

**Articles and Sermons :: "Because we have Jesus,...."****"Because we have Jesus,.... - posted by Joyful_Heart, on: 2012/2/18 9:17**

In a recent interview, an Indonesian Christian, Petrus, made this startling statement: "Because we have Jesus, it is not difficult to be a Christian, although there are many oppressions." While his statement seems obvious to many of us, following Christ has required great sacrifice for Petrus.

An angry, radical Muslim mob surrounded the church building, breaking windows and chanting their hatred for Christians. Petrus's father, the church pastor, was inside with Petrus's mother, sister, cousin, and a church worker. His father tried to calm the mob, but they would not leave. He retreated into the church to pray, asking God's protection and help.

The mob, seeking blood, lit the building on fire, screaming chants as they waited to attack anybody who came out. Indonesian police were too afraid to take action. The military were not available. It was another church burning in a nation where more than five hundred churches have been burned in the past ten years.

When Petrus arrived at the scene hours later, the church and parsonage were ashes. The bodies of his loved ones were burned almost beyond recognition.

Later, a government official apologized to Petrus but urged him not to seek revenge. Petrus's desire is not for revenge but love. He wants to see Muslims in his country won to Christ's kingdom.

Persecution is often the final battleground in the fight between natural instinct and spiritual conviction. Instinct is interested in self-preservation. Conviction is above our own interests. Instinct says to take revenge upon our perpetrators. Conviction reminds us of the spiritual needs concerning those who persecute us. Most of us, after seeing our loved ones murdered for their beliefs, would find it instinctively difficult to share Petrus's convictions. However, the alternative to following Christ was more unbearable for Petrus. How could he not follow Christ? His story proves it is possible for our convictions to overrule our instincts. But this is only when our natural inclinations are reversed by the compelling love of Christ—a victory amid the battleground of persecution.

Voice of the martyrs
extreme devotions
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