

Since the death of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago,
43 million Christians have become martyrs.

Over 50% of these were in the last one hundred years.

Every three minutes,
a Christian is killed for their faith in Christ. . .
that's one every three minutes.

Over 200 million Christians face persecution every day --
60% are children.

A further 400 million Christians live with
non-trivial restrictions on their freedom and
the loss of many basic rights,
simply because
they choose to love and follow Jesus Christ.

In nearly fifty countries across this world,
it is **illegal** to profess Christ as Savior and Lord,
and/or possess a Bible.

*Seventy percent (70%) of the Church
is now found in the non-Western world
in nations with very poor human rights records.*

And when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it...
1 Cor. 12:26a

The Truth About Persecution: Four Responses (adopted from Matthew 13)

THE OPTIMIST - "It could never happen here"

The truth about persecution falls "beside the road" - and the birds eat the seed: the Evil One comes and snatches away the seed. He says, "Our country's constitution permits freedom of religion. Look at all the churches. It could never happen here!" The Optimist filled with pride wants to "feel good" about the good news of Jesus Christ but feels confused and "misunderstands" the truth about persecution.

THE PRAGMATIST - "It doesn't happen anymore"

The truth about persecution falls "in rocky places" - and in the dry soil it sprouts and withers; a temporary reasoned approach without a firm rooting. The Pragmatist with all naiveté wants to "stand strong" when the storms of persecution come but falls away and "denies" the truth about persecution.

THE HEDONIST - "No time to think about it"

The truth about persecution falls "among thorns" - and the thorns choke out the seed: the worries of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. The Hedonist in full denial desires to "give it all to Jesus" and avoid the deceit of materialism but gives up and "chokes" the truth about persecution.

THE REALIST - "Keep watch because we do not know the day or hour it comes"

The truth about persecution falls "on good soil" - and yields an abundant crop: phenomenal spiritual growth and good preparation to "stand strong through the storm." The Realist invites the Holy Spirit to live within—heart, mind and soul—in order to be able to hear, understand and apply the truth about persecution.