

**GOD'S NAME WILL BE GLORIFIED WHEN YOU ARE PERSECUTED** by Annie Poonen - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 20

I have many friends who have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, but whose husbands have not been converted. Their husbands harass and torment them. Sometimes they abuse them physically, publicly humiliate them and torture them in many other ways. Some of those wives have even been divorced against their will. Some endure every indignity silently in order to keep their family intact and to remain with their children.

There is a lot of heart-wrung weeping in homes like that. The Lord has given grace to these wives to stand true to Him and to be witnesses to the forgiving, meek and submissive nature of Christ. Their children have seen them suffer patiently for the Lord's sake and some of these children have accepted Christ. See how God turns evil to good. Eventually some of the husbands have been won over to the Lord.

A friend of mine told me of the immense suffering she faced because her husband was a member of a secret organisation. There was confusion in their home for many years. How she wept and pleaded with her husband not to let their family suffer the consequences of his association with that group. But he could not break away from it. He had become wealthy, as a result of his contacts with the businessmen in the organisation.

Satan used a similar tactic to tempt Jesus: "If you bow down to me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory (which includes their wealth)". But Jesus rebuked Satan and told him to get away from him.

Some, who have left such secret organisations and become Christians, have revealed that new members have to invoke curses on themselves and their families, if ever they break the rules of the group. In some groups, members have to write the oaths in their own blood. Many make these promises without realising the seriousness of what they are saying. Some of these groups even worship Satan in secret. Such deliberately chosen chains are not easily broken. But God can help a person revoke every evil oath he made in the past. Many have been freed by the Lord from such groups - even some who were at one time leaders of such organisations.

So never give up praying for your husband, whatever he may be a captive to. Weep and pray in faith. Seek the Lord's protection and pray for your husband, as you would for your only son. Christ broke every fetter when He died on the cross. He came to set every captive free.

Some unmarried girls who accept Christ face intense persecution from their relatives. One mother threatened to commit suicide when her daughter accepted Jesus. Jesus knows how your heart aches to hurt your dear mother who worked so hard to bring you up. But the Lord calls us to love Him more than we love our parents and to be faithful unto death. Your tearful prayers to the Lord for the conversion of your parents will not be in vain. Years later the mother (mentioned above) attended her daughter's wedding to a fine Christian man.

I know of teenage girls who have been thrown out of their homes even in these days, just because they accepted Christ or obeyed Him in water-baptism. I am certain that the Lord will honour them and He has prepared a glorious future for them. In the final day I know the Father will say to them, "This is My beloved daughter in whom I am well-pleased".

Did you discover that due to financial difficulties, you have to live with your husband's parents forever? Even though they are good people, you have to live in a 'joint family', where you share your home with your husband's relatives; and your husband's mother runs the home. Everything in the house is common property and at times you feel that even your thoughts are common property! You resent it and you weep inwardly. You feel cheated out of a home of your own. You long to share your feelings with your husband. But you cannot say anything about his relatives, for that will hurt him. You live one day at a time and somehow manage to pull on, accepting the miserable situation, just as many other married women in India do. Sometimes you have outbursts of weeping and anger, because things are not as you would want them to be. There is chaos in your mind as well as in your life.

You cannot change the culture of India. But God can change you! You can learn to forgive and not take offence at words spoken to you. Those words are not going to matter a hundred years from now. Think positively of the many advantages of your situation - the practical help you have in the house, and your children having their grandparents with them. Many families live far away from their relatives. And with all the external turmoil in the house, you can still have a secret walk with the Lord in your heart.

You can also be a comfort and strength to other women in India who are facing similar situations. Every crushing experience we go through helps us to partake of Christ's sufferings. We can thus acquire the nature of Christ and be a blessing to those around us who are going through the similar problems.

Are you being harassed (by words and actions) by your husband's relatives because of "insufficient dowry".

Perhaps you are disgusted with those around you and are in despair, wishing you had never got married. We read of "dowry-deaths" almost every day in the newspapers. Your life is not your own. It belongs to God. So don't ever think of ending it. Instead ask God for grace to endure this trial. Don't do things that will be tragic for your family. Find your

security in the Lord. He has promised not to allow any trial to become too much for you. It is futile to spend your days in accusing and blaming others. Wait in faith for the Lord to work on your behalf. Those who trust in Him will never be disappointed (Isa.49:23) and those who wait on Him will rise up and soar like the eagles one day (Isa.40:31).

Ask the Lord to give you wisdom in your situation.

Some believers have had the unique privilege of being dragged to court for the Lord's sake. That is indeed a privilege and an honour, because our Lord Himself was taken to court by His enemies. The charges levelled against you may all be false. But the Lord allows even that with a purpose. He has assured us that when we stand before judges, we need not worry about what we should say, for He will tell us what to say. So we can rest in Him with a child-like trust.

Here are some wonderful promises that God has given in His Word for all who are taken to court unjustly. You can claim all of them in Jesus' Name (Quotations are from the Living Bible):

“The Lord is my lawyer and defender, and He will rescue me.” (1 Sam. 24:15).

“The Lord says, ‘Don't be afraid! Don't be paralyzed! For the battle is not yours but God's! You will not need to fight! Stand quietly and see the incredible rescue operation God will perform for you. The Lord is with you.’” (2 Chron. 20:15-17).

“The Lord will not let the godly be condemned when they are brought before the judge” (Psa.37:33).

“Judgment does not come from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south (that is, from any man). It is God Who is the Judge condemning some and acquitting others. He will break the power of the wicked, but the power of the righteous will be increased.” (Psa.75:6,10).

“The Lord will not judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them.” (Isa.11:3-5).

“Their insults cannot hurt me, because the Sovereign Lord gives me help. I brace myself to endure them. I know that I will not be disgraced, for God is near, and He will prove me innocent. Does anyone dare to bring charges against me? Let us go to court together! Let him bring his accusation! The Sovereign Lord Himself defends me - who then can prove me guilty? All my accusers will disappear; they will vanish like moth-eaten cloth. All of you that plot to destroy others will be destroyed by your own plots. The Lord Himself will make that happen; you will suffer a miserable fate.” (Isa.50:7-11).

“The Lord says, ‘Your enemies will stay far away; you will live in peace. Terror shall not come near, for I am on your side. Your enemies will be routed for I am on your side. No weapon turned against you shall succeed, and you will have justice against every courtroom lie.’” (Isa.54:14-17).

“The Lord says, ‘I will be your lawyer; I will plead your case.’”

“O Lord, You are my lawyer! Plead my case! For you have redeemed my life. You have seen the wrong they did to me; be my Judge, to prove me right. You have seen the plots my foes have laid against me. You have heard the vile names they have called me, and all they say about me, and their whispered plans. See how they laugh and sing with glee, preparing my doom” (Lam. 3:58-63).

“Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly” (Luke 18:7,8).

“No one could arrest Him because His hour had not yet come” (John 7:30, 8:20).

If you or your husband ever have to stand in a court before your accusers, for the Lord's sake, don't weep. Hold back the tears. Instead, feel sorry for your accusers. How terrible will be their judgment in the day that the Judge of all the earth deals with them!

Jesus Himself was betrayed and taken to court and had to stand before a mocking crowd. Do not wonder then at what is happening to you. Aren't you His disciple? It is a rare privilege that He has given you to follow in His steps even in this area. Be bold. This is no time for tears. Leap for joy instead, for your reward in heaven will be great. Jesus is praying for you, and one day He will vindicate you and honour you.

Here on earth our life is to be one of suffering. We are partakers of His sufferings, but He gives us His overflowing joy as well in every trial. He Himself was betrayed by a close friend and taken through a mock trial. He was slapped and beaten so much that His back was furrowed. Today, we can hire a lawyer and hope for some justice. But Jesus did not even have a proper trial and was unjustly condemned to die. His death was the most cruel death anyone could ever have suffered. But He had joy within Him because He thought of the reward of those sufferings - the reward of delivering you and me from the clutches of sin, to be His bride. He can give us joy too.

Isaiah 53:7-9 is a passage of Scripture that always moves me:

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He never said a word. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He stood silent before the ones condemning Him. From prison and trial they led Him away to His death. But who among the people of that day realized it was their sins He was dying for - that He was suffering their punishment? He was buried like a criminal in a rich man's grave; but He had done no wrong, and had never spoken an evil word.” (Living Bible)

The apostle Paul suffered much for the sake of the gospel. But from his prison cell he wrote some of his most wonderful epistles, like Philippians for example, where he tells us to rejoice in the Lord always.

All who seek to live a godly life in Christ will suffer some form of persecution. So we should not be surprised when that happens to us, as though some strange thing were happening to us (1 Peter 4:12). The Lord will encourage us through His Word each time.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:10.)

The Lord has taught us to forgive those who persecute us, to love them and to pray for them. We prove that we are children of our loving Father when we do good to those who harm us. God is good to all. Perhaps your closest friend or relative has stabbed you in the back. Don't weep. Rejoice that you have the privilege of walking in Jesus' footsteps. Let the mind of Christ rule you at such times.

I have read of pastors who have been imprisoned for many long years for the Lord's sake. This must have been very hard for their wives. We must pray for the families of Christians who are being persecuted even today in many countries. Persecution will come to us in India too. Let us pray that God will keep us strong in faith. It is good for all of us to take time to read the stories of martyrs and those who were persecuted in past times for the Lord's sake. That will strengthen us when our time comes.

“The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us” (Rom 8:15).

“Our momentary light affliction works an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor.4:18).

“When you pass through the waters, they shall not overflow you” (Isa 43:2).

“God comforts (encourages) us so that we can comfort (encourage) others” (2 Cor.1:4).

“Jesus Himself helps us and lives to make intercession for us” (Heb.7:25).

“He is our Advocate” (1 Jn.2:1).

“The upright will not fear bad news” (Psa 112:7).

“As your days so shall your strength be. The eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deut. 33: 25,27).

“He rejoices over you with singing (Zeph 3:17).

“All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psa. 46:1).

Peter speaks of fiery trials that we will have to face, and the Lord assures us in Isaiah 43:3 that when we walk through the fire we will not be burned. That means that our soul will not be destroyed in persecution.

Jesus teaches us to pray. The Holy Spirit also makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. When we are not able to put our anguish into words, the Holy Spirit comes to our aid. So let us yield to the Holy Spirit and He will cry out from within us.

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