The Suffering Church

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 January 2025

Preacher: Tyler Neighbors

[0:00] Church, if you all would, go and turn your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, 14 through! 16.

And today's issue that we're going to be addressing from God's Word is, it's a very heavy topic that honestly I don't feel that I could do complete justice to, which is the topic of the suffering church. All around the world, there are Christians that suffer immensely for their faith, like the Christians that we're going to read about today in Thessalonians, but there are Christians that are suffering in ways that are difficult for us to imagine, living in a place like the United States where we have things like the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech.
On other areas where that is not a privilege of protection that people have, there are many Christians every day that suffer greatly and that lose their lives.
And honestly, it's something that a lot of people don't even know happens in some parts of the world, that it's happening. For instance, I was, when I was at Southeastern, there was a Chinese foreign exchange student that I'd become very good friends with, and he started going to church with me and came to Christ while he was in the United States.
[1:39] But then he asked me about what persecution was, because he had heard that word come up in his class that he was in. And I said, well, all over the world, there are Christians that suffer and die for their faith because they would not renounce Christ, to which his response was, well, I'm glad that that doesn't happen in China.

So it happens all over the world. Many times it goes unnoticed. But as the church here in the United States, it's something that we should always have on the front of our mind what other brothers and sisters in Christ are going through all over the world, because they are part of the same global bride of Christ that we are.
And we should remember them in our prayers. We should remember them as we do ministry here, and we should always, again, cannot say this enough, but we should always remember them as we pray and as we lift them up.
Well, in our passage today that we are going to be looking at, this is really the part of Thessalonians where Paul starts talking about the suffering that this church is going through.
As I've emphasized in past sermons, suffering for righteousness sake is part of the Christian experience. Opposition and suffering are going to come. They're going to come in many different forms, depending on where you are in this world.
[3:02] But the truth is, we live in a world that is under the oppressive rule of sin. And because of that, there will always be strife between the true church and the world.

And the main idea of our text and of our sermon that we're going to be looking at today is this, the church will suffer in a fallen world. It's a very sobering truth, but it is a very real truth.
This goes against everything that culture says that we should strive for. And in the world of the all about me culture, the world says that we should seek to live our best life now, that we should seek to have ease and comfort in this world.
And honestly, that's something that any rational person would think that they should strive for. But to be at peace with the world means that you would need to be hostile towards God because Jesus draws that clear line in the sand that we're going to see later on in our sermon.
But you cannot be at peace with the world that is hostile to God if you are going to make a stand for Christ. Also, we're not called to live as citizens of this world either.
[4:17] Jesus did not come to bring peace between men. He came to bring peace between God and men that anyone can have access to through faith in him. So with that in mind, I want to read our text today.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

If you all would, stand with me as we read God's word. 1 Thessalonians 2, verses 14 through 16.
For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea.
For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews. Who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out and displeased God and opposed all mankind.
By hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved. So as always, to fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them at last.
This is the word of the Lord. You all may be seated. So our text today is fairly short. But what Paul is saying to this church at Thessalonica is that they are suffering like other believers around the world.
[5:35] Especially the churches in Judea. Which what was so important about them is that this is where the faith in Christ started. This is where Christ's earthly ministry was. This is also where the church was started in Acts.

Was in Jerusalem. In this area. Now again, I often have to wonder if these Thessalonian believers that had come to faith in Christ. As they were so excited about. Because it said they received the word of God as it really was the word of God.
They accepted it as well. So I have to wonder if these new believers are wondering to themselves, Have we done something wrong? Have we messed up somewhere along the way that we are suffering this much?
And Paul is saying, No. You have not gone astray. You are not doing the wrong thing. This is a lineage of suffering that can be traced back to the churches at Judea.
Back to Jesus Christ. And even before Christ was on the earth. All the way to the prophets. So there is a lineage of suffering that this church is now becoming part of.
[6:37] And Paul is trying to get them to understand. No. You are not on the wrong path. You are doing what you are supposed to be doing. And really, you have become imitators of the other believers in this faith.

So there's three reminders that we need to look at as we're studying this idea of the suffering church. This reality of the suffering church. And the first reminder is this.
As the church, we belong to Christ. As the church, we belong to Christ. If you forget this truth, then everything else in your faith is going to be off base.
If you forget to whom you belong, everything else is going to be off base about your faith. And the way that you live for God. So verse 14, just to reiterate what Paul has said here.
For you brothers became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. So what Paul is reminding the Thessalonians of is that they are not churches of Paul.
[7:42] They are not churches of some other local pastor or shepherd that Paul has left behind. They are churches of God in Christ Jesus. Now, why is this important?

Because the true church is always going to find its identity in its Savior, who is Jesus Christ. They're not going to find their identity in a political ideology, not in a cultural movement.
The true church is always going to align itself with its head, who is Jesus Christ. Paul emphasizes this important truth in his letter to the Ephesians. In Ephesians chapter 5, this is a very famous passage where Paul compares marriage to the relationship that Christ has with his church.
But in Ephesians 5, verses 22 through 30, Paul says this. It says,
Because we are members of his body. So what we see from this text is that clearly Jesus has done all the work to establish his church, to sanctify the church, to purify the church.
[9:50] And he has sacrificed and given of himself to provide for her every need. And in response to that great act of love and provision, as his bride, we are to submit to his authority, his headship of the church.

There's no greater tragedy in the church than when Christ takes a backseat to other issues. The moment Jesus ceases to be the head of whatever local congregation you might be in, the minute that church decides that Christ is no longer the head, you have lost all eternal effectiveness for the kingdom.
It's at this time that the world begins to influence the church more than the church influences the world. James 4, 4.
Again, this is another letter that was written to a persecuted church. These were believers who were suffering. And James writes this. So as the church, we belong to Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

He is the head. He is the groom. And we are the bride that he has sanctified, cleansing by the washing of the water with the word. There is no room for shared allegiance in the church.
[11:21] We are either completely Christ or we are completely the world. There's no in between when it comes to allegiance with Christ. Some will try to keep one foot in the world and one foot in the church while still claiming that they are with Christ.

And really that goes back to the passage that we read last week, where it said that people hold to a form of godliness while denying its power, while still relating with all these detestable sins that Paul listed.
So what does it look like when Christ is no longer the head of the church? I feel that's an important issue to discuss here. And honestly, this is a big issue.
There's lots of issues that we could cover with this question. But I just wanted to hone in on probably one of the biggest symptoms of a church that has abandoned its head, which is becoming accepting of sin rather than broken by it.
We become accepting of sin rather than broken by it. When Christ ceases to be the head of the church, the church is no longer going to be grieved by the things that grieve God.
[12:28] You see, pastors attempt to soothe the conscience of people by either staying silent on issues of sin or trying to justify people, trying to make them comfortable in the pews.

If we are following Christ as our head, our ways will not be the ways of the world. Making those who hold no regard for Christ comfortable in our pews is not the mission of the church.
I don't like the term seeker friendly. We want the lost to be in our church, but we want them to be changed by the message that the church brings. Not the church changed by the lost.
That's not the way it should work. James 4, 7-10. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep.
[13:36] Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you. Now after reading that particular text, does that sound like a charge to the church to make sinners comfortable?

Does that sound like we need to be assuaged the guilt of our sin? I don't think so. Following Christ as our head is always going to lead us to a brokenness over the things that Christ is broken for.
It will lead us to be broken over the things that led him to the cross. And it will also lead us to be broken over the things that are leading lost people into eternal torment.
We should be broken over those sins. We should humble ourselves before God when sin is revealed. Not fortify our positions in trying to justify ourselves.
Whenever I've done decision training with people and whenever I try to counsel someone through a decision if they're trying to, you know, figure out if Christ is calling them to salvation, a lot of times you hear them being broken over issues in their life.
[14:51] They're broken over sin. The worst thing that you can do is try to assuage their guilt and comfort them in what they are going through. Because here's the thing, that's the Holy Spirit doing the work in their life.

And it is not our job to relieve them of their guilt. It is our job to point them to Christ who can erase their guilt. That is our job as the church. Now, what does a church look like that has Christ at its head?
There is going to be a concern for the lost. I think it's clear in Scripture that Christ has a heart for those that are lost. Luke 19.10 says, The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.
If the lost are what Christ has came to seek and save, then our efforts should reflect that heart as well. The lost are not a burden on the church.
The lost are not an interruption to ministry. They are our mission and our ministry. Next, a church that has Christ as its head, there will be a love for his commands.
[16:02] John 14.15, Jesus plainly says this to his disciples, If you love me, you will keep my commands. If Jesus is going to be our head, if love for him is what we are going to claim, then there needs to be a love for his commands.

We talked about this last week, that there is no ministry apart from the word. The commands of Christ are the foundation that we build everything that we do as a church on.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

We can never depart from his commands. To deviate from those commands is to deviate from Christ. Now, this is where things get tough, though. When we take a stand for Christ, the world is always going to take a stand against Christ.
And things can get tough. This is what we see in the church at Thessalonica. They have heard the word proclaimed. They have accepted the word.
They have allowed the word to work in their life. And because of that, the surrounding world has placed a target on their backs. Now, here in the United States, we face opposition for our faith as well.
[17:15] Many people face family pressure for their faith. Some face political pressure. When we take a stand for the faith in how we vote or who we support, I've seen Christians persecuted for that.

I've seen family ties severed because of the stands taken for Christ. It happens in the United States as well. Whether it be publicly, in the home, or maybe you're just ostracized by your friend group. There is persecution that happens in the United States. But I want to remind us of this truth, too. This is a second reminder that we're going to look at as the church. We suffer for Christ.
We suffer for Christ. Now, I want to make sure that I'm clear. Whenever I say the church, yes, that does refer to the local body of believers as well, but I'm also referring to the global bride of Christ, the whole church.
Local church membership is important, but you are not going to be persecuted for your affiliation with Highland Park Baptist Church. You will be persecuted because you have aligned yourself with Christ.
[18:25] That is why you will be persecuted in this world. And this was something that was common for Paul. Even when God sent Ananias to heal Paul's sight, and I always thought this interaction was interesting because at this time he was still Saul.

He still had this reputation of persecuting the church, of imprisoning Christians. It was his goal to stamp out the church. So when God had blinded him and he was now in Damascus completely helpless, God sends Ananias to heal his sight.
And Ananias obviously expressing his concerns to God, God responds with, I'm going to show Paul how much he must suffer for my name.
Now that suffering had become a very identifying mark of Paul's loyalty to Christ because everywhere he went seemed that he was driven out of the city.
He was stoned. He was flogged. He was persecuted severely. And in 2 Corinthians, Paul is trying to defend his apostleship. After he has planted this church and has left it behind, people have come in behind him.
[19:36] They've tried to discredit him. They have tried to get people to doubt his character so that they'll doubt the message. So Paul, to defend his character, to defend the validity of his testimony, he recounts the persecutions that he has undergone.

So in 2 Corinthians 11, this is kind of a lengthy passage, but Paul gives an account of what he has gone through for the sake of Christ. So in 2 Corinthians 11, 22 through 31, in referencing to the people that are trying to discredit his name, he says, are they Hebrews?
So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?
I am a better one. I am talking like a madman with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.
Five times, I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times, I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times, I was shipwrecked.
[20:46] A night and a day, I was adrift at sea. On frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, even without food, in cold and exposure, and apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

So even in the midst of all of his affliction that he's going through, his heart is still drawn to the churches and the disciples he's been making. But in 29, who is weak and I am not weak?
Who is made to fall and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

not lying.
So what Paul is saying here is that I'm not going to suffer this much for something that I don't truly believe in, something that I am not fully committed to. And really, that's also one of the arguments of apologetics for the proof of the resurrection.
You know, as we look at the apostles, these were men that were martyred for their faith, that suffered for their faith, and they died in gruesome ways. And the argument is that they would not have done this unless they absolutely believed in what they were doing.
[22:32] The same is true for us. We will not endure in the faith unless we remember that it is for Christ that we are suffering, the author and perfecter of our faith, the one that has paid the debt for our salvation.

Now, there's three truths about persecution that I think we need to look at in Scripture as we continue on in this.
And the first is this, that Jesus predicted persecutions. John 16, verses 1 through 4, he said, I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.
They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And he will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me.
But I have said these things to you that when the hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you. Jesus didn't want this to come as a shock to the faithful that they would suffer for their faith.
[23:41] Now, we live, like I said, for us specifically, we live in the United States. We have the freedom of religion. We have the freedom of speech, both very crucial for us to be able to worship in relative safety.

But that does not mean persecution does not happen in the United States. In certain parts of the country, there is pretty severe social persecution that goes on.
There was a family that moved to my hometown of Skiatuke right next door to my parents. And they moved from Washington State.
Now, this was a family that had taken a very public stand in their community for their faith. He was an educator, ran a school. So his word carried a lot of public weight.
He said they were ridiculed publicly. They were accosted in the grocery store, screamed at in public, and completely socially ostracized to the point where they moved to Oklahoma for safety.
[24:44] Persecution does happen in the United States. Now, it may not happen like it happens on the other side of the world, but we still need to be ready for when opposition comes our way because it will.

And why do they do this? As Jesus said, and they do these things because they have not known the Father nor me. Until we have come to know the Father, until we have received the Holy Spirit, the only nature that is driving us is our sinful nature.
And that is a nature that is always going to be hostile towards God and that is a nature that the majority of this world is driven by. So it should not be a surprise to us when persecution or opposition comes our way.
The second truth that Jesus says about persecution is that Jesus blesses the persecuted. He blesses those that are persecuted.
Matthew 5, 10 through 12, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
[25:54] Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. For those who have suffered for your faith, and I know that there are some in this room that have, Jesus, the one for whose sake you are suffering, He sees you and He gives you this command to rejoice.
Obviously not in the circumstances of your suffering. Suffering is never enjoyable, but in the reward that is to come for the price that you have paid for your faith.
Jesus sees your pain. He sees the anguish that a broken world has inflicted upon you, and He promises that your inheritance is going to be great one day. And if you are someone who is truly seeking to bear the image of Christ, then there is a certain amount of joy that does come with persecution that we have been identified with Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That the world sees enough of Jesus in us to treat us as they treated Christ. When the church of Acts was established, miracles were happening, and it was all being done in the name of Jesus. [27:20] The church was growing. New believers were coming to the faith every day, and Peter and John, who were the ones that were leading this, were brought before the Sanhedrin. And they had suffered greatly at the hands of the Sanhedrin with threats, with physical violence.

And after all this had happened, in Acts 5, 41, it says this, Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.
bearing the image of Christ is always an honor. Even when the world will seek to dishonor you. There's no honor that the world can take away from us.
There's no comfort or ease that the world can bestow on us that will compare to the honor of being counted as belonging to Christ and the eternal promise that that brings.
I'm humbled when I read about Peter and John's response. They so loved Jesus that even in the pain of being beaten and publicly humiliated, they still rejoiced in the fact that they were that much more like Christ to the world that was around them.
[28:37] And while the greatest blessing is in the life to come, the blessing in this life is always taking joy that we are sharing the image of Christ to the world around us, becoming like him in his suffering.

The suffering servant, as he is described in the book of Isaiah, the suffering servant will have a church that suffers as well. And we can also endure in all this with the third truth that Jesus says about persecution, that's this.
Jesus will end persecution one day. Thessalonians 4, 13. I can't wait to get to this passage and actually get to preach a sermon on this passage, but we see that the broken world that inflicts this damage and this hurt on us, they will not have the final word.
Chapter 4, verses 13 through 18. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep. When he says those who are asleep, he's talking about those who have died.
That you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.
[30:02] For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.
And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
And so, we will always be with the Lord. Lord, therefore, encourage one another with these words.
The world is not going to have the final say.
The victory has already been proclaimed. When we read about things like eschatology, especially in the book of Thessalonians, it can be easy to get tangled up in the different fields of theology that are out there, but we have to remember that when this was proclaimed in Thessalonians and also in the letter to the churches in Revelation, this was meant to be a letter of comfort, not division.
[31:30] This was meant to be a letter, a word reminding them that the Savior you have suffered so much for, He is the one that is coming back for you. You will not suffer forever.

The enemy will not have the victory. victory. Jesus is coming back, and He will make all things right one day. The decision to follow Christ, it may cost you more than you could ever possibly imagine paying, but it is eternally worth it.
Some of you may be familiar with Jim Elliott, but he said in his journal that he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.
This was a missionary who had died for his faith, and there is nothing that we will lose in this life that compares to the glory that awaits us. And again, I say this with a great deal of humility, knowing that we have brothers and sisters elsewhere who suffer in unimaginable ways for the name of Christ, Christ.
And to see their passion and drive for the Great Commission is nothing short of inspiring. The work they have been called to, like Paul, consumes their lives.
[32:48] And this is the third reminder about persecution. As the church, we endure for the work of Christ. So we belong to Christ, we suffer for Christ, and we endure for the work of Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Christ. I want to read verses 15 through 16 again. Again, talking about the people that are persecuting them, says, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and drove us out and displeased God and opposed all mankind by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved.
So it's always to fill up the measure of their sins, but wrath has come upon them at last. So Paul was talking about this final wrath that is mentioned here.
It is something that was to come. It was something that has been prophesied, and it is such a sure thing that is going to happen that Paul is talking about it as if it's already happened in the present. Paul is that sure that this is all going to take place.
But for the people performing the persecution, you know, they truly believed that they were performing a public service for the city of Thessalonica. Jesus even prophesied saying that these people that persecute you and kill you will do it as an act of worship to God, thinking that they're somehow honoring God with this.
[34:12] Well, in this particular city, they believed that Roman culture, worship, and loyalty, they believed that that's what made the city great. They believed that that's the things that they needed to say, adhered to, to maintain their prosperity.

prosperity. So when these new believers come along proclaiming faith in a different God, they saw that as opposition. They saw it as a threat.
And Paul takes his comments a step further. This is not just an opposition to the church, the local church. This is an opposition to all mankind. in trying to silence Paul, in trying to extinguish the church, what they are really doing is trying to keep us from sharing the gospel, the source of life that a lost world needs, that we have been called to proclaim as his church.
Paul, who was writing this, was engaged in this similar mission at one point in his life when he was Saul. I want to read a passage out of Acts chapter 8 when Stephen, he was the first person to be martyred for the faith.
He was a deacon. He was powerful in the spirit and in word and whenever he was executed, it was Saul that was overseeing his execution.
[35:49] Starting in verse 1, Saul approved of his execution and there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles.

Devout men buried Stephen and made great limitation over him but Saul was ravaging the church and entering house after house he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.
Now those who were scattered and I love this those who were scattered went about preaching the word.
So what may have seemed like a victory to the opposition only served to further the mission of the church. So how do we persevere? We persevere by continuing to spread the truth.
because it is not our salvation that is at stake. If we are in Christ our salvation is secure but it is the salvation of a lost world that is at stake.
[36:56] Our silence dooms the world around us who is in desperate need of the gospel. I've heard people say that well God is sovereign and I believe in the sovereignty of God.

I believe in his sovereignty over salvation and people will say well God is sovereign and he's going to save whether I speak or not. But here's the thing. Jesus has commanded us to go and if we love Jesus we will love his commands and we will go share the truth with a lost and dying world no matter the cost.
God will be glorified in his church not just surviving persecution but in his church clinging to and proclaiming the hope throughout that persecution.
So our main application from today is this persevere through trials because you are glorifying Christ. Persevere through trials through persecution.
Believer you have a solemn responsibility to let your life and your words proclaim the gospel of Christ. No matter what the opposition no matter what weapons the enemy uses to try and silence your witness you have this solemn responsibility.
[38:27] Persecution is going to look different depending on who you are and where you are in this world and yes some Christians it even cost them their life that we hear about on a daily basis.

I remember listening to a missionary talk at another church that I was in and part of his work was supporting houses where pastors would hide their children so that they could go about the work of

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

doing Christ without having to fear for the lives of their children.
That is unimaginable to me. I've never been in fear for the life of my children. These blessed pastors in these countries they have separated themselves from their family for the sake that some yes even those that are seeking to end their lives would come to know Christ.
That's just beyond my comprehension to even fathom living like that. And yet here the church has caved to much less. Individual believers have given up ground and their fears of influence for fear of social pressure.
Wanting to fit in with those they deem as important or maybe to just avoid conflict you verbally go along with what the rest of the world is saying even though in your heart you know it contradicts everything you've read in God's word you still go along with it to avoid the pressure.
[40:04] And whatever circumstance we find ourselves in whether you are fearing for your lives or the lives of your loved ones or maybe you're trying to cling to some sort of peace with the culture that's around you our focus should always be on our connection and our loyalty to our head Jesus Christ not the world.

and there is nothing in this life that will separate us from Christ. Romans 8 35-39 says who shall separate us from the love of God?
The love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword as it is written for your sake we are being killed all day long.
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered no in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
so no matter what the world throws at us no matter what the enemy might try to use to silence us we can cling to this truth that the victory is won it is ours in Christ Jesus and we should proclaim the truth of boldness knowing that they cannot take that away from us.
[41:39] Now for you here that are unbelievers maybe you're new to this whole Christianity thing maybe you're hearing about Jesus for the first time and you wonder why would somebody be willing to sacrifice so much for this Jesus person.

It is because he paid that same price for us. We're not doing anything that he has not already done for us and led by example in. When we suffer for Christ we are bearing his image and how he suffered for us to pay the price for our sins for your sins as well.
First John 2 verse 2 says this he is the propitiation for our sins. Not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
He paid that price for us. He paid it for you as well. But that payment is only good on your account if you place your faith in Jesus Christ.
If you believe that he is a son of God that he died for your sins and rose again on the third day and you confess him as Lord. Romans says that you will be saved.
[42:52] And if that is something that you want to know more about we're about to have a time of response. You are welcome to come down and talk to me. Talk to an elder. Talk to a Sunday school teacher that you've had interactions with.

We would all love to share Jesus with you. And for those of you that are believers that are here today my encouragement to you is this.
Persevere. because it's not for your sake that you are suffering. You are suffering for the sake of Christ because you belong to Christ.
And we have a command and a mandate to live out which is the work of Christ. So persevere because your reward will be great in heaven one day when Jesus says well done good and faithful servant.
Let's pray. Father we we come to you today and Lord just in light of what we have read from your word today I pray that as believers that we would always be strengthened to persevere no matter what the cost no matter what the enemy might throw at us Lord I pray that we would endure Lord that the passion for the great commission to bring others into your kingdom would consume us Lord that the truth would not just stay inside of us but that we would proclaim it no matter the cost as brothers and sisters on the other side of the world are and Lord we just lift them up to you as well those saints that are suffering so greatly Lord we lift them up to you Lord physically Lord we do pray for their protection Lord we do pray for your hand to shield them as they perform this work to protect their families but Lord we also pray for their endurance as well

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[44:52] Lord that they would endure in the faith that they would persevere that the testimony that they are living out would reach the loss that are around them and yes even the loss that are persecuting them Lord we pray that your kingdom would grow in these parts of the world Lord I pray that they would always be the subject of our prayers our thoughts and our ministry Lord I pray for the loss that are here today Lord I pray for those that are here that have never professed faith in Christ and Lord maybe there are lost here that have taken part in persecution maybe just mocking believers that are around them Lord there is no one that is beyond your redemption or saving and Lord I pray for those unbelievers that are here today Lord that you would call them Lord that they would repent of their sins and be made new in you and become part of your kingdom Lord I pray that you'd be glorified by how your word is received today Lord that your word would not return void but that it would accomplish exactly what you mean it to I pray for all these things in Jesus name amen amen

Thank you.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host