

All throughout the New Testament we see trials that the early church faces and the book of Revelation is no exception—persecution is a reality. This week, the devotion guides you in praying for the countries that are in the 50 most dangerous places to follow Jesus. Our God is global God and we are connected to a body of believers across it—many of whom have vastly different stories than us. Listen to God, empathize with your brothers and sisters across the globe and pray for the persecuted church.

How might you pray for each country?

- Read the facts about each country. Spend time imagining what it might be like to live in that country. Ask God, “Where are you in this picture?”
- Thank God for the gift of believers in persecuted countries—thank Him for their courage, boldness and perseverance. Pray the provided Scripture over the people of that country.
- Ask God to intervene—both within the structures of the country that are enabling persecution and within the hearts of people.
- Ask God to change your heart toward these countries, growing your connection to believers across the globe.

Want to learn more about the persecuted church?

- One of our Share partners is the International Missions Board. Check out www.imb.org to learn more about how we support church plants across the globe.
- Explore at www.opendoorsusa.org to learn more about the persecuted church and the top 50 countries where it’s most dangerous to follow Jesus. Learn, listen, and let others’ experiences change the way you follow Jesus in the United States.

Monday, October 29th

Pray for North Korea

The main driver of persecution in North Korea is the state. Christians are seen as hostile elements in society which have to be eradicated and people are highly watchful and willing to report anything suspicious to authorities. If Christians are discovered, many are deported to labor camps as political criminals or killed. Meeting as a community of Christians is almost impossible.

However, Christians minister to North Koreans despite the restrictions through aid and development projects or by way of smuggling Bibles. As of 2015, there were more than 300,000 North Korean refugees in China but many still face danger of capture and up to 90% of women refugees end up sold as slave-wives or into the sex trade.

Monday continued...

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Tuesday, October 30th

Pray for Afghanistan

The main driver of persecution in Afghanistan is the Islamic state because all other religions are seen as alien and individuals that become Christians are heavily pressured to return to Islam. Because of the deep ties to Islam, those who choose to follow Jesus are often considered insane for leaving Islam leading to the loss of personal property and businesses as well as beatings and death at the hands of their own communities.

Health risks and human development have been of utmost concern—children often die from preventable diseases, a high proportion of people suffer with disabilities, and heroin and opium addicts are prevalent. Women face specific challenges, often dying in childbirth because they cannot receive healthcare from male doctors and female literacy is under 20% - they are in dire need of justice and freedom from oppression.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:10

Wednesday, October 31st

Pray for Eritrea

Eritrea is located in Northeast Africa with a population of over 5.4 million. The main driver of persecution is both the government and the cultural climate. The current presidential regime is known for absolute authoritarianism and the arrest, harassment and murder of Christians is common. Religious freedom remains a major issue and some estimate thousands of church members suffer in prison, with others under house arrest. The church grows rapidly among those who flee the country, those who live in camps and those in prison.

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Thursday, November 1st

Pray for India

The source of persecution in India depends on the location within the country but the majority comes from a variety of Hindu radical groups and organizations. Hindu radicals often view Christians as outsiders and Christian converts are continually under pressure to return to Hinduism—often physically assaulted or even killed for refusing to deny Christ. Meanwhile, the government continues to look away when religious minorities (such as Christians) are attacked.

India has more human need than many other nations with poverty affecting hundreds of millions and health concerns, such as a lack of adequate sanitation and clean water, impacting children and the poor. Women and children often suffer the most with staggering numbers of orphans and rampant physical and sexual abuse.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil. For you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4

Friday, November 2nd

Pray for Mexico

The source of persecution in Mexico comes from the corruption of the Mexican government and the lack of protection for Christians. Secular ideology is on the rise and many associated groups seek to eliminate religious expression. This intolerance affects Christians who publicly express their religion, resulting in harassment, criticism and ridicule. Criminal groups control various regions and often persecute believers by issuing death threats and murdering Christian leaders—Christian ministry is seen as a threat to their agendas.

On top of that, Mexico and the USA often resent each other when only cooperation will overcome rampant human trafficking and illegal drug trades ringing on both sides of the border. It's often true that Mexican migrants are able to find Jesus while away from home and bring the good news back with them.

⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:4 & 12



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