

THE POSITIVE POWER OF PERSECUTION (Acts 4:1-31)

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. Acts 4:1-3 (NIV)

“You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given to you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.” Mark 13:9-11 (NIV)

1. The REALITY of persecution

διώκω (dioko) = to run after, pursue, persecute

θλίψις (thlipsis) = oppression, affliction, trial, tribulation

θλίβω (thlibo) = to press, squeeze, pressure

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 1 Peter 4:12-13 (NIV)

See also 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3; Matthew 5:9-11; and
2 Timothy 3:12

2. The REASONS for persecution

A. See John 15:18-21

B. John Piper: “Suffering with Jesus is not merely the *result* of living a life that brings glory to Christ, it is also the *means*. (*Don't Waste Your Life*)

*For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.
Philippians 1:29 (NIV)*

3. The RESPONSES to persecution

A. Be _____. (vv.5-7)

B. Be _____ with the _____.
(v. 8a)

C. Be _____ in seizing _____.
(vv. 8-13)

D. Be obedient to _____ at all _____.
(vv. 14-22)

E. Be committed to _____. (v. 23)

F. Be _____. (vv. 24-28)

G. Be _____ of greater _____.
(vv. 29-31)