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Sermon Notes

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## **John the Baptist Martyred**

**Matthew 14:1-12**

### Introduction: The Suffering of Martyrs

1. God has consistently advanced the church by pouring out His choicest servants in martyrdom
  - a. The early history of the church is filled with the blood of martyrs
  - b. In our time, 55,000 Christians a year are martyred for their faith
  - c. What is especially painful is to see the frivolous way that Christians have died to please the whims of tyrants and hate-filled persecutors
  - d. Christians lifeblood poured out on the sands of the Coliseum to entertain the Romans... until the audience realized there was very little entertainment about watching a godly family, husband, wife, children, kneeling and praying while the lions mauled them
  - e. Nero illuminated an evening dinner party with a bonfire of Christians... his personal entertainment at their ultimate expense
2. John the Baptist was the first of these: his death demanded at a birthday party after young girl's dance; the cowardly tyrant, King Herod, killed him to please his dinner guests
3. The question for us is: How can God allow such suffering to happen by His choicest servants?
4. This becomes especially acute when we consider the awesome power of God depicted in the Bible which God exerts to rescue His people

Psalm 18 depicts the power of God motivated to save His servant David from his enemies

It is an awesome picture of an omnipotent God, vengeful, descending on the clouds of heaven to destroy David's enemies completely

***Psalm 18:6-9 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. <sup>7</sup> The***

***earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. <sup>8</sup> Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. <sup>9</sup> He parted the heavens and came down***

Yet throughout Redemptive History God has NOT descended from heaven to rescue His servants from their enemies... but rather has time and time again poured them out like a drink offering to serve His purposes

This is extremely perplexing, especially when one considers the Scriptural promise given by Christ in this very matter:

***Luke 18:1-8 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. <sup>2</sup> He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. <sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' <sup>4</sup> "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!" <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"***

What did Christ say? "I tell you he will see that they get justice and quickly!"

Yet the very one who spoke these words cried out from the cross, saying "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" and God did not take Him down from the cross!

To put two verses from Romans 8 together, "He who did not spare His own Son..." why would He not also "consider us as sheep for the slaughter"?

Jesus Himself traced out the history of the Jews in spilling the blood of the prophets to show that God does not always rescue His servants, but frequently gives them over to death while holding their persecutors accountable for what they've done:

***Matthew 23:34-37 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. <sup>35</sup> And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. <sup>36</sup> I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. <sup>37</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.***

Now the entire Book of Revelation speaks of the future of God's wrath when the whole world will be punished for shedding the blood of the martyrs. The martyrs themselves raised the issue of God's justice

***Revelation 6:9-11*** *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. <sup>10</sup> They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" <sup>11</sup> Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*

And God answered by pouring out His wrath on the entire planet:

***Revelation 16:4-6*** *The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. <sup>5</sup> Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; <sup>6</sup> for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve."*

But might not the servants of God feel frustrated that God did not deliver them sooner, in their own generation, sparing them from being burned alive slowly with green wood, or being drawn and quartered, or being sawn in two, or being boiled alive, or any one of the other tortures by which the enemies of the cross have ended the lives of the servants of God?

Might not they ask, "Why didn't you save us? Why didn't you vindicate us in our day?"

NO, they will not!! For all of us must die, since we are descended from Adam and under his death penalty. And the resurrection of the righteous is infinitely more than any of us deserves, and will answer completely any lingering sense of injustice to us personally. Furthermore, the future condemnation of the enemies of God's people will infinitely exceed anything we might feel they deserve for hurting us, for the real issue is their sin against the infinite worth of the glory of God, not just because they hurt us.

So we come to Matthew 14 and the martyrdom of John the Baptist with trembling hearts, struggling to understand how such a holy man, an otherworldly figure, a man of whom Jesus said

***"Of those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist."***

How could such a faithful and pure servant of the living God be executed because of a lust-filled promise made by a corrupt king at his birthday party, a promise made to a seductive dancing girl in front of all his dinner guests. How could someone so high be brought down by someone so low, by something so despicable?

More to the point now, how can God allow Sudanese Christians to be murdered coldly by roving bands of Muslims, chopped to death by machetes?

How can God allow Chinese house church pastors to languish in communist jails, eating putrid food and undergoing hours of interrogation?

How can God allow a Muslim family to murder their own son because he has professed faith in Christ?

The answers lie behind John's execution as described in Matthew 14... the question is as ancient as Cain's murder of his brother Abel, the explanation given in 1 John 3, as we will discuss.

Deeper is the question of all the suffering of God's people in this world, and God's sovereign purpose behind it.

In the account today, we will see very clearly depicted the life of fear versus the life of faith; or perhaps more accurately, the fact that a man who fears God need fear nothing else in this life, but a man who doesn't fear God is actually ruled by fears of many kinds

John the Baptist fearlessly proclaimed the truth to a wicked ruler, Herod the Tetrarch, concerning his sinful, adulterous and incestuous marriage to Herodias:

***“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘It is not lawful for you to have her!’”***

Having been faithful to the Lord, John needed to fear nothing else... though Herod imprisoned him and, as recorded in our story, murdered him to satisfy the vengeance of his offended wife, John feared none of this

Herod, on the other hand, had no fear of God: committing adultery and murder boldly... but he lived a life ruled by fear: fear of the crowd, fear of John, fear of his wife, fear of the Romans, fear of his dinner guests

We have on display two different ways to live: fear God and nothing else; refuse to fear God, and fear everything else

***Proverbs 28:1 The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.***

***Proverbs 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.***

## I. John the Baptist: A Lamp Burning and Shining for a While

### A. Who Was John the Baptist?

1. One of few people ever predicted by the prophets
  - a. Most prophecies focused on Christ
  - b. Some rare prophecies focus on others

## i) Josiah

***1 Kings 13:1-2*** *By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. <sup>2</sup> He cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: "O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'"*

## ii) Cyrus the Great of Persia

***Isaiah 45:1*** *"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut*

## iii) Alexander the Great

***Daniel 8:21*** *The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.*

## iv) John the Baptist... two different prophecies about him

***Isaiah 40:3*** *A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.*

***Malachi 4:5*** *"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.*

## 2. Miracle baby of Zechariah and Elizabeth

- a. Two godly Israelites, blameless and upright
- b. BUT childless, past hoping that God would answer their prayers
- c. The arch-angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him the wonderful news

## 3. Astonishing ministry... "in the spirit and power of Elijah"

## 4. Jesus' amazing assessment

***Matthew 11:11*** *I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist*

## B. What Was His Ministry?

***Matthew 3:1-6*** *In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert,*

***'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'*" <sup>4</sup> *John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.***

John MacArthur's unforgettable summary: 1) Prepare the way; 2) Proclaim the way; 3) Get out of the way

1. Prepare the way

- a. John prepared the way by speaking of the imminence of the Kingdom and of the Messiah
- b. Getting hearts ready for Christ
- c. Raising expectations
- d. BUT being very clear that he was not the Messiah

2. Proclaim the way

- a. John did this one fateful day when Jesus came to be baptized
- b. John treated Jesus differently than any man who had ever come to be baptized
- c. With other men, John was fiery and fearless, proclaiming their need to repent
- d. But here came Jesus, and John was in awe:

***John 1:29-31 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"***

***"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"***

3. Get out of the way

- a. John was immensely popular and had a huge following
- b. Crowds went out to him from all over Judea and Jerusalem
- c. His fame spread over the Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire
- d. Once John identified Jesus, it was time for John to step aside and not share the spotlight

***John 3:30 He must become greater; I must become less.***

- e. God Himself sovereignly moved John out of the way by having Herod the Tetrarch arrest John for his preaching against their sinful marriage

### C. Truth on Fire

- 1. Like Elijah, a man utterly fearless in his ministry of confronting sinners and bringing them to repentance

***Jeremiah 23:29 "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"***

- 2. Two samples of his courageous preaching

- a. Warning the Scribes and Pharisees of their sins

***Matthew 3:7-12 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."***

- b. Warning Herod the Tetrarch of his sins

***Matthew 14:3-4 Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, <sup>4</sup> for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her."***

The Greek verb tense implies John was repeatedly preaching directly against Herod's sin in taking Philip's wife

John didn't merely touch on it once, but was a great embarrassment to the Tetrarch by preaching the truth

- i) Kings don't like to be told they need to repent
- ii) But God has consistently raised men who will stand their ground and tell rulers the truth about sin and righteousness and the judgment to come

Moses said to Pharaoh:

***“Thus says the Lord: Let my people go!”***

Samuel said to King Saul

***1 Samuel 15:22-23 To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup> For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.”***

Nathan said to King David

***“You are the man!”*** and convicted him of his hidden sin of adultery and murder

Elijah said to King Ahab

***1 Kings 21:19 This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?’ Then say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, dogs will lick up your blood-- yes, yours!’”***

Christ said to Pilate

***“You would have no authority over me if it were not given you from above.”***

Peter and John said to the Sanhedrin:

***Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-- whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.***

Paul spoke boldly to Felix about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, and then fully preached the gospel to the Emperor Nero

Courage and boldness in proclaiming the word of God is a hallmark of Redemptive History

John Knox, the great Scottish reformer, said to Mary, Queen of Scots, "Without the preaching place, Madam, I think few have occasion to be offended at me, but there, Madam, I am not master of myself, but must obey Him who commands me to speak plain and to flatter no flesh upon the face of the earth."

Here we see the courage and boldness of a man filled with God

John was no “reed swayed by the wind” blowing back and forth with public opinion

Fearing God, John feared nothing else... and he paid for it with his life

A.T. Robertson: “John’s holy boldness cost him his head; but it is better to have a head like John the Baptist and lose it than to have an ordinary head and keep it!”

D. A Man of Whom the World Was Not Worthy



1. Hebrews 11 speaks of men and women who lived courageous, faith-filled lives
2. These godly people were examples of what a life of faith looks like in the real world
3. The chapter contains many triumphs... victories won by faith...
4. BUT the chapter ends with the suffering of faith-filled people as well

***Hebrews 11:35-38 Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- <sup>38</sup> men of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.***

John was a man of whom the world was not worthy.

By stark contrast...

## II. King Herod: A Black Hole of Pride, Power, Lust, Anger and Fear

Jesus said John was a lamp, blazing and shining, and people for a time enjoyed that light

If John was a lamp blazing, then Herod was a black hole

Black holes are stars that have collapsed in on themselves, whose self-directed gravitational pull is so strong that even light cannot escape them

Herod took the light of God and extinguished it... he discarded John's preaching and his warning through his selfishness and sin

### A. Herod's Pride and Power

1. Herod the Tetrarch was usually called Herod Antipas, and was the son of Herod the Great, the king who slaughtered all the babies when Jesus was born
  - a. Thus Herod Antipas was the son of a genocidal murderer
  - b. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree!!
2. After the death of Herod the Great, the Romans divided Herod's kingdom among his three sons... the word "Tetrarch" literally means "ruler of the fourth part"... the Romans did it to keep one man from being too powerful
3. Herod's half-brother, Philip, was tetrarch of the northern provinces of Trachonitis and Iturea; Herod Antipas controlled Galilee and the central

region of Palestine; Archelaus was given the southern provinces of Judea and Samaria

4. Herod was thus a ruler but not a king... a petty middle-level potentate who lived for luxury and pleasure

#### B. Herod's Pattern of Lust

1. Herod set his eyes on his brother Philip's wife, Herodias
2. She was a thoroughly evil woman, perhaps as bad as Jezebel herself
3. This encounter was typical of the way such evil women manipulated their ruling husbands to do their will
4. Herodias left her husband Philip to be married to her uncle Antipas, the Herod of our text... probably for reasons of power... she was closer to the possibility of being named Queen this way
5. Herod lusted after her and took her and they were married
6. But lust is a character flaw not satisfied by obtaining what it desires

Lust is like giving a thirsty man saltwater to drink... it leaves him even thirstier when it's done

7. We see Herod's lust again when the young girl danced and pleased Herod... let's talk about Herod's complex anger

#### C. Herod's Complex Anger

##### ***Matthew 14:5 Herod wanted to kill John***

1. It was Jesus who taught us the link between anger and murder
2. Herod's conscience did not stop him from stealing his brother's wife
3. When John tried to convict him of sin, Herod's prideful anger stirred
4. Now Herod's view of John was complicated:

***Mark 6:19-20 Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, <sup>20</sup> because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.***

Amazing!! Herod liked to listen to a man his wife wanted to put to death!! I think he would have set him free if he could have

5. Well... Herod's the ruler; that means he can kill John, right? Theoretically, yes... but now we meet Herod's dueling fears

#### D. Herod's Dueling Fears

1. Herod was afraid of John... his behavior is one of anger motivated by fear... he wanted to kill John because he was afraid of him
2. BUT Herod had other fears beside: He feared the people

***Matthew 14:5 Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet.***

3. Violent and cruel tyrants are usually that way because of fear and insecurity
4. Herod feared an uprising of the people if he killed John
5. So here is Herod... trapped like an animal by his corrupt character

Trapped by pride and power... Trapped by lust... Trapped by anger...  
Trapped by fear

He was trapped by all these things even before his birthday party

Little did he know he would be trapped openly before his dinner guests by his cold-hearted, clever, conniving wife

### III. The Dirty Deed Described

***Matthew 14:6-11 On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them and pleased Herod so much <sup>7</sup> that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. <sup>8</sup> Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." <sup>9</sup> The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted <sup>10</sup> and had John beheaded in the prison. <sup>11</sup> His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother.***

#### A. A Birthday Party to Remember

1. Two birthday parties mentioned in the Bible... at both, a king executed someone
  - a. The first was in Genesis when Pharaoh executed his baker
  - b. This is the second, when King Herod executed John
2. Birthdays can be times of encouragement and love given to a loved one
3. OR they can be lavish, materialistic, gluttonous, lascivious orgies of self-indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh

In November of 2005, media mogul Conrad Black, owner of the Chicago Sun-Times, was indicted for defrauding his company, Hollinger International, for more than \$100 million; at the core of the indictment was a birthday party Black threw for his wife at the posh Le Grenouille restaurant on Park Avenue in New York City that cost \$62,000. Black stuck his company, Hollinger International, with \$42,000 of the bill, even though little if any business was involved, the indictment said. Wine and champagne at the affair ran \$13,935. He served 80 dinners at \$212 a plate plus \$175 each for champagne and wine; there was Beluga caviar and other delicacies

A birthday party to remember! But King Herod's was even more memorable

### B. Herodias Baited and Sprung the Trap

A famous old poem begins this way:

*"Will you walk into my parlor?" said the spider to the fly*

1. Knowing Herod's lust, Herodias arranged to have her teen-aged daughter dance for Herod at the party... Herod was attracted to John's preaching, intrigued by him, liked to listen to him... Herodias HATED John and wanted him dead... so she has to lure her husband, entice him... and she uses her beautiful daughter as bait
2. There is a good chance the daughter's dance was lascivious... a sultry alluring kind of dance meant to ensnare Herod by his lust-filled eyes

***Mark 6:22-23 When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." <sup>23</sup> And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."***

3. She pleased Herod so much that he made a lavish oath
  - a. This kind of lavish oath was meant to be very impressive to his dinner guests
  - b. See how powerful I am, see how generous!!
  - c. Little did he realize it would cost him so much... his very soul, corrupted by the blood of God's

### C. Herodias's Wicked Request

***Matthew 14:8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."***

1. Sick twisted request... the details particularly gruesome

2. She is undoubtedly motivated by a deep seated hatred of the man who has called her an adulteress
3. She wants him to suffer, she wants him to die
4. So she has woven a trap like a spider does for its unwitting victim... now her husband has been caught, and he must do her will

#### D. Herod's Cowardly Surrender

1. Herod honored and respected John... he even feared him
2. After John was dead, when he heard of Jesus' miracles, he felt it **MUST** be John the Baptist raised from the dead (even though that would make no sense)
3. Herod honored and respected himself and his dinner guests more
4. He agreed to the dastardly request, and John's head was severed from his body
5. The gruesome gift was carried in on a platter and given to the girl who carried it to her mother
6. This ended one of the heinous deeds that has ever been done... **one of the greatest men in history murdered to celebrate a birthday!!**

### IV. Lessons & Applications from John's Martyrdom

#### A. Fear God and Fear Nothing Else

1. John the Baptist was a fearless preacher of the word of God
2. He had absolutely no fear of man or of the consequences of the message he came to preach
3. This is essential to being a preacher of the truth... fear God more than you fear man
4. John lived that out more than anyone who preceded Christ
5. Do you live this out in your life?
6. Fear of man is a terrible snare in our lives

***Proverbs 29:25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.***

7. It keeps us from following our convictions, from evangelism, from rejecting worldly sinful patterns

## B. Don't Fear God, Fear Everything Else

1. If the fear of God is not your starting point in life, you will be blown and tossed by fears of all sorts

## C. Christ Both Ordains Martyrdom and Mourns Martyrs

1. Long march of the church has been sprinkled by the blood of martyrs
2. This is the way the church conquered the Roman empire
3. This is the way the church grew and thrived under communism
4. This is the way the church must conquer the final frontiers, many of them Muslim
5. BUT YET Christ mourns over the martyrs and is compassionate to their suffering

***“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute ME???”***

## D. Get Active in Praying for and Helping Persecuted Christians Around the World

1. Many Christian agencies: Voice of the Martyrs, Persecution Project, Christian Freedom International
2. Learn more about what your brothers and sisters are going through around the world
  - a. In the Sudan, between 1980 and 2000 over two million Christians were killed by Muslims... the stories are horrific

Muslim Commander Taib Musba, who in the mid-1980s killed an estimated 15,000 unarmed, civilian, ethnic Uduk Christians.

In 1986, Musba entered the Uduk tribal capital of Chali and declared to its Christians: "You are all going to convert from Christianity to Islam today, because here is what's going to happen to you if you don't."

Musba then killed five church leaders in front of the gathered villagers. When they refused to convert, he began killing unarmed men, women and children. Some were herded at gunpoint into a hut then run over by a 50-ton, Soviet-made tank.

He also herded groups of about a dozen people into a hut, where he asked the first person "Do you renounce Jesus Christ?" Anyone who refused was killed by a three-inch nail driven into the top of the head.

- b. One Pastor in Rangoon, Burma spoke to American Christians pleading for help... he was asked about the view some in the Western church hold that

persecution and martyrdom are good for the church, making it stronger, more committed, purer; he answered

“They don’t know what they are talking about because they live in a free country. If they think persecution is good, why don’t they try it? We don’t want persecution. We don’t agree that persecution is good for the church, we can do without it. We would rather have peace and freedom. We want our children to have opportunities for a better life.”

- c. In Pakistan, a Christian man was arrested in 2003 for using a restroom attached to a mosque; he was quizzed about the cross hanging around his neck, then falsely accused of defacing the Koran; it was slanderously reported that he’d ripped pages of the Koran out and trampled them under his feet; he never did this, but what’s even more amazing was that the punishment for this was life imprisonment!! He was released two weeks through the efforts of Voice of the Martyrs

#### E. A Word About Islam

1. The religion of Islam considers any who die in a jihad to be martyrs, including suicide bombers who kill innocent people in a bus in Jerusalem, a subway in London, a train in Mumbai or a skyscraper in New York
2. They do not consider Christians in the Sudan or Nigeria or Indonesia who refuse to submit to Islam and are then slaughtered as a result to be martyrs
3. Herein lies a major difference between Christianity and Islam: Christianity advances by the principle of dying, Islam by the principle of killing

Story about Ray & his “Speaker’s corner” ministry