**Persecution**

Discovery Bible Study

*The amount of material in the New Testament on persecution (and the related concepts of oppression, trails, suffering, spiritual warfare, etc.) is overwhelming. But one thing is abundantly clear: suffering and persecution are the normal experience of Jesus-followers. Furthermore, significant kingdom advance (including CPM) is normally accompanied by it. Therefore, we must be prepared for persecution, and we must prepare those we are discipling.*

**Discovery Bible Study**

Break into groups and study the following passages. After reading and discussing in small groups, ask each group to them report their findings back to the large group.

Group A: Foundational Principles - Consider the following passages to discern foundational principles behind suffering and persecution.

* John 15:18-21
* John 16:1-4
* John 17:14-18
* Matt 16:21-27
* Matt 23:34-39

Group B: Responding to Persecution - Consider the following passages to discern how believers ought to respond to persecution. Also, discuss which passages are relevant for every situation in all times and which are not. How do we know which approach to take?

* Matt 10:23; Acts 13:50-51
* Matt 5:11-12
* 1 Cor 4:12-13
* 1 Pet 4:12-19
* Matt 5:44
* Acts 4:18-31
* Acts 5:27-29
* Acts 8:4
* Acts 14:1-6
* Acts 16:22-40
* 2 Cor 12:10
* Acts 21:37-22:2
* Acts 22:24-29

Group C: Causes of Persecution - Consider the following passages to discern causes of persecution & suffering. (If verses are grouped, the cause is the same.) Discuss your findings and discuss how do we know what is causing it in our particular case?

* John 15:18-23
* John 16:1-3; Acts 13:49-50; 26:9-11
* Acts 6:8-11
* Gal 4:29
* Gal 5:11; Gal 6:12
* Matt 13:21; 2 Tim 3:12
* Acts 4:17; 14:2; 1 Thess 2:15-16
* Acts 5:17-18; 13:45; 17:5
* Acts 12:1-4
* Acts 16:19
* Acts 19:23-27
* Acts 21:37-39
* Acts 23:6-10
* 1 Pet 4:17
* Rev 12:12-13; 1 Pet 5:8-9; 2 Cor 12:7; Luke 22:31; I John 5:19
* 2 Tim 3:1-5; Matt 24:3-12; 2 Thessalonians 2

**Discussion and Application**

After each group report, break back into small groups and discuss for application. The following are some questions you can use – adapt and create your own questions when helpful:

* Am I facing persecution like the Word of God says? Why/why not?
* How do I respond to persecution that comes according to God’s will/word?
* How can God use persecution for positive results?
* What are the obstacles or practices from my side that brings needless persecution?
* How do I balance being wise and bold in my church planting activities in my side?
* What is the price that I need to make to face and stand on the time of persecution?
* Who do I need to share these passages with?
* How does this passage affect how I will plant churches?

Close by spending a few minutes in prayer to make specific applications using "I will statements"

* I will…

Some things possibly discovered above (do not teach but use questions to help the groups):

**Foundational Principles**

* John 15:18-21 - world hated Jesus first because it didn't know the Father
* John 16:1-4 - Jesus warns us persecution will happen, even martyrdom
* John 17:14-18- the world hates disciples because other-wordly. But Jesus sends us to world.
* Matt 16:21-27 - Jesus life was marked by it; so will his followers be.
* Matt 23:33-39 - the lives of the prophets were marked by it, but God longs to comfort & redeem the persecuted and even the persecutors

**Responding**

* Matt 10:23; Acts 13:50-51 - flee to another city (even Paul did)
* Matt 5:11-12 - rejoice and be glad!
* 1 Cor 4:12-13 - endure it
* 1 Pet 4:12-19 - do not be ashamed; praise God!
* Matt 5:44 - love your persecutors; pray for them
* Acts 4:18-31 - don't stop sharing; pray for boldness
* Acts 5:27-29 - keep obeying God (keep sharing), not man
* Acts 8:4 – keep sharing the Gospel
* Acts 14:1-6 - boldness in the face of persecution
* Acts 16:22-40 - speak up for your legitimate rights; encourage the body
* 2 Cor 12:10 - delight in it
* Acts 21:37-22:2 – respecting authority (asked to speak), appeal to shared identity, corrected when he was mis-stated as a criminal
* Acts 22:24-29 – speak up for your legitimate rights

**Causes**

* John 15:18-23 - they don't know God
* John 16:1-3; Acts 13:49-50; 26:9-11 - mistaken religious zeal
* Acts 6:8-11 – could not refute Stephen so they persecuted him to silence him
* Gal 4:29 - man's nature
* Gal 5:11; Gal 6:12 - committed to preaching false doctrine
* Matt 13:21; 2 Tim 3:12 - just trying to live a godly life causes persecution
* Acts 4:17; 14:2; 1 Thess 2:15-16 - others attempting to stop spread of gospel
* Acts 5:17-18; 13:45; 17:5 - others filled with jealousy
* Acts 12:1-4 – leaders trying to please the public by killing and imprisoning
* Acts 16:19 – loss of income
* Acts 19:23-27 - loss of income
* Acts 21:37-39 - mistaken identity (frequently happens to all 'foreigners')
* Acts 23:6-10 - caught between two warring factions
* 1 Pet 4:17- Judgment of God/purification
* Rev 12:12-13; 1 Pet 5:8-9; 2 Cor 12:7; Luke 22:31; I John 5:19 – Satan
* 2 Tim 3:1-5; Matt 24:3-12 - end times