with a joyful heart.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

In Christ Alone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=887jcen5Pec>



Catechism Time!

Bible truths for teaching children

Question 33

Q: Should those who have faith in Christ seek their salvation through their own works, or anywhere else?

A: No, everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ.

This means...

- Salvation is through Jesus only. Not Jesus + "XYZ"
- Paul the Apostle was super clear on this. He even opposed Peter in the letter to the Galatians because Peter's action was not in line with this truth (see below).

Bible verse (Galatians 2:16b)

So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

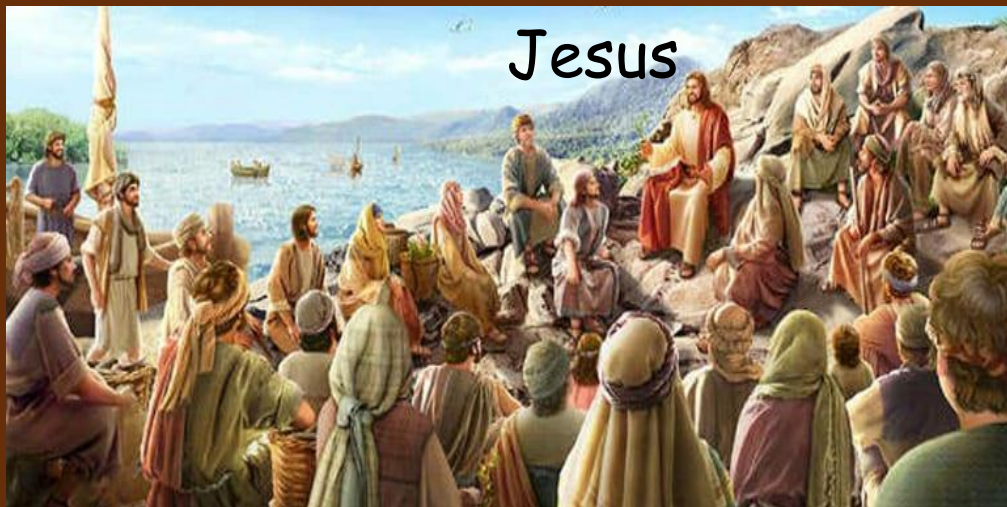
Matthew 5:1-12

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them. He said:

3. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
10. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11. 'Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
12. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- ❑ In the Old Testament God gave Israel the Law through Moses. Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
- ❑ Moses wrote "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." (Deut 18:15) . Moses was actually writing about Jesus...



- ❑ As Moses brought the Law to the Israelites, Jesus' introduced a new way of life for the citizens of God's Kingdom.
- ❑ This is known as "Sermon on the Mount". We just read its beginning 12 verses on the previous slide.

Did you notice what Jesus said,
"Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of
evil against you because of me..." (5:11)

He was actually saying,

"Congrats! You should be happy when
people do everything they can to hurt
you because of me..."

WHAT ???

Doesn't being a Christian mean you win a
lottery to go to heaven? Why are Christians
persecuted?



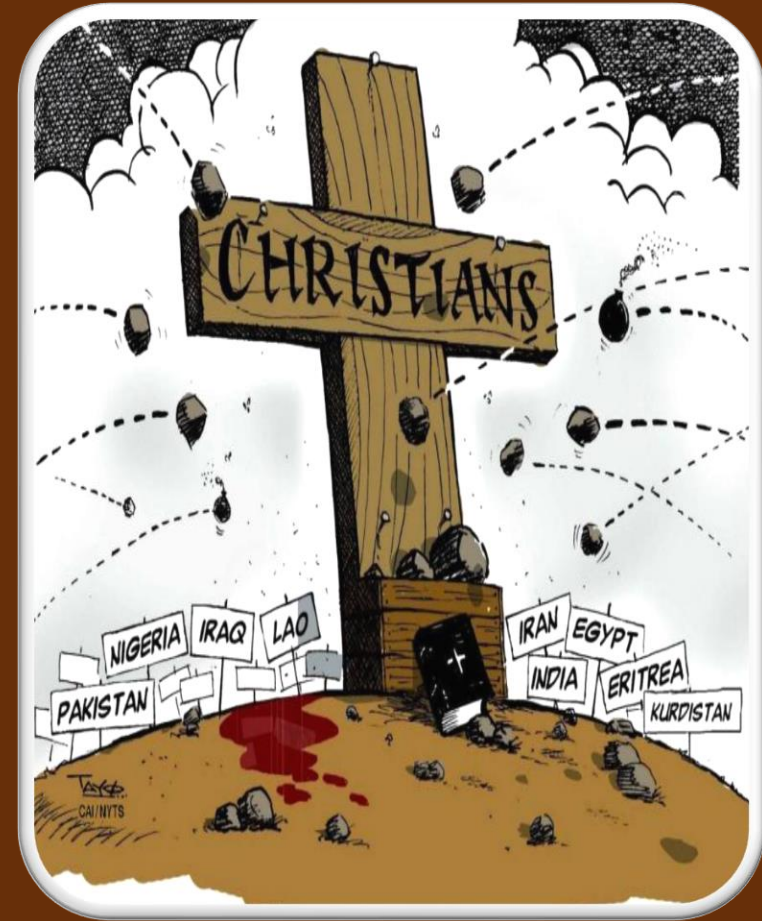
Christians
to the lions!

Roman Emperors
persecuted Christians for
refusing to worship them as
gods. To punish such
disloyalty, they sent
Christians to their death.



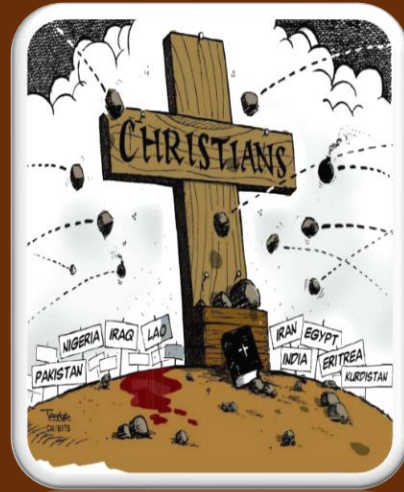
Persecution of Christians is happening today in many countries.

From the picture, can you name some places where Christians are being persecuted in the world today?



Q: Why are Christians persecuted?

A: If we live the "Jesus" way, we will clash with the world. The world will turn against us.

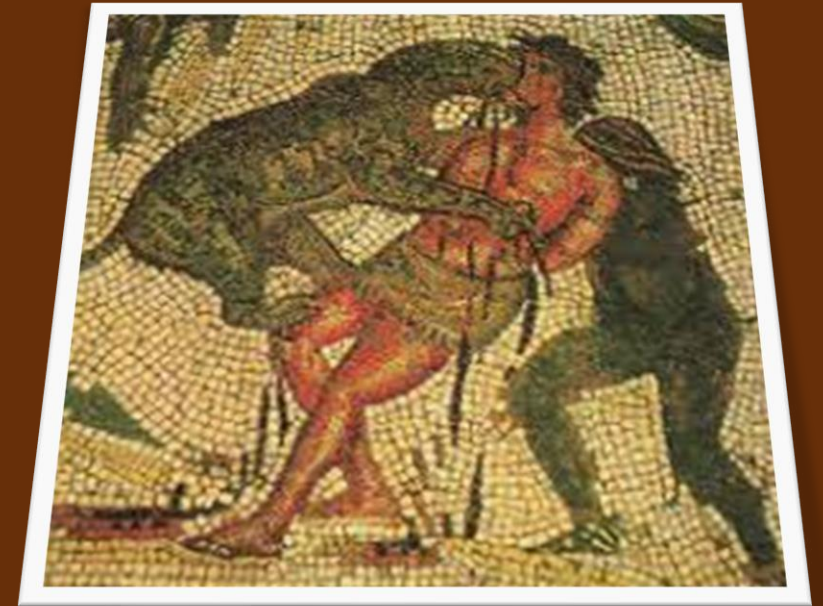


Jesus explained to his disciples:

*"If the world hates you, keep in mind that **it hated me first**. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. **Remember what I told you: "A servant is not greater than his master."** If they persecuted me, **they will persecute you also.**" (John 15:18-20)*

You see, the world wants Christians to conform to it, to live the way it wants, because the world is under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19)

- ❑ In the Roman Empire, it meant honouring Caesar as god.
- ❑ But since Christians were loyal to God and King Jesus, they refused to worship and offer sacrifices to Caesar.
- ❑ Furthermore, when the Roman army lost a battle or war, or when there was a plague, famine or flood, Christians would be blamed for not joining in worship of the pagan gods.



Similar to persecution in the old days, many Christians now live in countries that persecute them. They are persecuted because:

- ❑ The country's leader wants utmost loyalty from its citizens and cannot accept Christians having God as their King (above him)



or

- ❑ Most people in the country have a different religion that cannot tolerate other forms of faith



Church bombing in India

Countries with Highest Level of Persecution of Christians



Level of Persecution:

■ Extreme

■ Very High

2021 rankings

| | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|--------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | <u>North Korea</u> | 11 | Iraq | 31 | Bangladesh |
| 2 | <u>Afghanistan</u> | 12 | Syria | 32 | Burkina Faso |
| 3 | <u>Somalia</u> | 13 | Sudan | 33 | Tajikistan |
| 4 | <u>Libya</u> | 14 | Saudi Arabia | 34 | Nepal |
| 5 | <u>Pakistan</u> | 15 | Maldives | 35 | Central African Republic |
| 6 | <u>Eritrea</u> | 16 | Egypt | 36 | Ethiopia |
| 7 | <u>Yemen</u> | 17 | China | 37 | Mexico |
| 8 | <u>Iran</u> | 18 | Myanmar | 38 | Jordan |
| 9 | <u>Nigeria</u> | 19 | Vietnam | 39 | Brunei |
| 10 | <u>India</u> | 20 | Mauritania | 40 | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| | | 21 | Uzbekistan | 41 | Kazakhstan |
| | | 22 | Laos | 42 | Cameroon |
| | | 23 | Turkmenistan | 43 | Bhutan |
| | | 24 | Algeria | 44 | Oman |
| | | 25 | Turkey | 45 | Mozambique |
| | | 26 | Tunisia | 46 | Malaysia |
| | | 27 | Morocco | 47 | Indonesia |
| | | 28 | Mali | 48 | Kuwait |
| | | 29 | Qatar | 49 | Kenya |
| | | 30 | Colombia | 50 | Comoros |

Source – Open Doors

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/>

Faith and Danger: Open Doors' World Watch List 2020 Top Five

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1Zf0zICS4E>



Persecution of a Christian in the UK

But don't think that persecution is only happening in far away countries...

If you stand up for your faith in God, you will face persecution. For example, if you tell your friends that LGBTQ and abortion are not in line with God's truth as revealed in the Bible, you will be labeled as a homophobia or something worse.

Dr David Mackereth is a Christian doctor. His patient was a transgender (a man who became a woman). He was fired by his employer because he would not call his patient "she" or "madam". In court, Dr Mackereth said that maleness and femaleness are "unchangeable and fundamental to who we are as people who were created in the image of God".

Doctor sacked for refusing to refer to transgender woman as 'she'

Dr David Mackereth, a Christian, tells tribunal he will not 'call any six-foot tall bearded man "madam"'

Ewan Somerville | @ewansomerville | Wednesday 17 July 2019 19:50



Dr David Mackereth, pictured outside the employment tribunal building in Birmingham. (PA)

Source: Telegraph

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/christian-doctor-trans-woman-sacked-gender-pronouns-universal-credit-a8999176.html>

Persecution of Christians

- ❑ Jesus said, "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33)
- ❑ When we stand up for our faith, we reveal that God is more important than anything else, even our comfort, job, reputation and perhaps, our life.
- ❑ God is pleased when his people show that they value Him above everything in the world.

Family Discussion

1. Can you name the 8 blessings in our bible reading today?

2. Jesus said,
"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
 - a) We learnt just now that many Christians live in countries that persecute them. Why wouldn't they just give up their faith to avoid persecution?

 - b) What is the reward in heaven that Jesus promises here?

3. Have you ever experienced pressure (or persecution) from others because of your faith in Jesus? How can you overcome the pressure?

Family Prayer Time

1. Thank God for His Word and help so we may learn from Him.
2. Ask your children to pray for what they have learned just now.
3. Ask your family how you can pray for them specifically.

寶貴十架 *Precious Cross*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6dEU4h0xkM>

