

*Phil 1:29 (NLT)*

*For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him.*

We all love to brag about all the blessings we receive from the Lord. We thank Him over and over again for all His blessings in our lives. But when was the last time you thanked Him for the persecution you receive? What about the last time someone threatened you for being a Christian?

Paul is telling us that it's not only great to be blessed by the Lord as we trust in Him for our everyday needs and salvation, but also to be thankful for those times of persecution.

You may be thinking, "Paul doesn't know what I have gone through, what does he know about persecution?"

But if that is your thought process, then you don't know much about what Paul went through for the gospel sake.

- † **Acts 14:19-20** *Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*
- † **2 Cor 11:24-28** *From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.*

So how can someone be happy because they are threatened for being a Christian or even persecuted as much as Paul was?

Jesus has an answer for you.

- † **John 15:18-20** *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."*

So next time you are persecuted or threatened for being a Christian, rejoice because others see Jesus in you, and they persecuted Him also.

But also remember what Jesus prayed on the cross for those who were persecuting Him. Shouldn't we do the same thing as well!

† **Luke 23:34** *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.*