

Flying above the radar

Matthew 5:10-12

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Christ did not call us to live our lives below the radar. As we have learned in Matthew 5:3-9, we are to fly above the radar. When we do, we can expect to get shot at. When that occurs, Jesus explains in verses 10-12 how to respond.

When persecution comes . . .

Make sure you suffer for the right reasons (10)

Don't be surprised when the world acts like the world (11)

Insults

Harassment

False accusations

Keep your heart in heaven (12a)

Pray for fellow flyers (12b)

Life can be difficult for Christians and harsh for converts

Christian minorities suffer systematic discrimination and persecution

Persecution of Christian minorities is pervasive and severe

Historically Christian minorities at risk of genocide



Religious Liberty The right to worship and practise the religion of your choice in private and in community, including the right to witness and evangelise, and the right to convert, i.e. to change your religion.

Pray for CHINA

Wrestling with transformation. Intense spiritual warfare guaranteed.

The nation:

- that God will continue to awaken and enlighten Chinese consciences. May China's pursuit of 'harmonious society' lead many to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- for God to give the government divine wisdom in dealing with the immensely complex issues of such a large and multi-cultural nation. May there be security with justice, and development with sensitivity.
- that China's vast network of some 1100 'loagai' (reform-through-labor prison camps, most used for forced labor) will be relegated to history.

The Church:

- that God will be the refuge and strength of China's imprisoned believers, healing their physical and emotional wounds and that the ever-present Holy Spirit may comfort and counsel their hearts.
- for continued church growth in the midst of oppression and suffering. May Bibles be plentiful and may God raise up more Christian pastors and evangelists to meet the enormous demand created by nation-wide spiritual hunger. May he continue preparing the Church for the coming days of liberty.

For more information on how to pray for the persecuted church, check out the website for the "International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church – www.idop.org.