

What's that you say?

“...they will...flog you...When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.”

Matthew 10:17-23 (NIV)

The photos were all very graphic and when I saw them it disturbed me greatly. The photographer had visited a Communist country and was able to take photos of bodily evidence of the government's torture of Christians. The scars left by the tormentors was revolting.

I found it difficult to imagine how one human being could do such horrible things to a fellow human. We need to confess that there is a dark side to all of us, call it what you want. Scripture calls it iniquity. Iniquity refers to the inner twist of nature that pushes people into sin. In Psalm 51:5 we read the words, “...I was shapen in iniquity.”

What Jesus is trying to say to His followers in our verses today is that if you will follow Jesus you will find yourself persecuted in various ways. Those who wish to believe in Jesus and follow Him need to sit down and realise that our Lord never said that any of His followers would find the way of truth easy to follow. In fact Jesus said the opposite.

Some well meaning but very misguided people seeking to communicate the Good News about Jesus tragically misrepresent the message. They will tell prospective Christians that if you just “come to Jesus” you will find your life's problems disappear and the sun will always shine on you. It is sometimes referred to as the “Health and wealth Gospel”.

Sadly, some of the people who claim that Jesus will heal all your diseases and make you successful in life are bald headed, wear glasses or contact lenses, have lots of fillings in their teeth and so on. In other words their very physical appearance denies the message they preach.

If you are suffering today and think that God is here just to solve all your problems and show you the good life you are mistaken. Even the great apostle Paul had some medical issues that prayer did not cure (2 Corinthians 12:7). Paul prayed 3 times especially that the problem might leave him. Instead of being cured the apostle discovered that

God's amazing grace allowed him to endure the difficulty.

When Paul wrote to his younger colleague Timothy he knew about Timothy's weak stomach. In 1 Timothy 5:23 Paul refers to a number of medical issues Timothy had and suggested he drink a little wine to help ease the problems. Paul never sought to heal Timothy from a distance as Jesus had done with sick people. Matthew 8:5-13 tells the story of Jesus healing from a distance.

So God's choice servants sometimes had to endure various medical issues that “a simple prayer of faith” would not resolve. Do not let yourself be discouraged Christian friend. What the Lord said to those who follow Him is that their problems may remain but He will remain with them also. God's grace will enable you to endure and ultimately the trials of this life will end and you shall live wonderfully, unspeakably well forever.

www.RumfordMinistries.org
All rights reserved