How To Pray For The Persecuted Church

Author: This Biblical study on how to pray for the persecuted church was submitted by a friend of Films for Christ, a pastor who prefers to remain anonymous.

For their physical protection and deliverance:
Matthew 26:39 “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”
Acts 12:5 “So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.”
Philippians 1:19 “For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance (from jail) through your prayers.”
Philemon 22 “I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you (from jail)”
Romans 15:30-31 “Now I urge you, brethren… to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea”.

God predicted persecution:
Acts 20:23-24 “the holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the suffering came:
Acts 21:30-31 “And all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together; and taking hold of Paul, they dragged him out of the temple; and… were seeking to kill him. “That God would give them the right words and that they would fearlessly make Christ known!”

Here Paul tells how to pray for him when he was suffering for Christ in jail—notice his prayer was not for release:
Ephesians 6:19-20 “Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will declare it fearlessly, as I should.”
Colossians 4:2-4 “Devote yourselves to prayer… praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”
That they will see God’s grace as sufficient and God’s power perfected in their weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
That they would love Christ’s appearing all the more: 2 Timothy 4:5-8 “I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”
Hebrews 11:35 “…others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection”.

That they will rejoice in sharing the sufferings of Jesus so that they will rejoice even more when Christ is revealed:
Hebrews 10:34 “…accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.”
Matthew 5:12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
1 Peter 4:13 “but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.”

That they will endure:
Hebrews 10:36 “For you have need of endurance.”
That they will choose ill-treatment and the reproach of Christ, not pleasures of sin:
Hebrews 11:24-26 “Moses… (chose) rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”
That they will arm themselves with this purpose: to suffer so as to eradicate sin
1 Peter 4:1 “arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in flesh has ceased from sin.”
Hebrews 5:8 “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.”

Contd. on pg 8

For Private Circulation, within the Church

THE EARLY CHURCH WAS MARRIED TO POVERTY, PRISONS & PERSECUTIONS. IS TODAY’S CHURCH MARRIED TO PROSPERITY, PERSONALITY & POPULARITY?”
- Leonard Ravenhill

MISSION: TO LINK THE FREE CHURCH OF THE WORLD WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN INDIA
AIM: FREEDOM TO WORSHIP JESUS CHRIST IN INDIA
MOTTO: SERVE PERSECUTED – LOVE PERSECUTOR

PERSECUTION RELIEF
AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT TO THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN INDIA

For Private Circulation, within the Church
A little boy who miraculously lifted a car off his father’s body after it fell on him has said “angels” gave him the superhuman strength that allowed him to save his father’s life.

According to a Idaho State News, 8-year-old J.T. Parker was working on a Toyota Prius with his 17-year-old brother Mason and their father Stephen at their Sugar City home last summer when the accident occurred.

J.T. was the only one around when the car fell on his father, as Mason had gone inside the house minutes earlier with a cut hand.

“I yelled to J.T. on the other side of the car, ‘Jack it up quick! Jack it up quick!’” Stephen said. “I couldn’t move it, and then I passed out. It was all in his hands, and I thought, ‘This is it. There’s no way he can jack up this car because it took my 17-year-old son and I both to jack it up the first time.’

Mustering all the courage and strength he could in his little, 50-lb body, J.T. Mustering all the courage and strength he could in his little, 50-lb body, J.T. adjusted the jack and started jumping up and down on the handle: “It was scary, and I didn’t think that I could jack the car up, but I just kept on trying,” he said.

After 15 minutes of jumping up and down, the car slowly started raising off his father. When asked what gave him such strength, the little simply said, “Angels”, calling to mind Psalm 91:11-12: “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

When the car was completely removed from his father, J.T. ran to get his brother and call 911.

Stephen says that when the car fell after the Prius, he felt tremendous peace.

“I remember seeing white, like a nice happy and peaceful.” He said. “The clouds were going by, and everything was happy and peaceful.”

His wife Jodi arrived while the three Parker men waited for emergency responders.

“When I got there, I saw my husband underneath a car,” Jodi told the website. “My heart just sank, and I didn’t know what to expect.”

Stephen was taken to Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center via helicopter in critical condition - and while he had 13 broken ribs, he miraculously had suffered no internal damage.

“It was just a miracle,” said Stephen, who explained that when he asked J.T. to jack up the car again, he didn’t have the strength.

“We believe my grandpa, who passed on, and my sister who died were helping him,” Stephen added.

Jodi said that the entire situation is proof that miracles do, in fact, happen every day.

“This whole thing is a miracle. There’s no other way to describe it,” she said. “There’s no way that little boy could have done that. I just felt that it was a responsibility we now have to tell people that miracles still exist.”

Last week, the American Red Cross of Greater Idaho presented J.T. with one of its 11 “East Idaho Real Heroes” award for 2017, Fox News reports.

Pastor Raymond Koh Update: Wife Says Family is ‘Numb’
One Month After Abduction, Asks for Prayer

By LEAH MARIEANN KLETT (email protected) Mar 13, 2017 10:38 AM EDT 0 Comments

One month after Pastor Raymond Koh’s abduction, his wife has said she has suffered feelings of “numbness, despair, hope, sadness, fear and anger” and urged the international community to continue praying for his safe recovery.

In a lengthy statement issued Monday, Janetta Koh explained that when he asked away from us, my children and I have swung between feelings of numbness, despair, hope, sadness, fear and anger. From this comes a frustration that there has been no significant breakthroughs in efforts to find my husband.”

However, she said that the “immense show of concern and solidarity” the family has received from organizations around the world has given them hope.

“We do not feel we are alone, thanks to the outpouring of support from Malaysians, and their prayers at the many peaceful candlelight vigils held in cities across the country,” she said.

As reported, Pastor Koh, 62, was abducted from a street while on his way to a friend’s house. Leaked CCTV footage of the attack shows a military-style, professionally executed operation in which seven cars and at least 15 men took part.

The pastor’s car was seen turning off a highway as three black SUVs surrounded it and forced it to a stop. At least eight men in black emerged from the SUVs, and another man emerged from a car behind them to record the operation.

Last week, Koh’s son, Jonathan, filed a second police report on suspicion that his father was murdered. He explained that the reason for the report was the lack of information or a ransom demand, even though the family had offered a reward of about $22,500.

Liew said her husband’s abduction is “unprecedented in Malaysia”, as the country has long stood as a global example of multicultural and interfaith harmony.

“This harmony is precious to all of us: it is the foundation on which we stand as a nation,” she said.

“For many Malaysians, the abduction of my husband, a man of faith who is known in the community for his charity work, is a blow to that harmony. As such, I urge all our leaders to do their best to address and allay this very real fear.”

She continued: “It is not just my family who are traumatized by this, but many others who do not even know Raymond, yet feel concern and a deep sense of outrage at what happened to him.”

On Thursday, the man was arrested after he made a ransom demand to Koh’s family for his release, but in her statement, Liew expressed hope that the arrest will not distract efforts to find Koh’s “real abductors” or discourage others from sharing information. “I refer to the arrest of a suspect by the police in the early hours of Thursday, March 9. As the police have referenced us, the family, in their public statements about this, I would like to clarify the facts from our side,” she said. “A number of text messages were sent to my son Jonathan’s mobile number that seemed suspicious and extortionate. On Wednesday, March 8, Jonathan alerted the police to these messages, whose quick work on this led to the arrest.

“While I am happy that the police acted swiftly on this matter, I hope the arrest does not distract attention away from the real abductors and their accomplices or discourage genuine informers to reach out to us,” Liew added.

Concluding her statement, Koh’s wife thanked those who have “spoken up” regarding her husband’s disappearance: “I hope more will step up to send a clear message that Malaysia does not tolerate such acts of criminal violence against anyone, regardless of race, religion, creed or circumstances,” she said.

“To my fellow Malaysians, thank you for your prayers and support. I hope you continue praying for the safe recovery of my husband Raymond, for us to not lose hope and for our nation to never lose sight of our precious harmony and mutual respect for each other.

Koh was previously at the center of controversy in 2011, when his NGO, HarapanKomuniti, was accused by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) of attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity following a raid at a thanksgiving and fundraising dinner at the DamansaraUtama Methodist Church.

Later, the pastor received a death threat in the form of a bullet that was sent to his home.

So far, a petition urging the Trump administration to help pressure Malaysian authorities to use all their resources to find Pastor Koh has received just over 4,000 signatures.
We have a lot of questions from parents of prodigals, and those parents want to walk wisely. Dennis, a father, writes in: “Pastor John, thank you for this podcast. I have a 16-year-old prodigal son who has left our home and walked away from Christ. I struggle to know whether I should generously financially support him in the world, like the father in the prodigal son story. Or, unless what it seems Eli should have done, should I take a more strict position in relation to my rebelling son? The prodigal was given his inheritance, blew it on lewd living, and returned home in repentance. Eli’s sons were wicked, lived in all sorts of sin unchecked and unrepented of, and they died for it. Abundant grace or strict restraint? How should a father of a prodigal do especially in regards to finances?”

I love the way he has already thought a lot about this and thought about it from the Scriptures. Frankly, I wish I had precise and clear answers, but let me do the best I can in the interplay between the Lord will use it in some way.

Piper: “I don’t think there is a simple rule that dictates when you help a prodigal financially and when you don’t.”

One of the things that makes a relationship with a prodigal so difficult and complex is the interplay between the foundation of Christianity is that without belief. The alternative is to believe in nothing that is real, nothing that is eternal. The promise of our bodily resurrection.

Since we believe in Jesus' bodily resurrection into eternity. The reason I think these questions matter is because they are the sort of thing we have to ask about all of our generosity towards others, especially those who misinterpret us. We want to show the child that Jesus is your all-satisfying treasure. And any withholding of money which might be wise in any given situation is not owing to stinginess or fear or greed or insecurity. It is owing to a desire to do the child good. We want him to see that. And that would mean that parents would look for other ways to continually do good to the child.

I think that is a significant principle that, if you have to say no in one area because the child’s expectation is harmful as you see it, you try to help him see your heart is still there for him by pouring yourself out in other ways. You will continually reach out to him rather than write him off. You will continually offer yourselves even if you don’t offer your money. And that may be much more difficult. To get on a plane and go across the country might be much more difficult than wiring money. You will go out of your way to be there for the child.

“Even if you don’t continue to offer your child money, keep offering your child yourself.”

And, yes, at some utterly surprising moment, you may give him a wonderful gift that is not designed to advance his sin, but lavish him with grace in the hopes that God might open his eyes. Above all, I would just say to this parent: Immerse yourself in the word of God and join hands with your spouse in continual prayer for wisdom and love and boldness and even joy while your heart is breaking. And I think God, out of that, will show you the way forward.

John Piper (@JohnPiper) is founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is author of more than 50 books, including A Peculiar Glory.

My Prodigal Left Home — Should I Give Him Money?

Credit: Desiring God Ministries:

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How to End Human Trafficking in India

India’s top magazine selects nun for annual women award

By Jose Kavi

New Delhi: Vanitha (woman), the largest circulated magazine in India, has selected a Catholic nun for its prestigious Woman of the Year Award. The fortnightly magazine published in various Indian languages announced the annual award on March 7, the eve of the International Women’s Day.

The magazine, a publication of the MalayalaManorama newspaper group, said it chose Sister Sudha Varghese, for the 100,000 rupee award in recognition of her meritorious service among the lowest among the Dalit groups in Bihar, eastern India.

The 68-year-old nun, who insists to be referred to as Sister Sudha Varghese, for her devoted work among the Musahar (literally rat eaters), who lived like slaves under the oppressive caste system.

How to End Human Trafficking in India

Indias top magazine selects nun for annual women award

Vanitha, which awards people in various fields, had average qualifying sales of 687,915 copies in December 2013, according to India’s Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Sister Sudha Varghese

Published by: mattersindia.com

The nun’s work has helped end child marriage prevalent among them and check their exploitation by higher caste people, the magazine says. She founded “Nari Gunjan” (Women’s Voice) as an umbrella organization in 1987 to coordinate her multilayered activities such as education, advocacy and welfare schemes. Her organization coordinates 1,020 Self Help Groups for Musahar women in Patna and Saran districts. Each group, comprising 10 to 15 members, educates its members about their rights and helps them become financially self-reliant through thrift societies.

She has so far helped some 2,250 girls to graduate from high school or skill training centers.

Sudha’s work among the low caste women, braving threats to her life, has won her several awards. In 2006, the Indian government presented her Padma Shree (lotus honored), the fourth highest civilian award in the country.

The same year, she was chosen for the Social Lifetime Achievement Award from Godfrey Philips and the Ideal Village Award from the Bihar government in 2008. She became the Pride of Bihar in 2009. Four years later, she received the Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Award for Education in Bihar. She won the Icon of Bihar Award in 2016.

The Bihar government appointed her vice-chairperson of the state Minorities Commission in 2012 for three years. She represented Bihar at National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and coordinated a two-year study on “violence of Dalit women” in 2005. She is a member of the National Dalit Human Rights Campaign since 1998, the Bihar unit People’s Union for Civil Liberties and National Alliance of Women.

Vanitha, which awards people in various fields, had average qualifying sales of 687,915 copies in December 2013, according to India’s Audit Bureau of Circulations.

The statistics on human trafficking in India make for disturbing reading: every eight minutes a child goes missing. The National Human Rights Commission says that about 40,000 children go missing and 11,000 are never found. About 10 percent of the human trafficking in India is international and the other 90 percent happens within India.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, West Bengal is the hub for human trafficking followed by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra states. Delhi is the transit point. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime the vast majority of the victims in Asia are females, either adults or underage girls.

The trafficking of males accounts for about 17 percent of the total number of victims, slightly lower than the global average, but trafficking in children is reported relatively frequently. In South Asia, the share of child victims detected is second only to Sub-Saharan Africa. Bangladesh also reports a high level of child trafficking while in Nepal women remain the most frequently reported victims of trafficking, according to the 2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons. According to the International Labor Organization, Human Trafficking is the third most lucrative crime in the world, after drugs and the arms trade.

It is one of the worst violations of human rights since it denies the victim’s right over their own person, their freedom and liberty, and forcibly exploits their labor exploiting them in innumerable ways. Needless to say, the victims are mostly drawn from poor and vulnerable sections of society. They are also found in areas where there is scant legal protection, where natural resources and livelihoods are scarce, and where governance is either poor or non-existent.

Societal response has been in the form of laws, special implementation mechanisms and the involvement of civil society organizations, some of them with special skills in addressing this hydra-headed crime. Due to the vast geographical areas of operation and complex manner of execution, anti-human trafficking bodies need to work in collaboration to bring about a successful outcome in the prevention, detection and prosecution of the crime and the rehabilitation of victims. They have formed networks to provide intelligence and generate collaborative efforts to carry out anti-trafficking operations and successfully rehabilitate victims, who are often abused by their captors physically, mentally and sexually.

Hence, given this context, it is necessary for non-governmental organizations from across the country to not only deliberate on themes of collaboration, technology and public engagement but to actually develop a strong, well-resourced and unified national movement against trafficking and to collaborate on a national plan of action that would address the problem in a comprehensive manner.

We live in a country where the role of NGOs in addressing this issue is commendable and the judiciary aware. The issue of trafficking is more an issue of society than of law enforcement and civil society needs to take it more seriously. The role of media and communication in combating trafficking must also be underemphasized as with legal practitioners assisting in getting successful conviction rates.

Industry can and should avoid hiring trafficked labor in high-risk sectors like the textile and garment industries. Best practices including the protection of whistle blowers, screening supply chains for bonded labor and direct recruitment, should be the norm not the exception. Include educating customers on the human costs of trafficking to help them understand the need for non-exploitative business practices that might incur higher costs.

To better grasp the enormity of the problem, NGOs need to change the terminology of trafficking and refer to “saeling” or “selling” children - something that is easier for people to understand. But above all, it is the constitutional duty of every Indian to be active against human trafficking and take a stand to address the problem of profits raised from trafficking.

Cynthia Stephen is a writer and researcher based in Bengaluru. She is also a social worker helping women and children in vulnerable situations.

“The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opituity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day.”

- E.M. Bounds
The City of Jerusalem belongs to the Jewish people, a delegation of the international evangelical group Christians for Israel International said during a meeting with President Reuven Rivlin on Tuesday.

The group included Christians from many countries, including Malaysia, which does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

“Never mind,” Rivlin told the Malaysian representative. “We’ll say you came from Singapore.”

The group is initiating a Jerusalem unity campaign that will be brought to the attention of churches and Christian organizations worldwide in the months ahead, the group told Rivlin.

CII has offices or representatives in more than 40 countries, the organization’s executive director Andrew Tucker told The Jerusalem Post. Asked how the group differs from the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, considering the similarity of their raison d’être, Tucker said that the ICEJ has offices in Jerusalem while CII is not represented in Israel. Additionally, all of its work is outside this country, whereas ICEJ works both inside and outside Israel.

The two organizations have a good relationship, he said, and sometimes they collaborate.

CII, which was established in the Netherlands in 1979, acknowledged that the city of Jerusalem belongs to the Jewish people, as part of God’s covenant with the Children of Israel, and unconditionally supports the governance of the undivided city as the capital of the Jewish State of Israel.

Rivlin, whose forebears settled in Jerusalem in 1809, said the Jewish people had returned to their homeland because it was the only place to establish the Jewish state. “We did not come to be imperialists. We came home,” he said. “Most Jews who came in prestate times did not come to the Land of Israel; they came to Jerusalem,” he added.

Meanwhile, Dowell also plead not guilty in December, but has not yet changed his plea.

Meanwhile, a similar incident recently occurred in Texas, where two illegal aliens who are members of the MS-13 transnational criminal gang killed a 15-year-old girl as part of a satanic ritual.

Diego Rivera, 18, and Miguel Alvarez-Flores, 18, allegedly kidnapped and raped at least two young girls for several weeks. Breitbart Texas reported that when one of the girls, Genesis Cornejo-Alvarado, 15, “disrespected” a satanic shrine in the apartment of one of the men, Rivera and Alvarez-Flores took her to a road in southwest Houston where they shot and killed her.

**“Two things that have no benefit;”**
1. Love without sacrifice
2. Marriage without love

**“Two things that entrench charismas;”**
1. Trustworthiness
2. Steadfastness in serving God

**“Two things that aid answers to prayers;”**
1. Faith in God
2. Prayerfulness

**“Two things that keep the devil far from one;”**
1. Imitation/comparison
2. Steadfastness in serving God

**“Two things that bring about misery;”**
1. Disrespect for elders
2. False accusation

**“Two things that destroy a man;”**
1. Honesty
2. Honesty

**“Two things that destroy a woman;”**
1. Living a sinful life
2. Lack of focus

**“Two things that destroy a man;”**
1. Living a sinful life
2. Lack of focus

**“Two things that destroy a woman;”**
1. Love for materialism
2. Imitation/comparison

**“Two things that destroy friendship;”**
1. Lies
2. Backbiting/distrust

**“Two things that enhance charismas;”**
1. Trustworthiness
2. Steadfastness in serving God

**“Two things that bring about misery;”**
1. Disrespect for elders
2. False accusation

**“Two things that bring about happiness;”**
1. Doing good deeds
2. Peace

**“Two things that bring one close to God;”**
1. Reading & Studying the Word of God
2. Righteousness in God’s instruction

**“Two things that keep the devil far from one;”**
1. Be God fearing
2. Prayerfulness

**“Two things that aid answers to prayers;”**
1. Be God fearing
2. Perseverance

**“Two things that God loves;”**
1. Giving
2. Winning souls

*by Leah Marieann Klett*

Amanda Bennett, 17, last week told the court that she and Sebastian Dowell, 18, had decided in October that they needed to kill two people a year as part of the demonic religion, Buchanan County Jail.

A Missouri teen has admitted she stripped and brutally murdered another teen as part of a “Satanic sacrifice” offered by herself and her partner.

Amanda Bennett, 17, last week told the court that she and Sebastian Dowell, 18, had decided in October that they needed to kill two people a year as part of the demonic religion, according to the St. Joe Channel.

The teen said that she consequently “mesaged a couple of depressed people” on Facebook, and when Kaylin Root, also 17, responded, she arranged to meet up with the girl in the park. While the two girls weren’t close, they knew each other in school, she told the judge.

While the three walked along a jogging trail in Hyde Park, Bennett said she was advised by Dowell that it was time to carry out their plan. Bennett told the court that she struck Root with a stick, and then Dowell knocked the girl to the ground, choked her and inserted a syringe into her neck.

The two then stripped Root of her clothing, and when they saw the teen standing up, Dowell stabbed her again and told Bennett that they must cut Root’s throat.

“I couldn’t do it,” Bennett said, explaining that she then watched as Dowell carried out the horrific murder.

According to News Press Now, Bennett had plead not guilty in December, but changed her plea last week after prosecutor Dwight Scroggins agreed not to file a first-degree murder charge in exchange for a guilty plea. Bennett, who has a young child, had also initially been charged as a juvenile, but now is being considered an adult.

She faces between 10 to 30 years behind bars, and will undergo a mental health evaluation before sentencing.

Meanwhile, Dowell also plead not guilty in December, but has not yet changed his plea.

Meanwhile, a similar incident recently occurred in Texas, where two illegal aliens who are members of the MS-13 transnational criminal gang killed a 15-year-old girl as part of a satanic ritual.

Diego Rivera, 18, and Miguel Alvarez-Flores, 18, allegedly kidnapped and raped at least two young girls for several weeks. Breitbart Texas reported that when one of the girls, Genesis Cornejo-Alvarado, 15, “disrespected” a satanic shrine in the apartment of one of the men, Rivera and Alvarez-Flores took her to a road in southwest Houston where they shot and killed her.
International Women’s Day: Bible Verses Celebrating the Worth, Value God Places on Women

By leah Marieann Klett

Today is International Women’s Day - a global day established in the early 1900’s celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women throughout history.

“International Women’s Day is all about unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy and action - whatever that looks like globally at a local level,” explains the campaign website.

The Bible has a lot to say about women and their priceless worth. Throughout Scripture, God makes it clear that women are important to Him - in fact, there are many great examples of strong women in the Bible to learn from.

As we celebrate International Women’s Day, let’s take a look at Bible verses about women to better understand the special role that God has for all women - and incredible value He places on His daughters.

Ephesians 5:22-23
Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

Psalm 46:5
God is within her, she will not fall.

Luke 1:45
Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her.

Psalm 139:14
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

1 Peter 3:3-4
Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.

Proverbs 31:10-31
10 A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
11 Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.

13 She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
15 She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
17 She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.
21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
22 She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
23 Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

20 Christian Women Who Died as Martyrs
Sharefaith Team Christian Ministry Articles, Church & Worship Related

Continuing the series, this edition features another 2 women every who were martyred for the Gospel and their incredible stories

Blandina (162 – 177)
Blandina also died during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the city of Lyon in Asia Minor. Blandina was arrested along with other Christians. She was a slave and not a Roman citizen. This is important because if she were a Roman citizen her death would not include torture. A quick beheading should be her fate. Instead,
she withstood so much torture that it is said the perpetrators became tired under her strength. Finally, she was taken to an amphitheatre and bound to a stake. Wild animals were let loose. However, they did not touch her. Days past and finally, she was killed by throwing her in front of a wild steer.

Perpetua (- 203)
Perpetua died in modern day Tunisia in Northern Africa (Carthage at the time). It was Emperor Septimius Severus’s son’s birthday and Perpetua was one of several new Christian converts rounded up to celebrate the special day in a display of horrible violence. It’s not known whether Severus was even involved. We do know that he put forward laws against conversion to Christianity. Perpetua ultimately died by directing the gladiator’s sword to her neck after being trampled and gored by bull did not work.

Former Porn Star’s Life is Transformed When She Finds Jesus

A former porn star’s life was transformed after she encountered Jesus. Now, instead of making adult films, she is involved in women’s ministry.

CBN News reports on Crystal Bassette’s incredible story. Bassette got pregnant at the age of 16 and afterwards moved to Los Angeles to try making her way in Hollywood through acting and dancing. She was then offered a job in the adult film industry which she accepted.

“I remember after the scene, I sat in the shower for about two hours crying,” Bassette said of her first porn shoot. “Then I stopped after that shoot and didn’t go back for about one month.”

“I ended up going back to it again and that’s when I was numbing myself through taking pain medicine and drinking alcohol to get through the scene,” she continued.

In 2014, Crystal’s life began to change forever. She was in a terrible car accident which prompted her to begin attending church. It was there she found God.

“The day I was saved, I felt like the preacher was just speaking to me directly. It was like he was preaching to only me and you know that day I felt God was talking to me through his preaching and everything he said felt right,” she said. “I got down on my knees and was just praying to God to just release me from everything and my mom was there and my sister came over and were just all crying.”

Bassette now shares her story with others, encouraging them to turn to God in their brokenness. She is also a wife, mother, and a pastor, along with her husband, at New Beginnings Christian Life church in Fulton, New York.
13 Reasons Not to Worry About the Future of the Church

The church has survived and thrived through worse problems than whatever is worrying us today

by Karl Vaters

The church is in trouble. It must be. My blog feed keeps telling me it isn’t.

For several years now, rarely a day goes by without someone writing about the imminent demise of the body of Christ.

Everyone seems to have a different reason why they think the church is dying:

• The “nones” are growing faster than the church
• The “doones” are leaving faster than we’re replacing them
• People aren’t singing together any more
• Offerings are way down
• Regulars attend less often than they used to
• Attendees attend less often than they used to

But despite all the gloom-and-doom, I have not lost hope, but have tried to offer a balanced look at this. In fact, while the European and North American church is dying, the church in the rest of the world is experiencing strong, steady growth.

3. The Church Always Thrives Under Persecution

If persecution is coming to the American church (let’s face it, that’s the church everyone is worried about) it may reduce church attendance numbers and perceived cultural influence, but it won’t kill the church.

Prosperity is far more dangerous to the church than persecution has ever been. As the Puritan writer Cotton Mather put it in the early 1700s, “Religion brought forth prosperity, and the daughter destroyed the mother.”

4. Loss of Privilege Is Not the Same As Persecution

The loss of morning prayers in public schools is not the same as the removal of a Ten Commandments monument from a courthouse.

Don’t get mad at me. I’m not saying those things are good. But they’re not persecution.

There are Christians in places like Syria and Iran who know what real persecution feels like. When we claim persecution for what is little more than loss of privilege, we minimize the real persecution our brothers and sisters face all over the world today.

5. The Church is at its Best When We Are Counter-Cultural

The church doesn’t hold the reins of power well. We’re better off in the role of a burr-in-the-saddle of the culture than the conquering hero on the stallion. Let’s leave that role to Jesus himself.

6. The Church Is Bigger than Our Buildings and Our Denominations

I do believe that we will lose many church buildings in the coming decades. It will be especially challenging for churches like mine – small congregations with full-time pastors and a mortgage in a big city. I also foresee massive problems for many denominations. (But I don’t need to be a prophet to see that one, do I?)

We may need to lean on our buildings and denominations less in order to lean on Jesus more. I sympathize with those who love their church’s historic building and/or denomination, only to lose one or both. But I’m grateful that buildings and denominations are not needed for the church to survive and thrive.

In fact, we may need to lean on our buildings and denominations less in order to lean on Jesus more.

7. The Church Is People Who Love Jesus, God’s Way, and Each Other

This is one of the main reasons the church thrives under persecution. It forces us to turn to what really matters and can never be taken away – loving Jesus, the bible and each other.

8. The Church Has Faced Bigger Problems Than This – What’s Your “THIS” May Be

We tend to magnify the severity of small pains that are close to us, while diminishing the reality of much larger pains that are further removed from us. Whatever your real or perceived church crisis may be, it is not, as I’ve seen written way too many times lately, “the greatest crisis the church has ever faced.” There have been bigger problems than this. But the church is still here.

9. MY Church Is Not THE Church

My church may be tied to a particular worship style, theological stance, historical background, denominational identity or any of a wide variety of other distinctive. But the way I worship is not the church. It’s just my little corner of it. If the way I like to worship becomes less popular, that has nothing to do with the strength of the church as a whole.

In fact – brace yourselves – even if the church in America collapses, as tragic as that would be, it would not mean the end of the church.

Jesus has sheep that are not of this fold.

10. Maybe the Parts That Can’t Survive Shouldn’t Anything Jesus does will not just survive, but thrive. Eternally. So I have to wonder, if my favorite form of church is dying, maybe it’s because Jesus isn’t building that thing. Everything but the church itself (as defined in point #7, above) has an expiration date. No denomination, worship style or tradition is forever. Sometimes a congregation, tradition or denomination dies because it has finished serving its purpose.

(Both point is not meant to trivialize the very real pain of a local church going through serious hardships. I stand with you. Like John said to the suffering saints in Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13). “I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” You have my heart, my prayers and any help I can offer.)

11. The Church Is the Most Relentlessly Growing Organism in History

For almost 2,000 years of great triumphs and horrifying persecution, the church keeps going. When Jesus builds something it tends to stand. And stand strong.

12. Worry Doesn’t Work

In fact, worry makes it worse.

13. Jesus Told Us Not to Worry About Anything

You can toss the previous 12 points. This is all I need to know.

To mildly (but hopefully not inappropriately) paraphrase Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5:25-33:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your church building, where you will worship or fellowship, or about your denomination, what decisions it will make. Is not church more important than buildings, and the faith more important than denominational creeds? ... Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? But if you cannot do even that much, why worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Whatever is worry of is not of faith.

And we need all the faith we can get.

By Leah Marieann Klett

An Indiana pastor has forgiven and invited to church the vandal responsible for beheading the statue of Christ in the same area (above) has an expiration date. No denomination, worship style or tradition is forever. Sometimes a congregation, tradition or denomination dies because it has finished serving its purpose.

Unfortunately, there is little than can be done to counter the wave of vandalism, he said.

“You can’t take these sculptures inside in the evening and you can’t watch them at night,” he said. “And a video camera in public spaces is also problematic.” This is not the first time religious statues and artifacts have been targeted in the area. According to the German tabloid Bild, 40 sculptures have been defaced over the past two years.

Explained that the communities themselves would have to pay for statues’ repair and replacement. Unfortunately, there is little than can be done to counter the wave of vandalism, he said.

“A video camera in public spaces is also problematic.” This is not the first time religious statues and artifacts have been targeted in the area. According to the German tabloid Bild, 40 sculptures have been defaced over the past two years.

In December, a similar incident occurred in the Munster region in west Germany, where dozens of Christian statues were destroyed, including one of Jesus Christ which had its head lopped off. Due to the dense Muslim population in the region, police were investigating six men with alleged links to Islamic extremists, but gave up after three left for Syria, one died and the other two dropped off the radar, according to Heavy.

GünterFehn, who oversees the town’s finances, estimated the cost of the damage to be a whopping six-figure sum, and explained that the communities themselves would have to pay for statues’ repair and replacement. Unfortunately, there is little than can be done to counter the wave of vandalism, he said.

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That they will love Christ far more than life itself:
Revelation 12:10-11 “they overcame (Satan) because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.”
Philippians 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
Acts 20:24 “I (Paul) do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course.”
That they will love their enemies:
Luke 6:27-31 “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”
Philippians 1:29 “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”
That they will rejoice that they are considered worthy to suffer for HIS name:
Acts 5:41 “So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.”
That they will remember they were made for such persecution:
Acts 14:22 “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”
Romans 8:18 “For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”
That they would learn to more completely trust in God:
Philippians 1:29 “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”
That they would rejoice in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s sufferings:
Colossians 1:24 “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.”
Note: Our sufferings do not add to the atoning worth of Jesus’ sufferings. Rather, His sufferings are not known to the world, and so we suffer to bring that news to those His sufferings were meant to save.
Contd. from pg 1
Philippians 1:28 “…in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.”
That they will remember their unbelievable future glory:
Galatians 6:17 “From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.”
That they would rejoice that they bear in their bodies the “brand marks of Christ”:
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