

Persecution

II Tim 3:1-5,10-13; Luke 22:31-34

1. Intro

1. It seems that our society is getting worse and worse
 1. Deception seems to come from everywhere
 2. Temptation on all sides
2. Paul tells us that “difficult times will come”
 1. I think that “difficult times” encompasses a lot
 2. Part of that is persecution
3. Two different text, gives us two different perspectives of persecution.

2. Persecution

1. Persecute Defined
 1. To harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict; specifically: to cause to suffer because of belief
 2. To annoy with persistent or urgent approaches (as attacks, pleas) : PESTER
2. Persecution comes from the Destroyer
 1. Prince of the powers of the air (Eph 2:2 (work in the hearts); xf 6:12 - wrestle)
 2. Comes as a hidden enemy
 3. Can come through deception (13)
3. Persecution is usually seen as overt
 1. Kick in the door and point guns at us.
4. Can persecution be covert?
 1. Brought about through others
 1. Family, friends, community

3. Paul's Persecution And Sufferings (11)

1. Paul and Barnabas driven out of Antioch by officials of the city (Acts 13:50)
2. Paul and Barnabas were about to get a stoning from the city officials in Iconium (Acts 14:5-6)
3. In Lystra the Jews of Anitoch and Iconium catch up with Paul and stone him, leaving him for dead (Acts 14:19)
4. Barnabas and the disciples take him to Derbe and preach there for awhile.
5. They then return to: Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, strengthening the disciples in those places. (21)
 1. Paul; are you nuts, do you have a death wish!
 2. What do you think the Jews and city officials thought when Paul shows up again?

4. Peter (Luke 22:31)

1. Jesus is coming close to His crucifixion
2. He has just told His disciples that because they have stood by Him in His trials that there is something special waiting for them in His kingdom.
3. Jesus then singles out Peter
 1. Jesus told him that “Satan has demanded permission to sift you (all disciples) like wheat”
 1. Demanded permission – to come to trial (subpena)
 1. By what authority?
 1. Because he is ruler of this world
 2. Jesus continues “I have prayed that your faith will not fail, and when you have turned again, minister to your brothers”
 1. Going to be a test of faith
 2. He is going to survive that test (when you have turned, not “if”)
 3. He is going to be in a better position to minister.
4. What happens
 1. Peter says he will go to prison and even die (33)
 2. Jesus says you will deny me three times (34) before the night is out.
5. The covert operation
 1. Jesus arrested (54)
 2. A servant girl identifies Peter (56)
 3. Another person (58)
 4. And then another (59)
 1. A relative of the one who lost an ear (John 18:26)
 2. Matt says that Peter curses this time (Matt 26:74)
 5. Morning comes the rooster crows and Peter leaves and has an emotional breakdown.
6. Was that:
 1. Persecution
 1. Covertly through these three individuals
 1. Satan behind the scenes
 2. Wrong decision means failure

5. Response

1. Paul
 1. What did Paul think about God after a good stoning?
 1. Thankful – at least I am not dead
 2. Happy – I took one for you Lord
 3. Mad – Look at what I am trying to do for You
 4. Angry – enough of this, I am going back to tent making.
 2. Even though physically abused, he continues on with his ministry

1. The Lord rescued me out of them all. (11b)
2. Then he states, “all who desire to live for Jesus will be persecuted”. (12)
2. Peter
 1. I'm going fishing (John 21:3)
 2. Jesus comes and restores Peter personally so he can continue (John 21:15-17)
3. Can persecution be covert?
 1. Brought about through others.
 1. Family, friends, community
 2. Family
 1. Has anyone been questioning our belief system?
 3. Friends
 1. Same question
 4. Community
 1. Has someone, either through business or maybe committee caused you difficulty?
 5. Isn't this similar to what Peter went through?
 6. It comes to a test of faith.
 1. How do I choose to respond to the critics of my belief?
 1. Does what they say affect my relationship with God?
 2. If it is community, do I disengage from it or retaliate?
 7. Remember, who is behind the scenes?

6. Conclusion

1. Usually we think of persecution as overt
2. I believe that persecution can be covert
3. Any persecution is going to test our faith.
 1. Do we pass or fail in that test
 2. Those test are refining fire
4. As we go through these things we have:
 1. The power and authority of Jesus to sustain us
 2. The opportunity to show Jesus through our responses