

# Early Christians Undergoing Persecution

by William MacDonald

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seizing opportunities to serve God, regardless of our circumstances, and not waiting for ideal conditions.*

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 11:4, Acts 4:29, Philippians 1:12

**Topics:** "Boldness in Faith", "Serving God in Adversity"

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## Description

William MacDonald emphasizes that early Christians faced persecution with boldness, choosing to glorify God rather than waiting for favorable circumstances. He critiques the tendency to postpone service to God due to life's distractions and challenges, illustrating that true ministry can thrive even in adverse situations, as seen in the lives of Joseph, Daniel, and Paul. MacDonald encourages believers to act now, as ideal conditions may never come, and highlights the wisdom of Luther and Solomon regarding the importance of seizing the moment for service.

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## Transcript

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.” (Acts 4:29)

When the early Christians were undergoing persecution, they did not wait for their circumstances to change. Instead they glorified God in the circumstances.

Too often we fail to follow their example. We postpone action until conditions are more favorable. We see roadblocks as hindrances rather than as stepping-stones. We excuse our copping-out on the ground that our circumstances are not ideal.

The student remains uninvolved in Christian service until he graduates. Then he is preoccupied with romance and marriage. After that the pressures of employment and family life keep him from throwing himself into the work. He decides to wait for retirement; then he will be free to give the rest of his life to the Lord. By the time he retires his energy and vision are gone and he succumbs to a life of leisure.

Or it may be that we find ourselves having to work with people who rub us the wrong way. Perhaps these people have positions of leadership in the local church. Though they are faithful and hardworking, we find them objectionable. So what do we do? We sulk on the sidelines, waiting for a few first-class funerals. But it doesn't work. People like that always have surprising longevity. Waiting for funerals is unproductive.

Joseph didn't wait to get out of prison to make his life count; he had a ministry for God in prison. Daniel became a power for God during the Babylonian captivity. If he had waited till the exile was over it would have been too late. It was during Paul's imprisonment that he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. He didn't wait for his circumstances to improve.

The simple fact is that circumstances are never ideal in this life. And for the Christian, there is no promise that they are going to improve. So in service, as in salvation, now is the accepted time.

Luther said, "He who desires to wait until the occasion seems completely favorable for his work will never find it." And Solomon warned that "he who watches the wind will not sow, and he who looks at the clouds will not reap" (Eccl. 11:4 NASB).

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