

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE

"Because of Jesus"

By Pastor Rick Rostek, Immanuel Lutheran Church

Indications are that the persecution of Christians has increased considerably around the world. In places like Nigeria, Kenya, Indonesia, and the Middle East, Christians are dying for confessing Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Christians in the United States perhaps do not face threats on their lives, but there is subtle persecution as secular thinking becomes more prominent in the world.

When Jesus prepared His disciples for their mission trip to the towns and villages of the lost sheep of Israel, He told them, "You will be hated by all for my name's sake" (Matthew 10:22, ESV). That's not a pleasant thought. The disciples would go out with the Gospel of Jesus, but many would hate them because of Jesus. The reasons were both simple and complex.

Complex in the sense that many Israelites, who really were looking for the coming

Messiah, couldn't bring themselves to believe that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah. In many ways He simply didn't measure up to their expectations. Whether they were looking for a military leader, a king, or something else, Jesus just didn't fit the bill.

But a simple reason for rejecting Jesus and the ones He sent was that Jesus said He was the

solution for sin. More than that, Jesus said that it was only through Him that one could come to the Heavenly Father. This exclusivity was a scandal to many, then and now.

So we shouldn't be surprised that Christians are persecuted today. Many of those first disciples ended up dying as martyrs for the faith. Yet, here is some good

news: because of Jesus and His death on the cross, forgiveness of sins has come into the world. And because Jesus rose from the dead, all who put their faith in Him have forgiveness and everlasting life.

Though the means to salvation is exclusive 'Jesus alone' all who believe and are baptized into the Name of Jesus will be saved. Nothing can take that away, not even persecution and death.

Though Christians in America are still somewhat insulated from the type of persecution that goes on elsewhere in the world, we should not think that it could never happen here. To be prepared, we continue to look to what Jesus did for us. We might be hated by the world because of Jesus, but we know that we are loved by God because of Jesus. This is the hope that sustains us in a sometimes hostile world.

When Everyone Speaks At Once



There are days when everyone gets on your nerves. They all want help "now" and you feel pulled in five different directions. Who can possibly handle such a situation? God can. He can hear all of us...all of the time. When we think of this from a human standpoint it is just too incredible to fathom; we take it on faith. We can communicate with Him anytime we choose; whatever we need, whenever we need it, He hears us. Worship this week and discover how prayer and faith can give you peace that is uninterrupted by the world.

Weekly Scripture Reading

John 14:1-14	John 14:15-31	John 15:1-27	John 16:1-15	John 16:16-33	1 Cor. 12:1-11	1 Cor. 14:1-25
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Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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