



## **The Cost of Discipleship (Part One)**

Sunday, March 12 / 23 --- Matthew 10:16 – 25

*Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves... you will be hated by all for My Name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved...*  
Matthew 10:16, 22, 24

*When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'*

Revelation 6:9 – 10

*Isn't the life of a Christian not so much 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life', but 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me'? The testimonies of the martyrs in this book will challenge your faith. I don't know what the cross you are called to carry will look like. I do know that it won't be easy. As you read these stories, remember that these are NOT Super Christians. They are ordinary men and women who have faced situations beyond themselves and have died to themselves and found Christ to be sufficient.*

*Gracia Burnham, New Tribes Mission, from Foreword, Foxe Voice of the Martyrs, (2007 Edition)*

1. The Climate of Persecution: Like Sheep in the midst of Wolves (vs. 16)
2. The Qualities of the Persecuted: Wise as Serpents and Innocent as Doves (vs. 16)
3. The Kinds of Persecutors (vs. 17 – 23)
  - a. Societal Persecution: Legal, Religious and Political Arena (vs. 17 – 20)
  - b. Family Persecution: Brother, Sister, Parents, Children (vs. 21 – 22)
  - c. Community Persecution: Friends, Neighbourhoods, Towns (vs. 22 – 23)
4. The Calling of the Persecuted: Disciple is not above his Teacher (vs. 24 – 25)



# The Kingdom of God Advances



## **Discussion Questions:**

In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer comments on this passage - - -

*There is a miraculous power latent in suffering... this suffering will help forward their testimony. It is all part of God's plan and the will of Jesus, and that is why they will be given power to make a good confession and deliver a fearless testimony even in the hour when they make answer before thrones and judgement seats. The Holy Ghost Himself will stand by their side and make them invincible.*

- Can you think of a time / instance when you suffered directly because of your faith in Jesus?
- We know that persecution of Christians occurs more in other parts of the world. The ministry of *Open Doors* publishes a 'World Watch List' each year which ranks the 50 countries where Christians experience the most extreme persecution.
- Have you heard / read about some of these places? Which country is closest to your heart?
- Do you believe that Christians in Canada will face more persecution in the years ahead?  
Why or why not?
- How should we pray for ourselves and the church in Canada at this time in history?

## **Application:**

- *Why not pick up a copy of the 'World Watch List' of the most persecuted Christians and decide to pray for them? (Copies at Welcome Centre)*
- *Pray about your own boldness to speak the truth in love and be a witness for Christ to the people that He has planted in your life.*