

Becoming like Jesus through persecution (Based on Chapter 24 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

Persecution for our faith confirms we are connected to Jesus.

Biblical Foundation

When they bring you to trial, do not worry about what you are going to say or how you will say it; when the time comes, you will be given what you will say. For the words you will speak will not be yours; they will come from the Spirit of your Father speaking through you ... Matthew 10:16-25 (TEV)

“Nothing can happen to you without Jesus knowing of it” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer).

To suggest the Christian life is a gateway to problem-free, stress-less living is a sign of fallen thinking. Our lives in Christ are meant to be extraordinary, incredible, meaningful and purposeful but never trouble-free.

We’re to step into the will of God and stay there, trusting he has our best interests at heart, even though he tells us that circumstances seem so bad that we doubt his promises (Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:13).

Why would Jesus leave us in the pressure-cooker of life, rather than making circumstances easier for us?

When we respond with defensiveness, blame, shame, anger, hatred, pride, fear and self-centeredness, we are, in that moment, no different from those who appear to have faith but reject its real power (2 Timothy 3:5).

Is God involved in your circumstances or not? Jesus allows no middle ground.

When we respond from the truth that we are connected to Jesus, we prove that we *believe* “he that is within us is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

What does your response to the trials and tribulations of life reveal about your beliefs? What do they indicate about your *trust* in Jesus?

The Cost of Discipleship

As the righteousness of Jesus flows through you, you will be persecuted. This is part of the cost of your union with Christ.