

PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

(Revelation 2:12-17)

We have a God-given responsibility as the church of the Lord to pray earnestly and intercede faithfully for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ across the globe. We must pray for them for we are one family in Christ (1 Cor. 12:16). The persecution of one Christian affects the whole body of Christ. Gleaning from Jesus' message to the church in Pergamum, let's reflect on these three prayers we must offer to God on behalf of His persecuted church.

1. Pray for _____ *in the sovereignty of Christ.*

The Christians in Pergamum faced the threat of execution and death if they did not bow to the sword of the emperor's rule and authority. Our Lord Jesus comforted them with the truth that He alone has the sword of highest authority for He is the true Sovereign Ruler and Judge (Rev. 2:12; Matt. 28:18; John 5:22). This truth about Christ's sovereign rule and authority must define our prayer for our fellow Christians who are suffering for their faith in Jesus. Being assured that our Lord Jesus is supremely reigning on the throne gives God's persecuted people the greatest comfort and encouragement.

2. Pray for _____ *in witnessing for Christ.*

The Christians in Pergamum were living in a city where Satan exercised his evil influence and power. Pergamum was known for being a center of pagan idolatry and emperor worship in Asia Minor. The city was severely in bondage to paganism, superstition, idolatry and immorality (Rev. 2:13). In spite of this evil and wicked environment, our Lord Jesus commended the believers in this city for their loyalty to Christ and the truths of the Christian faith. As the faithful church of Christ, we should be bold and unashamed to bear the name of Christ and proclaim the gospel truths in this hostile world. And we must pray that this kind of enduring faithfulness to the end would characterize our own lives and those of our persecuted brethren.

3. Pray for _____ *that conquers Satan's opposition.*

The Christians in Pergamum not only suffered external persecution from their pagan government as instigated by Satan himself. They were also assaulted internally within the confines of their congregation. The Lord Jesus rebuked them for tolerating false teachers in their midst who seduced God's people to commit the sin of idolatry and immorality (Rev. 2:14-16). This rebuke of our Lord must awaken us to the reality that we are a church still at war with Satan. But the good news is, no matter how relentless Satan's opposition is against Christ's church and His saving gospel, our Lord Jesus always wins! (Rev. 1:8; 1:18; 22:12). Praise God that in Christ, we are more than conquerors and overcomers through Him who loves us! (Rev. 2:17; Rom. 8:37). Let our prayers be then offered in celebration of the triumph of our risen and reigning Christ!
