

LIFE. DIFFERENT.

WHAT IF **GOD** TOOK OVER?

Whose Crime Was Christ

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

~Matthew 5:10-12

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THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

- 200 million Christians in 60 countries are currently denied fundamental human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance)
- 176,000 Christians worldwide were martyred between 2008-09. (Source: International Bulletin of Missionary Research)
- Number of believers who died for their faith in America?

WHOSE CRIME WAS CHRIST

- Work— Choosing Jesus disrupted their economic life.
- Social— Choosing Jesus disrupted their relational life.
- Family— Choosing Jesus disrupted their home life.



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WHOSE CRIME WAS CHRIST

- Work—Choosing Jesus disrupted their economic life.
- Social—Choosing Jesus disrupted their relational life.
- Family—Choosing Jesus disrupted their home life.
- Health—Choosing Jesus disrupted their physical life.

“The panting, huddled flock whose crime was Christ.”

~Anonymous

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“Suffering then, is the badge of true discipleship. The disciple is not above his master. Following Christ means ... suffering because we have to suffer ... Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer. In fact, it is a joy and a token of his grace.”

~Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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A JOY & TOKEN OF GRACE

1. Suffering persecution for righteousness' sake presents the opportunity for me to show loyalty to Christ.

“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.”

~Matthew 10:32

A JOY & TOKEN OF GRACE

2. Suffering persecution for righteousness' sake presents the opportunity for me to walk the way of the great cloud of witnesses.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

~Hebrews 12:1

A JOY & TOKEN OF GRACE

3. Suffering persecution for righteousness' sake presents the opportunity for me to share in the cosmic drama.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

~John 15:18-19

A JOY & TOKEN OF GRACE

4. Suffering persecution for righteousness' sake presents the opportunity for me to makes it easier for those who will follow.

“Because because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.”

~Philippians 1:14

A JOY & TOKEN OF GRACE

5. Suffering persecution for righteousness' sake presents the opportunity for me is to stand with Christ—and to know that Christ stands by me.

“At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength”

~II Timothy 4:16-17

JOYFUL IN PERSECUTION

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.”

~Luke 6:23

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JOYFUL IN PERSECUTION

I may rejoice that although I lose everything on earth, I will inherit everything in heaven.

“We are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

~Romans 8:17

JOYFUL IN PERSECUTION

I may rejoice because persecution is a certificate of Christian authenticity.

“For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

~Matthew 5:12

JOYFUL IN PERSECUTION

I may rejoice because persecution allows me to suffer on Christ's account.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me."

~Matthew 5:11

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JOYFUL IN PERSECUTION

*They called the apostles in and had them flogged.
Then they ordered them not to speak in the
name of Jesus, and let them go.*

*The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because
they had been counted worthy of suffering
disgrace for the Name.*

~Acts 5:40-41

JOYFUL IN PERSECUTION

Wounds in Christ's cause are my medal of honor.

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