

Hundredfold

(Transcript) Warren Zehrung 7/29/2017

Extremely trying days lie just ahead for those of us in the Church of God. Too many of our Church brethren do not realize that world happenings are quickly paving the way for widespread persecution—especially for the saints. When God describes this time shortly before Christ's return, He says that His people are "asleep."

Christianity, in spite of what some believe, is no bed of roses. There is no way that a novice in the faith can reasonably envision all the trials and tribulations he will experience during his course of conversion. We do not know everything that the future holds – only God knows. What is clear is that Jesus warned that the last Church era before His return would let down and be in severe need of repentance.

It is high time for us to wake up! World events tell us that all the things that we hold near and dear are on fire. Everything that we hold sacred will soon be overthrown – everything, that is, except our faith, which must continue until the very end. Things are getting tough for God's people but we cannot allow ourselves to become discouraged.

The entire world of Islam is being stirred to action. Because of Muslim insurgency, the faith and demographics of nations are rapidly changing. Muslims are pushing their ungodly way onto unwary and gullible nations. Even Germany is up to their eyeballs with this population invasion. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has dismissed calls from high-ranking members of her own party to introduce a so-called "Islam law," regulating the religious practices of Muslims in the country. Merkel's Christian Democrats have seen support for their party **decline** over the chancellor's refugee policy which saw close to a million, mostly Muslim, refugees register in the country in less than two years - since the start of the **refugee crisis** in 2015.

In Canada one cannot read certain sections of the Bible without being subject to prison. If a boy wants to be called "Miss," and you do not oblige him in Canada – you can be fined and imprisoned. The perverted world of those who profess their deviant sexual behaviors are making tremendous political headway into the established norm. New laws are springing up everywhere which violate and desecrate Christian principles and moral ethics.

Brethren, when you see vast ungodly national movements gaining in intensity – know that the time is short and persecutions will be on the increase. Expect it!

There are some Christians who have never **suffered persecutions** – not in the world, and not in the Church of God. Do you think that somehow you have cautiously walked a tightrope of avoiding conflict, confrontation and persecution? If so, perhaps it is due to the fact that you have not cast a large enough profile of representing God's way of life.

2Timothy 3:12-13 Yes, and **all** that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer **persecution**. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

That *persecution* is a Christian principle we often don't like to think about. "**All** that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." As we become one with Christ (Galatians 3:28) through partaking of His blood, our life with Him involves **suffering as He suffered**.

When a person is actually living His faith as a priority – standing for and practicing Christian principles in all that he does – he will be persecuted.

As Christians, we realize that our temporary lives are not our own—we have been purchased by Christ.

Jesus goes on to explain that those people who are His— will make a conscious decision to make God’s way of life their total priority. That fact alone sets us on a **collision** course with this world.

This is the section we call “Count the Cost” – even before we get baptized – asking ourselves if we have what it takes to finish this Christian course. Jesus says:

Luke 14:26 If any man **comes to me**, and hate [Greek ‘*miseo*’ love less by comparison] not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Jesus is saying **God** is **first** in everything – God is never to be consigned in a subservient position to anything else.

Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and **counts the cost**, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

This “count the cost” speaks to our having the character and will to embark on our Christian journey. We “count the cost” before we “take the plunge” into baptism – we might say.

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be **of you** that forsakes not **all** that he has, he cannot be my disciple.

That applies to **everything** – our Job, our family, our relationships – everything that gets between us and God.

When I worked in Pasadena I handled an inquiry from a man in the **hardware** business.

He said that he wanted to keep the Sabbath – but **for the time being** it was necessary to keep his business open for a half-day on Saturday.

That is exactly what Jesus is speaking of here: Hardware store **first** – God **second**. He that forsakes **not all** that he has, he cannot be my disciple. This principle of all applies to all of God’s holy things:

We must place God First – by keeping: All of His Commandments. The weekly Sabbath, The Feast of Lord, Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, **Feast of Tabernacles**, to the Last Great Day.

We cannot say, “It is not convenient to **fast** on Atonement this year – I have to work.” We cannot say, “My boss needs me – I can’t go to the Feast this year – I’ll make up for it next year.”

That is putting the things of God **second** to my own personal things – which come first in my life. People get used to excusing themselves from God’s Holy things.

Those who compromise God’s holy things never know what they missed out on. That **hardware** fellow in Pasadena is probably open right now – and he has no idea of the **Plan of God**, or that today is the Sabbath Day.

God requires our full and complete loyalty and commitment to Him because that is the only way we are able to become like Him. He is building His Church—an eternal spiritual entity—of God-like people like us.

If we have the eyes to see, there is a picture there of our future. But to be a part of what God has in store for us we must now become like God is. We must love His law and His people as He does—without competition or strife.

Do we really want God's way of life with every fiber of our being, or do we **resent** having to do things the "hard way?"

We are warned in the Scriptures that it is possible to fall away from the truth of God and His good graces, and lose out on salvation. That thought is dreadful to consider. Jesus says not to put God **second** to anything:

Matthew 10:37 He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Over and over in the Bible— **we** brethren— are admonished to live lives of overcoming, and to remain faithful to the very end.

We are to live exemplary lives as witnesses to those in the world. Some would ask the question, "What's in it for us?"

To those Christians who have left their former lives – even family behind for the gospel's sake, Jesus painted a picture of a good and promising life—but not without rigorous difficulties.

Mark 10:28 Peter began to say unto [Jesus], Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

Peter was asking Jesus, "What's in it for us?" Peter said, "I had a business – a good fishing boat and an established clientele... I had customers who depended on me."

The **title** of today's sermon comes from these verses:

Mark 10:29 Jesus answered and said, Truly I say unto you, There is no man who has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an **hundredfold** [that is how much we are blessed] now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, **with persecutions**; and in the world to come eternal life.

What a beautiful picture of godly fellowship and relationships – a hundredfold of what we enjoyed before being called by God!

We are told that we are to come out of the world and be separate—a different attitude and a different way of life.

How many brethren have regrets for choosing God's way? Has your faith grown to the point to where you can honestly say, "There's no way I would ever return to my former lifestyle – even if I could?"

We are to be holy as only God is holy – set apart as only God's perfect way can place us in Jesus shoes – walking in His steps.

We live in an evil and corrupt world. There is nothing that this world has to offer of a lasting nature except the occasion to stand against the things that are wrong, and support righteousness at every turn.

Let's look at a few Scriptures about putting **God's way** FIRST... showing the **principle of putting God first**:

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Please turn with me to Paul's beautiful **confession of faith**:

Philippians 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count **all things** but **loss** for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Philippians 3:9 And be found **in him**, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Philippians 3:10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

Brethren, Do we count **all things** but **loss** for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord?

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an **hundredfold**...

Does that mean that if you were worth \$10,000 dollars when you came into the church, you should be worth a **million** dollars today?

Some today preach a prosperity gospel in order to fleece the flock. Brethren, I believe in a prosperity gospel and I believe that is exactly what Jesus is saying right here ... Let's read it again!

Mark 10:29 Jesus answered and said, Truly I say unto you, There is no man who has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an **hundredfold** now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, **with persecutions**; and in the world to come eternal life.

Houses: We have a home; We have Feast housing; We have invitations to brethren's homes. We are always at home somewhere.

Brethren: We've gained many brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lands: No matter where we go across this nation – or around the world – we are near other brethren.

And then the big promise for putting God first: in the world to come **eternal life**.

But then Jesus issues a caveat – a warning – a prerequisite – a stipulation. Jesus says, "Don't get the big head – thinking we've got it made. "I'm in the money – I'm in the money! – I've got it made." NO!

Mark 10:31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

Brethren, what value do we place on the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord?

Jesus promised lots of church family, but isn't it interesting that He added how we would suffer **persecutions** – and then eternal life.

1Timothy 6:6-7 Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Matthew 6:33 Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye [first] the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. (also Luke 12:29-31,)

God's promise to us goes well beyond this temporal life.

His plan is that we attain to eternal spiritual life as children of God.

We cannot now imagine what will be within our grasp as creative spirit-born members of the God family with an eternity of time and the vast limitless universe at our disposal.

Psalms 84:11-12 ...No good thing will the LORD God withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in thee.

Jesus lived a perfect life, and yet He was **ruthlessly accused** of wrongdoing and He was persecuted for it.

He was **accused** of being a Drunkard... He was **accused** of being against Moses Law... He was **accused** of planning to Destroy the Temple ... He was **accused** of Sedition. Jesus was persecuted – can we expect anything less?

The men of Jesus day who accused Him were men of **high standing** – the priests, lawyers, Pharisees. Their accusations carried a lot of impact – a lot of weight – in that the people generally looked up to them – the naïve people wanted to believe their leaders. They looked to Headquarters – just like so many church people do today.

John 15:25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

John 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.

John 16:3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

John 16:4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Jesus was accused of many false charges

Mark 14:56 For many bare false witness against Jesus, but their witness agreed not together.

Mark 14:60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

Mark 14:61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

Mark 14:62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Mark 14:63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

Mark 14:64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

Mark 14:65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

Mark 15:19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.

Jesus was accused of sedition against the nation of Israel. Seditious conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state or king.

Luke 23:2 We found this man **subverting our nation**, forbidding us to pay the tribute tax to Caesar and claiming that he himself is Christ, a king.

John 18:30 If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you [Pilate].

Jesus was mocked by having a plaque put on His cross with the inscription "the king of the Jews" ridiculing his claim to Messiahship.

Mark 14:58 (Matthew 26:61) "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.

We had a saying down in Louisiana – maybe you've heard it too. "You can't **win** for **loosing!**"

Luke 7:33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, **He hath a devil.**

Luke 7:34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a **winebibber**, a friend of publicans and sinners! (Matthew 11:19)

Luke 7:35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

That means that God's people know the Truth of the matter.

Luke 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

Luke 7:37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

Luke 7:38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Jesus was accused of cavorting with prostitutes

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him: for she is a sinner.

Hebrews 12:1-2 ...Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the **joy that was set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

God knows we are having problems. But, He is there for us.

Psalms 34:17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

...If they are remorseful, and humbly looking to God to promote their well-being—rather than always trying to 'bless' themselves—or promote themselves.

Psalm 34:18-19 The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such ones as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

We have seen that for the people of God there will be sore trials, severe tests, and great temptations—especially in these last days.

Who today is exempt these days from some pretty severe trials?

1Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Trouble? Expect it! Trouble is our lot as Christians, but with the faith of Christ we will endure.

Like a weight lifter pushing on iron, steel and barbells – our trials and testings are for the purpose of making us spiritually stronger.

Do not resent the trials that come our way – but count them all joy.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into different kinds of trials;

God keeps them measured—they will not overcome us. Here is a promise of God's protection, sustenance and rescue.

1Corinthians 10:13 There hath no trial taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tried more that ye are able to bear; but will with the trial also **make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it.

We are called to suffer in like manner as Christ did.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that **we suffer with Him**, that we may be also glorified together.

We suffer with Him is one of the prerequisites of being Christians. Peter also spends a great deal of time expounding on this principle of Christian suffering because we must suffer with Christ if we are to share in His glory. Some people believe that a Christian should not have any trials – and that only blessings come from God's way of life.

Brethren, here is a serious question to ponder: Are you suffering persecution because of the Christian principles that you stand up for and live by?

In this selfish world, we often witness the "every man for himself" attitude that permeates society.

We should certainly understand the extent to which Jesus Christ demonstrated His love for us in giving His life.

But to what degree have we followed His example in demonstrating our loving concern for each other?

Who in the Church of God today is willing to suffer in order to help another person into the Kingdom of God?

1Peter 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

1Peter 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

1Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

1Peter 2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

1Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

1Peter 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

1Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judges righteously:

1Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.

1Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

1Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

We are not supposed to suffer for our own wrong doings... That would be the natural outcome of law breaking.

1Peter 4:16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

1Peter 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.

1Peter 5:11 To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We should not be surprised by trials and sufferings.

Matthew 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and **suffer many things** of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

1Thessalonians 3:3 That no man should be moved by **these afflictions**: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

1Thessalonians 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Here is some real good news: We are not the same as the world – God will even the score – it's not for us to do.

2Thessalonians 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith grows exceedingly, and the Godly love of every one of you all toward each other abounds;

2Thessalonians 1:4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

2Thessalonians 1:5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

2Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

2Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

2Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Expect to suffer Brethren – if you are laid back in a comfort zone – which it sometimes seems to be the goal of some in the Church – you do not yet grasp the Gospel message and you have not properly counted the cost.

Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

Paul explains how we are called to suffer with Christ:

Philippians 3:10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made to correspond unto His death.

Influential men are beginning to say that our country of America is dying. Old England is no more. This is a new and sad day. What will be the straw that breaks the camel's back? Our infrastructure is disintegrating, but no single factor will bring down our nation.

Why? Because, it will not be the failure of one single system that will bring about the ultimate destruction of the end-time.

If that were the case, people would be able to say, "If only such and such... none of this would have happened, and Jesus Christ would not have had to return."

No, brethren, there is going to be total failure of all worldly systems at the same time! There will be nowhere to turn for help. All men, including the Israelitish nations, will realize the utter hopelessness of this world's Godless ways. God prophesied of Ephraim as a type of all Israelitish nations, that these pervasive and ungodly trends will finally result in a people that has made itself to be without substance.

Hosea 13:1-3 And now they sin more and more... according to their own understanding... Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passes away.

Brethren, we need to recognize these and other end-time signs, for what they are – a warning to us to be **lively Christians** in a dying world.

Are we like Moses – the meekest and most humble of men on earth (Numbers 12:3) – are we willing to suffer and follow in Christ's steps?

Moses could have enjoyed all the luxury afforded those of royalty in Pharaoh's palace.

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Hebrews 11:25 Choosing rather to **suffer affliction** with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

We live in an evil and corrupt world. There is nothing that this world has to offer of a lasting nature.

Fame, wealth and worldly pleasures are fleeting. We are told that we are to come out of the world and be separate. In a heartfelt appeal, the apostle Paul pleaded with the Corinthian brethren to come out of the world – and to have nothing to do with the **ways** of this evil world.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what fellowship hath light with **darkness**?

That's right – this world is in abject darkness – and we are the children of light. But to those in the **dark** – the world seems a happy place - it seems profitable, secure, enjoyable...

2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial [the personification of evil.]? Or what part hath he that believes with an infidel?

'Infidel' One who does not believe in God's goodness. More and more, this world is purposefully leaving God out.

The two do not mix – and if they do mix, there is nothing good that comes of it – only a polluted mix – lacking maturity and foundation. Godliness cannot be **contaminated** -> because all evil moves away from God.

God lives **in us** as we put on the attributes of Jesus Christ. Those in the world are putting God as far behind them as possible. They are systematically eradicating His goodness from their lives -> while yet expecting a good outcome. It is not going to happen. But, one by one, all happiness, order, fulfillment, peace, wellness... will evade them. When their ways affect us we too become unclean – but our interaction with them does not make them holy.

2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

There are those who are **not** God's people! We are! Persecutions are coming. We will be protected a hundredfold!

Why? Because we are the blessed people of God.

End Hundred Fold