

# sermonindex.net Simulcast 2012: Persecution & the Cross

by Steve Gallagher

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*Steve Gallagher emphasizes the importance of cultivating a mindset like Jesus' in the face of persecution, looking to the joy set before us and despising the shame and suffering.*

**Duration:** 4:29

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:25, Luke 9:23, John 16:33, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Revelation 21:4

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Persecution"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the inevitability of persecution for believers and how the example of Jesus on the cross provides a profound perspective on facing suffering with courage and determination. Just as Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him, believers are encouraged to focus on the eternal rewards and the love for souls that can sustain them through persecution. The anticipation of God's mighty presence and the call to embrace a sacrificial mindset akin to Jesus' selflessness are highlighted as essential preparations for the challenging times ahead.

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## Transcript

I've been asked to share a few thoughts about persecution in anticipation of this year's Sermon Index Conference. The Bible is crystal clear that persecution is coming, and it seems certain that it will begin in our lifetimes. How are we to prepare for such a day? I believe the answer is found in the cross.

No human has ever experienced the depth of suffering that Jesus Christ endured on the cross, and yet Hebrews 12 says that he despised it. In other words, the shame and suffering were so insignificant to him that he didn't even consider them worth thinking about. He thought lightly of the shame because of the joy set before him.

There was something so marvelous about the cross that the tremendous pain paled in comparison, something that made the sacrifice worth it all. It's like a young girl in her first pregnancy who's heard all the horror stories about childbirth, but once the labor pains begin, she also experiences the excitement of the child she is bringing into the world. Does she suffer? Yes.

But is it worth it? Yes, absolutely. The payoff for Jesus was the bride he was purchasing for himself. He had a clear sight of the eternal realm and saw the redemption of people's souls, millions of them.

It was the love for those souls and the desire to have them for himself throughout all eternity that compelled him to go through the agony. He knew that on the other side of that cross was a wedding feast. The reality of that was so compelling, he could face the cross with courage and determination.

And so it will be for true believers when persecution breaks out. I believe that God is going to come to his people in a mighty way such as we have never seen or experienced before. He is going to fill us with himself, with his love and with his power.

Yes, there will be actual suffering and loss, but there will also be something that will be so marvelous that we too will despise the shame and suffering. The world is in the beginning stages of labor even now. Suffering is ahead for God's people.

And the purpose of this conference is to shake us out of our American apathy, to cause us to take stock of the way we are living our lives, to ask ourselves if we are truly ready to face what is coming on this earth. But having said that, we must not look ahead to all this with a fearful attitude of unbelief. Many Christians who look ahead to the future leave God out of the equation.

All they can see is what they will lose. They aren't seeing the tremendous joy set before us of being filled with the Holy Spirit, of being used mightily to win souls for God's kingdom, of the eternal joy just on the other side of it. As Jesus was on his final trip to Jerusalem, he told his disciples, if any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily and follow me.

If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. That is the mindset that took him through Gethsemane and Golgotha, and that is the mindset we must have as we face the days ahead.

Instead of getting caught up in trying to save our lives in this dying world, let us go confidently into the future, despising the pain and looking expectantly to what Jesus Christ will do in us, through us, and for us in this exciting time in world history. I believe this year's conference will be a true spiritual blessing to all. Each speaker has been assigned a specific subject to cover in regards to persecution.

I've been asked to talk about the role the apostasy will play in it all. The other speakers will also be addressing pertinent subjects. I'm sure that each session will encourage us to go forth seeing the joy set before us and despising the shame.

I look forward to seeing you there. God bless you.

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