CALVARY CHURCH

"Their God is My God" (IDOP Sunday)

IDOP: International Day of Prayer for the persecuted church. A day set aside to remember and pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who experience persecution in ways that we can only imagine, just for their Christian beliefs.

Paul writing to Timothy from a Roman prison.

10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...
2 Timothy 3:10-12

Paul wrote this as he was in chains for the second time, his story was nearly over, and he reached back to all the years that he and Timothy spent together and said, in effect: **you were there -- you SAW it.**

Suffering you have seen up close has background, faces, names.

Imagine it's a believer in Damascus in 2026, a grandmother in northern Iraq, a house-church pastor in Tehran, or a young woman in Kabul who has just locked her door, closed the curtains to read shreds of scripture that she keeps hidden in her floor.

Yes, this suffering is still happening, and we need to be aware of what believers go through today. We need to KNOW their suffering.

Part One: The _____

388 million Christians in 2026 live under high levels of persecution and discrimination because of their faith. That's more than NINE times the population of Canada. One in seven of the Christians on earth.

In 2025, there was almost 5,000 Christians reported killed for their faith. If you do the math: it is more than thirteen believers every single day.

Part Two: _____

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. — **1 Corinthians 12:26**

3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.
— **Hebrews 13:3**

As if you were together with them. Not "feel sorry for them." Not "send them good thoughts." Imagine the chains on your own wrists. Part of the same body.

Before he was Paul the apostle, he was Saul the persecutor of Christians. In Acts 9 he was blinded, and Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" If Jesus himself feels the blow when his people are struck, there is no neutral ground left for the rest of us.

Part Three: Where It All Began

On the day of Pentecost, Luke lists the people who heard the gospel in their own languages, that is modern Iran. That is Iraq. That is Egypt, and Libya. From the very first day, the church had Middle Eastern roots. Saul was struck blind outside Damascus. The first time the disciples were called by the word 'Christian' was at Antioch, in what is now southern Turkey' And when the risen Christ dictated letters to seven churches, every one of them stood in what is today Turkey. He called them lampstands: "The seven lampstands are the seven churches."

Of the twenty hardest places in the world to follow Jesus, seven are in the Middle East and North Africa: Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Algeria.

Part Four: "Their God Is _____"

13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. — John 15:13

When a brother or sister who doesn't look like us, doesn't worship like us, and lives in a country we can barely pronounce is in chains, will we say, "Their God is my God"? THEIR suffering is MY suffering.

ll scripture is from the New International Version unless otherwise note.

CALVARY CHURCH

"Their God is My God" (IDOP Sunday)

IDOP: International Day of Prayer for the persecuted church. A day set aside to remember and pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who experience persecution in ways that we can only imagine, just for their Christian beliefs.

Paul writing to Timothy from a Roman prison.

10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...
2 Timothy 3:10-12

Paul wrote this as he was in chains for the second time, his story was nearly over, and he reached back to all the years that he and Timothy spent together and said, in effect: **you were there -- you SAW it.**

Suffering you have seen up close has background, faces, names.

Imagine it's a believer in Damascus in 2026, a grandmother in northern Iraq, a house-church pastor in Tehran, or a young woman in Kabul who has just locked her door, closed the curtains to read shreds of scripture that she keeps hidden in her floor.

Yes, this suffering is still happening, and we need to be aware of what believers go through today. We need to KNOW their suffering.

Part One: The Facts

388 million Christians in 2026 live under high levels of persecution and discrimination because of their faith. That's more than NINE times the population of Canada. One in seven of the Christians on earth.

In 2025, there was almost 5,000 Christians reported killed for their faith. If you do the math: it is more than thirteen believers every single day.

Part Two: One Body

26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. — **1 Corinthians 12:26**

3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.
— **Hebrews 13:3**

As if you were together with them. Not "feel sorry for them." Not "send them good thoughts." Imagine the chains on your own wrists. Part of the same body.

Before he was Paul the apostle, he was Saul the persecutor of Christians. In Acts 9 he was blinded, and Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" If Jesus himself feels the blow when his people are struck, there is no neutral ground left for the rest of us.

Part Three: Where It All Began

On the day of Pentecost, Luke lists the people who heard the gospel in their own languages, that is modern Iran. That is Iraq. That is Egypt, and Libya. From the very first day, the church had Middle Eastern roots. Saul was struck blind outside Damascus. The first time the disciples were called by the word 'Christian' was at Antioch, in what is now southern Turkey' And when the risen Christ dictated letters to seven churches, every one of them stood in what is today Turkey. He called them lampstands: "The seven lampstands are the seven churches."

Of the twenty hardest places in the world to follow Jesus, seven are in the Middle East and North Africa: Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Algeria.

Part Four: "Their God Is My God"

13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. — John 15:13

When a brother or sister who doesn't look like us, doesn't worship like us, and lives in a country we can barely pronounce is in chains, will we say, "Their God is my God"? THEIR suffering is MY suffering.

ll scripture is from the New International Version unless otherwise note.