Our Response to the Persecuted 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: 15 March 2015

Preacher: Vasily Novakovets

[0:00] ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■.

■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■,! ■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■.
Let me tell you a little bit about the ministry of Odessa Theological Seminary. ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ 26 ■■■■. Our seminary exists already for 26 years.
■■■■ ■■■■■■ 1200 ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. More than 1200 students are graduated. And the graduates are not only from Ukraine.
Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia. Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan.
[1:08] We have students from Germany and the United States. Today we have about 200 students.

12 ■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. We have 12 programs that are existing. ■ 3, ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■, ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■.
And we're planning 3 this spring and summer to begin 3 more programs. Our programs cover us starting from the certificate level and even up to now we're working to start a doctorate program.
■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■. So as you enter into the church, there in the foyer you can find us a bulletin about our seminary, where you can see the information about it.
■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. We have a program of theological research. ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. Christian education. ■■■■■■■■■■■■. Sermon. Preaching.
[2:25] ■■■■■■■■■■■■■. Pastoral program. ■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■, ■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. Work with youth worker or children's worker.

■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■. Musical. ■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■. ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■. ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■.
Level programs that we do at the local churches. They don't come to us. We go to them and teach them. ■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■. ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■. This spring, we're trying to open the new program Women's Calling.
■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■. When the women will teach women. ■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■. ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ Deacon Ministry.
And this, you understand, this spring, they're trying to start Deacon Ministry program. ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■.
[3:25] ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■, ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■.

■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■. ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■, ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■.
■ ■■ ■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■.
■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■.
■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■, ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■-■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-06-27 18:06:33

[4:36] ■ ■ ■■■■■■■■■■, ■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■. ■ ■■■■ ■■■■ 17 ■■■■■■■■■■■■.

■■■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■. ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■, ■■ ■■■■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■■■.
■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■, ■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■, ■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■.
The point or the accent of this program is that we, the emphasis of the program is that we teach them the most basic things. And then for nine months, about nine months there, beyond the Ukraine.
Today it's Uganda, Tajikistan and Egypt. And so they also have opportunities to visit other countries like South Sudan and Jordan.
[5:58] As well as you can find this prayer list in the foyer from seminary. So we invite you to join prayerfully for us.

This is a list of the key prayers for the seminary. Please take it and pray for us.
Now let's turn to the Word of God, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. So we're going to read 2 Thessalonians chapter 1.
The entire chapter. Paul and Silvanus and Timothy. To the church, to the Thessalonians, and God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
We are always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged and the love of each of you toward one another grows ever greater.
[7:10] Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God for which you indeed are suffering.

For after all, it's only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.
Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. This will pay the penalty of eternal destruction as away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.
When he comes to be glorified in his saints on the day and to be marveled at among all who have believed for our testimony to you was believed. To this end also we pray for you always that our God will count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire for godliness, goodness and the work of faith with power so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you and you in him according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Let's focus from this passage on the theme of the relationship to the persecuted church, the suffering church.
[8:45] This is a message in general for the suffering church. This epistle in general is a good encouragement for the suffering church.

Not all people in this church were ideal, but they were believers, they were brothers and sisters. They were suffering for their faith.
And so Paul is writing to encourage them. So I'm confident that it's a good example for us today. When we hear the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East, in Africa, in Southeast Asia, and today you hear, and we also testify to you about persecute sufferings in the East of Ukraine.
When we hear about the persecuted church, what is our response? And as we look in the text, we can see one point here.
And so the first one point is that we would thank and plead for them. So the verse three says, we are always to give thanks to God for you.
[10:22] And the reason there, it says, because your faith is greatly enlarged. and then in chapter two, he says, we thank God for you because you are chosen for salvation.

In this same chapter, verse 11, Paul writes, we always pray for you.
It's interesting to observe that in every episode, Apostle Paul has a prayer for the certain church and the person that he's writing to.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-06-27 18:06:33

He always not only gives a good exhortation, he always says, I pray for you and always pray for you.
Paul uses different methods to encourage, to support church. All these methods, they cannot be sufficient, they are all limited.
[11:44] For example, personally, he visited one, another church. He was also asking one of his helper's assistants to visit one of the churches when he couldn't do it.

He called some churches to have offering and to help other churches who are in need. And as well as he wrote his epistles, which served as an encouragement for churches.
But he always asked others and himself prayed for them. And so today, it's an example for us and a reminder.
We, as believers, of course, we pray. Let us focus this idea and decide about whom do we pray. Especially when we hear and know about suffering church. What kind of names come to our mind? separate people or churches.
[13:11] If we do that, let us continue to keep doing it. [redacted], [redacted] to the suffering church is when we thank God and pray for them.

So the relation to the suffering church is when we thank God for them and pray for them. When we look further to verse 4 of this chapter 1, we find yet another approach of how to relate to the suffering church.
It's when we [redacted]. And this is when we talk to others about the suffering church. It says that we are boasting about this church who stays faithful during the suffering.
[redacted], [redacted]. Of course, the scriptures teach us to boast only in God. But Paul shows that if believers are in God, it's worthy to be proud of them or boast about them.
Not because they themselves are worthy of it. But because they strongly hold to the Lord. As we look to the book of Acts, and as we remember how the church in Thessalonica started, we can see that only three sabbats in a row Paul was able to be there and to start that church.
[15:04] And then he wasn't able to stay there any longer. Not because he didn't want to, but because the enemies of the gospel they forced him out.

And he was very very worried about these new believers, who just became a believer. he was anxious about these first believers, who just became a believer. But he heard that even though they're just new believers, that the sufferings and pressure now turned on them.
they still are faithful. We know one brother, his name is Sergei Moroz.
This is an example. He was the regional pastor in the east of Ukraine. And so every time I try to read his Facebook page to see what he's writing when he was going there.
So here's one of the small passages from one of his letters. So he writes, good morning everyone. According to your prayers, I am alive and well.
[16:38] Nothing became worse. Last night in my district was quiet, more quieter than the previous one.

After the shelling, I didn't hear anything. I slept well. And in the home. we don't have electricity, but the sun came up.
Don't forget that today is Sunday. That's why run to the church. Okay, now I said hi to you.
Then I'll go and show up before my neighbors. We'll say that I'm alive and well. May God bless you all. He couldn't sleep every day in his house.
More often he slept in his basement. He had very limited food supply. For a long time didn't have electricity or hot water.
[17:48] But he was worried that believers would be in church and would stay with them.

He was a good example for the believers over there as well as for unbelievers coming out and saying I'm alive and well here. When the occupation became stronger he was forced to leave the region.
He is one of the vice presidents in the Baptist Union. And so he continues to help as much as he can to the brothers and sisters.
Together with our former president Vladimir Shemchishin they visit encourage they give food and resources.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-06-27 18:06:33

This is just a little example of one person. We know much more people who are faithful. and we want to testify about their faithfulness.
[19:13] Even though they have real threat to their life they stay faithful. And so I'm glad that I know these brothers. I can pray for them and I can testify about their faithfulness.

In the same way as Apostle Paul knew about the church in Thessalonica. And so your church is also involved in many ministries.
Asia included. And so you are not ashamed to tell those brothers and sisters who are faithful.
So the relation to the suffering church is to thank for them and to plead for them.
Pray for them. It's to testify about them. And another point is to teach about the justice of God or repayment of God.
[20:25] God has a special care of his church. Because it belongs to him and only to him. It's like his possession.

And he's not indifferent to what is happening to the church. So sooner or later he will repay.
He will repay to those who in a right way and a kind way treat the church. Those who are enemies, he will punish them.
from the verses 5 to 9 we see how Paul in detail writes about it. The church belongs to God.
He will repay for it. He cannot not not repay. That's his nature.
[21:29] That's his nature. He is just absolutely. Sooner or later he will bring it to justice. More than that.

God we heard in the morning that God promised to repay. And when he promises something he fulfills it.
The church belongs to him. His nature is just. And so he promised. And so he promised. In many passages of the scriptures.
And so he promised. As well as in the first Thessalonians. In the book of Acts. Paul often warns believers that they will have to suffer.
Not because Paul or God likes it. But unfortunately not everybody accepts rightly the church of God.
[22:37] And it's very normal for the person believer who strives to do good to go through suffering.

And the God says that he will see that and he will repay. And so Jesus Christ told about it as well.
On the last judgment day he will divide all people to two groups. And one will go to the joy of the Father because they were serving him.
And treated rightly him. And others will be punished because they rejected him. And they persecuted the church of God.
[redacted]. God's retribution will come. [redacted], [redacted]. [redacted], [redacted].
[23:52] [redacted]. To check our relations to the suffering church.

[redacted]. The word of God calls us. [redacted]. Pray for them. [redacted]. Testify about their faithfulness.
[redacted]. So may God help your church. [redacted].
[redacted]. widen you the sphere of your ministry. [redacted]. May God bless you. Amen. Amen.
Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-06-27 18:06:33