

EFCDP SERMON NOTES • February 16, 2025

Series: *Did God Really Say?* # 3

“The Power of Persecution” • John 15:8-16:4

The Big Idea: *Persecution is a powerful tool used by God to proclaim the gospel.*

1. Our persecution reminds us we are adopted into God’s family. 15:18-19

2. Our persecution reveals the world is lost. 15:20-21

3. Our persecution exposes the world’s guilt. 15:22-25

4. Our persecution demonstrates the power of the Holy Spirit. 15:26-16:4

Digging Deeper

A guide for personal and small group study for the week of February 16, 2025.



→ Was any part of the message unclear? Which aspect of the message do you think will be the most challenging to apply to your own life?

→ Do you agree with the “big idea” of this passage? Why or why not?

1. Do you personally know a believer who has faced serious persecution for their faith, such as imprisonment? If so, describe.

2. Have you faced hardship of some kind because of your faith? If so, describe.

3. Have you known people who suffered hardship and think it is due to their faith, when in reality, it probably came because they were rude or arrogant to someone with different beliefs? If so, describe.

4. How might faithful application of these passages help us avoid persecution due to our own bad behavior?

- Colossians 4:6
- Proverbs 15:1
- 1 Peter 3:15-16

→ Do Christians typically follow these principles as they interact with the world, especially on-line? Why or why not?

5. If you see a fellow believer “behaving badly,” (on-line or in person) how do you typically respond? How has this worked out for you? What do you think the impact of insensitive Christians is on the typical unbeliever?

6. Review the following passages, noting what they teach about the sovereignty of God in choosing people to become followers of Jesus (AKA the doctrine of “election”):

- Ephesians 1:4-5
- Romans 8:29-30
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- 1 Peter 1:1-2

→ How do these passages “fit” with 2 Peter 3:9?

7. Read Acts 17:16-34. Summarize Paul’s approach when interacting with people who do not share his faith. What principles can believers today take from this account to guide their interactions with unbelievers today?

8. How is it possible that the Jews, who were given so much of the Bible, still not know the truth about Jesus? Also Gentiles?

- John 8:12-30
- John 8:48-59
- 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
- Ephesians 4:17-19

9. What is the significance of Jesus quoting Psalm 35:19-20 and 69:4 in relation to himself?

10. What do we learn about the problem of growing hardness of the human heart from these passages?

- Exodus 7:3
- Hebrews 3:12-13
- Romans 1:21-24
- Ephesians 4:17-27

→ To summarize, what can a person do to avoid developing hardness of heart?

11. How can the following passages encourage believers going through persecution for their faith?

- Philippians 1:28-30
- 2 Timothy 2:9-12
- Hebrews 12:3-4
- Philippians 3:10
- 1 Peter 4:12-19

12. How could the following passages encourage a Christian who is afraid to share their faith out of fear of persecution?

- John 15:26-27
- 1 Peter 3:15
- Mark 13:11
- Acts 1:8

13. If a younger believer came to you expressing concern for the persecution that will inevitably be increasing, based on this study, what advice would you give them?

Application Ideas:

1. When you feel persecuted, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart, revealing whether it is truly the result of your commitment to Christ, or the result of your own bad behavior.
2. Take inventory of your lifestyle, looking for ways your life is the same or different from the unbelieving world we live in. Is it really obvious to your neighbors and friends that you live according to a heavenly set of values?
3. When you are persecuted, remember they are rejecting Jesus in you, not you personally. That will enable you to treat others with respect and compassion.
4. Ask God to control and empower you with the Holy Spirit to be his witness to your circle of influence.

→ Which of these will be the most challenging for you to apply?