

REVERB::TRANSFER::Disciple-Making 101:lesson two

FAMILY DEVOTION

Current unrest between the Pakistani government and the fundamental Islamic Taliban has displaced many Pakistanis from their homes. The government is making concessions for Pakistanis who are Islamic, but little if any aid is being provided for Christian refugees. The churches in Pakistan are doing all that they can to help, but they are nearly at the end of their own resources, according to the group Voice of the Martyrs. There are many followers of Christ going without food, water, and medical attention. Many are forced to walk for days without provisions while being taunted and threatened.

According to Voice of the Martyrs, “It is estimated that 200 million Christians live in societies where they daily face the threat of being imprisoned, tortured, and killed because of their identity as Christians. Approximately 171,000 Christians were martyred in 2006 . . . More Christians died for their faith in the 20th century than at any other time in history.” Despite these facts, many missionaries continue to share the gospel in dangerous areas where many people continue to turn to Christ.

The book of 2 Timothy stands out because it is believed to be the apostle Paul’s last written words before he died. He wrote this letter to his spiritual son Timothy from a cold and dark prison cell while locked in chains.

Paul was preparing for the end of his life by passing his final words and ministry to Timothy. Read 2 Timothy 1:8–12 as a family. Paul had just assured Timothy in verse 1:7 that fear does not come from God because He gives us power, love, and self-control. Paul had every right to be fearful and ashamed and to stop proclaiming the truth. If he’d kept quiet, it probably would have saved his life. Instead, he continued to risk his life for the truth that had changed his own life. Now he wanted to remind Timothy of the importance of continuing that message without fear after he was gone.

Paul’s life had been so drastically changed by Jesus Christ that nothing could cause him to back down. He had confidence because the God that he knew and believed in had already won the victory over death.

We can be thankful that Paul continued to share the gospel without fear. It’s possible that without the boldness of Paul and Timothy and other people like them that the gospel would not be as widespread as it is today. Now it’s our turn to be bold and share this truth with future generations. No matter how great the cost might be, it’s a life-saving message that must be shared.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS

1. How are the facts that you read in this devotion different from what you daily experience as a Christian? How are you persecuted because of your beliefs?
2. From the following list, identify your biggest fears related to telling others about Christ: laziness, embarrassment, ignorance, rejection, being seen as intolerant, not having the right answers, people who don’t care, intrusive, too busy, not knowing any non-Christians, torture.
3. Describe the importance of sharing the gospel today.
4. Take turns describing about when you first heard about the message of Christ. Why is our personal testimony important in telling others about Christ? Who was most influential in telling you about Christ?
5. Christian persecution is nothing new. From reading the Old Testament, we see that God’s people have always faced fierce opposition. Come up with as many reasons as possible as to why there is such strong opposition to God, His people, and His message. Share your answers with others.

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