



# WE ARE ONE

40-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY

*Walking by Faith  
with the Persecuted Church*

**JOHNNIE MOORE**

AUTHOR OF *THE MARTYR'S OATH*

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*We Are One: Walking by Faith with the Persecuted Church*

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## INTRODUCTION

# WE ARE ONE

*Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.*

JOHN 17:11

**ON THE NIGHT** before Jesus was crucified, he prayed for his disciples—not just for the ones who were with him in the Garden of Gethsemane but also for us today. What was on Jesus’ heart when the Cross was in his sights was that all believers—in his time and in the future—“may be one.”

We live in fractured times of political, cultural, and religious division, even among those who claim to follow Christ. But Jesus’ prayer for us is a reminder that deeper and stronger than the things that divide us is the bond we share. *We are one.*

It is amazing, then, that for many Christians in the West, we have forgotten a large part of the family of God. According to some estimates, a Christian is martyred for his or her faith every five minutes. Christians in Egypt have

experienced more persecution in the last five years than in the previous six hundred years combined. Groups like ISIS and Boko Haram terrorize Christians in the Middle East and Africa, and atheistic regimes in China and North Korea have worked to sideline and silence Christians. And the West is largely silent.

How can this be when we are one?

The goal of this devotional is to remember our brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering and dying because of their love for Jesus. But more than remembering them, we need to pray for them. We need to serve them. We need to identify with them. We need to *be* them.

Jesus' prayer is that we may be one. That is my prayer as well as you read these stories of those who have faced persecution around the world. Each devotion includes a short prayer that will help you as you intercede on behalf of your brothers and sisters facing persecution.

These devotions are a good place to start in identifying with those who are persecuted, but there are many more resources available to you through organizations like Open Doors USA ([www.opendoorsusa.org](http://www.opendoorsusa.org)) or my own organization, The KAIROS Trust ([www.theKAIROStrust.com](http://www.theKAIROStrust.com)). My book *The Martyr's Oath* also contains more information

about persecution worldwide as well as what you can do to support persecuted Christians. I've included the introduction and first chapter of that book at the back of this devotional. (You can take your stand with Christians around the world in harm's way at [www.MartyrsOath.com](http://www.MartyrsOath.com).)

The apostle Paul wrote, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). There is one Lord over all of us who claim the name of Christ. We *are* one. My prayer is that we will live this reality.

*Johnnie Moore*  
*August 2017*



## DAY 1

# ENOUGH

*Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.*

MATTHEW 19:29

**PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS** know what it's like to rely on God for their daily needs. Often they've had to learn this lesson when everything was taken from them quickly and unexpectedly. Even while I was writing this book, one Egyptian village was nearly destroyed. Eighty Christian homes were looted and burned to the ground.

All of this was for one reason, because of a *rumor* that the Christians intended to build a new church in the city. When jihadist fanatics attacked, the police largely stood on the sidelines. These families watched as all they had was taken away and their homes were burned to ashes.

Their kids' toys and family photos, their lives and livelihoods gone.

We all hope this is an experience we never have, but we must believe that God would be with us if it did happen. He will provide what we need and reward us for our sacrifice on his account.

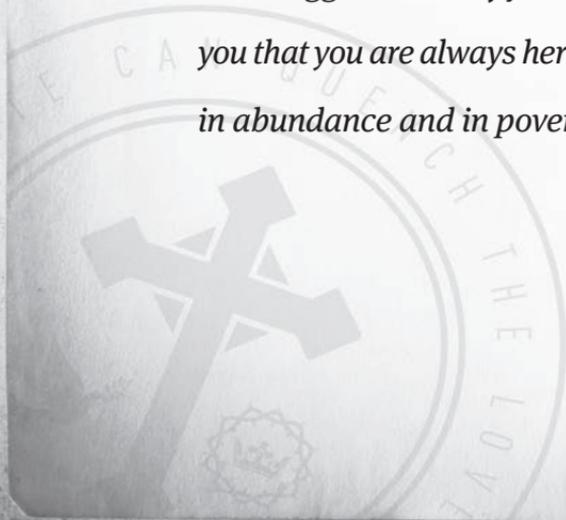
Here's a fact you can count on: God will always take care of you. That doesn't mean that you'll always have what you want. It doesn't mean that your cupboards won't be empty and your bank account won't run dry. It's not a guarantee of an easy life.

It is a guarantee of provision. It is a guarantee of enough.

God will give you enough of what you need when you need it, and he will give you enough grace to get through when it's hard to see the way, though God often doesn't give you too much, because he wants you to walk by faith. He knows you're better off if you know you need him every day.



*God, be with my brothers and sisters  
who will lose their homes and lives  
today for you. May their testimony  
bring you glory and bring countless  
people to you. God, be with me today  
as I struggle to walk by faith. I thank  
you that you are always here for me,  
in abundance and in poverty.*



DAY 2

## FAITH LIKE A CHILD

*Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*

MATTHEW 19:14

**NO MATTER OUR AGE**, when we first enter a relationship with Christ, we come as “little children.” Perhaps like me, you can recall the innocent faith you had when you first received Christ. Often, as we grow in the intellectual knowledge of our beliefs, we lose that fresh faith. And yet, that childlike faith can be the strongest substance on earth—stronger even than ISIS.

In an attack a few years ago, ISIS militants captured four Iraqi children and threatened to kill them unless they converted. “No, we can’t do that,” the children said. The militants pressured and threatened them: “Say the words!”

The determined children looked right back at those

fierce, armed jihadists and said, “No, we love Yasua [Jesus]. We have always loved Yasua. We have always followed Yasua. Yasua has always been with us.”

At that, the ISIS fighters beheaded all four children.

These martyred children did not face their tormentors with a rational argument based on theological knowledge. They faced death with courage, strength, bravery, and an unflinching faith in Christ—“childlike faith.” Jesus taught us about childlike faith with these words: “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2-4, ESV).

We face a world with constant challenges and trials, even if not all are matters of life and death. We can learn from these children of the persecuted church to face our fears, our worst challenges, with childlike faith.

Are you facing a crisis or challenge today? Think of these four brave children. Face your trials with boldness and with an unwavering faith in God. Our role is to run to Jesus, cling to Jesus, and “cast all [our] anxiety” (1 Peter 5:7) on Jesus. That’s the childlike faith Jesus told us to have. You don’t need “great” faith, just childlike faith.

*God, please be with the persecuted children who are being threatened with their lives for your sake this very day. Give them great boldness to endure suffering and, when needed, to stand up to their tormentors. Let their testimony be a challenge to me not to be consumed with the challenges I'm facing today. Help me to have more childlike faith and to trust you with my whole heart in all the difficulties I face.*

DAY 3

## ON ALL THE TIME

*To me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

**MANY PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS** live literally as Paul wrote, “to live is Christ.” They are not like Christians in free countries. They can never go out in public—to the store, to a friend’s house, to walk the dog—without people knowing they are Christians. A single Christian might stand out unavoidably in an entirely Islamic or Hindu portion of the world. Christians can never ignore their faith at work, school, or home, because everyone knows who they are. Members of the persecuted church live on a very narrow road. For some, there is never a moment, waking or sleeping, without watchful eyes, without danger.

In October 2011, Father Adeyi, a Catholic priest in terror-plagued Nigeria, said, “In spite of the many challenges, priests will not give up but are determined to run the race of faith to the end.” He was referencing the apostle Paul, who often spoke of the Christian life as running a race. Paul wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7, *ESV*).

Father Adeyi did finish his course. On April 24, 2016, militants kidnapped him, then used Father Adeyi’s own cell phone to call his parish and demand a ransom. The parish raised almost ten thousand dollars, but the priest was not released. Two months later, the priest’s decaying body was found dumped in a park.

For us, “to live is Christ” might be just a song lyric or a verse of Scripture we’ve memorized, but for the persecuted church, that phrase really does mean that Christ is everything to them. It means “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20, *ESV*). It means that every waking minute, they are cognizant of their faith, thinking of Christ, living for Christ, willing to die for Christ. When you think about it, “to live is Christ” is really the only way to actually live out the Christian life.

Unlike members of the persecuted church, every day

we face a world that offers many choices. We can make decisions without a thought about our Christian life, or we can make decisions as Christ directs us. Freedom is a wonderful blessing, but we cannot allow our freedom to give us the liberty to turn our Christianity on or off. All Christians owe it to Christ to be “on” all the time.

Remember our persecuted brothers and sisters as you make your decisions today. Be “all in” with your Christianity. Make it a goal to start each day saying, as Paul did, “To live is Christ.”



*God, please forgive me for making choices without depending on you. And please be with my brothers and sisters today who don't have such freedom to choose. Help those whose every move could bring on torture or even death. Help me depend on you every day, each step, each decision, so I also can truly say, along with the persecuted church, "To live is Christ."*

DAY 4

## GRACE FOR DENIERS AND DOUBTERS

*I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.*

LUKE 12:4-5

**A PERSECUTED FATHER** in Iraq faced an impossible decision when he was confronted by armed militants. They didn't threaten to torture or kill him. Instead, they threatened to murder his children. He would have to watch them die one by one unless he told the gunmen he would follow Muhammad.

Jesus told us not to fear those who can kill the body. So, what was the right decision? Would this father be failing as a Christian if he didn't sacrifice his children for a statement to follow Christ? Or would he be failing as a Christian father if he succumbed to his fear and allowed these intruders to murder his children, fearing man over God?

This father faced the fact that his children were about to be brutally murdered in front of his eyes, and he would have to live with that. He looked at his attackers, then looked at his children, and repeated the words to follow Muhammad. When the attackers left, he quickly called his priest and repented, saying, “I have always loved Yasua [Jesus]. I said those words because I couldn’t see my children be killed.”

We cannot stand in that father’s place and choose for him, one way or the other. But we can sit in the safety of our homes and appreciate this: out of all the decisions this father made for his children, he made the decision to raise his children to know Christ in the first place, even though it meant it might cost his own life or theirs. If this man had not identified himself with Christ and his church from the beginning, if he and his children had not been known as Christians all around town, he would never have had to face those attackers at all.

Thankfully, God’s grace extends even to denial and doubt. Like the apostle Thomas, who doubted Jesus had been resurrected, and the apostle Peter, who denied being a friend of Jesus, the Iraqi father found forgiveness. In the end, Peter died for Jesus’ name, and Thomas was the only

apostle mentioned in the Bible who touched the wounds of Jesus. They moved beyond their moments of weakness with the most intimate experiences of Jesus' grace.

In the aftermath of that father's choice—a choice some would say was weakness and others would say was heroic—God was always there, offering grace. Just as he extends grace to us in our moments of denial, doubt, discouragement, and distrust. And just as grace would be available even to the terrorists who murder Christians should they themselves come to repentance.

Perhaps you have experienced a difficult or painful choice; perhaps you've doubted Jesus or even denied him. Here's what you can count on: God's grace. It is fully available to you in moments of strength and in your moment of greatest weakness.



*God, I thank you for your grace toward your followers around the world. Please flood with your Spirit those who are struggling to stand up for you under serious threats. Your merciful, powerful, and forgiving grace covers their weakness, even as I pray you make them strong. I thank you that your grace is not weaker but stronger in my doubts and denial. You are with me when I am at my weakest. Your power is strongest when I'm the most powerless. I praise you that I cannot run beyond the reach of your mercy.*

DAY 5

## EXPECT PERSECUTION

*Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.*

LUKE 6:22

**IN PAKISTAN IN 2016**, a man complained to the police that the music coming from a nearby church was too loud. As a result, officers stormed the church during the service and beat up the pastor in front of his congregation. It was a terrible ordeal—terrible for the pastor and terrible for his family and congregation members who had to stand by, unable to help. It was terrible, yet not unusual. Pakistan normally ranks within the top ten of worst countries for Christians, yet it has millions of them.

With such an awful intrusion even being possible, it can seem amazing to Christians in the free world that

persecuted Christians keep going to church at all. We make decisions not to attend church because the air conditioning is too cold, the parking lot is too crowded, or the music is too loud.

Perhaps the problem isn't inconvenience but expectations. We expect the church to cater to our needs. We expect church to be comfortable, convenient, and cozy. We want good customer service and pleasantries. Yet, Jesus' expectation for the church was far less domesticated.

Jesus taught us to *expect* persecution for being a part of the church—to expect danger, disruption, and disorder! He encouraged all followers by saying, “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven” (Matthew 5:11-12, esv). Stop and think about this. So much for catering to my desire for convenience!

Could it be that in the free church we ought to experience more persecution? We don't deal with much of it, not only because we live in a country that allows religious freedom but also because it's easy to coast by as under-cover Christians. It's easy to simply avoid controversy, criticism, and conflict by not speaking up. If we don't give

voice to our faith, no one will know of our commitment, and no one will bother us.

Here's a thought: our desire for convenience and comfort even in church might be an indication of our passion to welcome outsiders in, but it might also be key evidence of our self-centeredness. We're not making the place comfortable for those seeking Christ but for those of us who've already found him.



*Father, I pray for pastors in all the persecuted countries of the world, that you would bless them in their trials. Give them courage to keep standing up for you and leading people toward you. And God, please give me courage to do the same. Help me to speak up for you to others and to never forget that Christians all over the world are suffering for doing just that. Help me not to seek convenience ahead of your plan for my life and for the church.*

## DAY 6

# A FAITH-DIVIDED FAMILY

*I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.*

MATTHEW 10:35-36, ESV

**AMIR AND ELISA** are a Christian couple living in Lebanon. They both came from Muslim families in Egypt. When Elisa announced that she had converted to Christianity, her family threatened her. The persecution in her home became so severe that she fled to Beirut just to find a safe place to live.

In Beirut, she met Amir, a seminary student who was also from Egypt. They were married in a Christian ceremony. But in a persecuting country, nothing is simple. As Egyptian citizens, and because they are Christians, their marriage was not government sanctioned. Humiliated yet determined, Amir and Elisa pressed on, working through

each difficulty with great confidence in the Lord. Today, both are pursuing degrees in higher education so they can work full-time in Christian ministry to share Jesus with their people.

Sometimes what stings the most is when people you expect to love you no matter what are the ones who turn on you, as Elisa's family turned on her. This is the experience of so many of our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. As David wrote, "Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me" (Psalm 41:9).

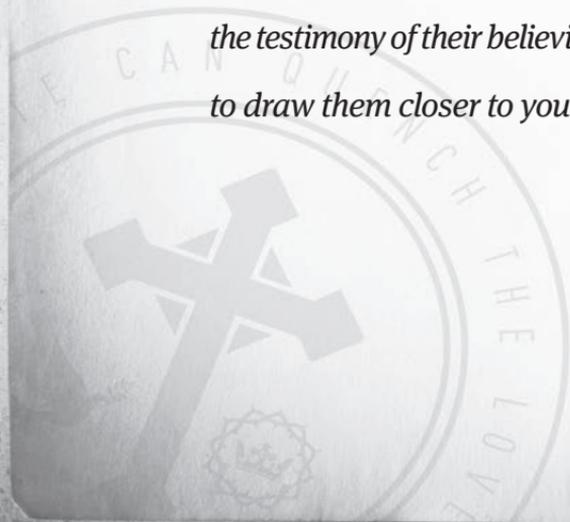
Yet it is in our refusal to compromise, our willingness to make choices that set us apart, that we become more like Christ. Jesus said, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29). These choices, though, don't remove the hurt of a lost love for forbidden faith.

When the people closest to you let you down, turn against you, or betray you, Scripture promises that although you may have lost a family member, "there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). Jesus is

your lifelong friend and your closest confidant. He loves you always. If you're fortunate to have the blessing of your family's support in your faith, that's a blessing you should never take for granted. Praise Jesus for it. And if you're ever fortunate to meet someone who doesn't have that blessing, then choose to be like family to that person.



*God, help those whose families have rejected them for following you. Support them with your love, and guide them to those who will be like family to them. I pray also for family members who do not believe; I ask you to bring them to faith and to use the testimony of their believing family to draw them closer to you today.*



DAY 7

## FREED FROM SELF-IMPOSED PRISONS

*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

**CHRISTIANS** in the persecuted church often face stiff prison sentences simply because of their faith. The prison experience generally involves deprivation and torture.

Ladan is a beautiful young woman from Iran who was invited to a house church and became a believer in Christ. When her family saw the change in her and discovered her new faith, she knew her days were numbered. To escape being imprisoned, Ladan fled to Turkey.

As she matured in Christ, Ladan experienced a growing desire to return to Iran to share the gospel. Upon her return, Ladan handed out Christian literature and Bibles.

She saw many people become believers before she was eventually caught. Ladan was imprisoned and endured a lengthy interrogation but would not give the names of her fellow believers.

Eventually, she was sent to solitary confinement for twenty-five days, but she managed to smuggle a pen into her cell. With the help of the Holy Spirit, she recalled verses of Scripture. Day after day, she wrote them out on the cell walls.

After her imprisonment, Ladan was forced to leave Iran and her Muslim family for good. She remains deeply concerned about getting God's Word into her home country. Her prayer is that one day in heaven she will meet someone who became a Christian because of the words she left behind on the prison walls. I believe she will have that very experience.

In the West, we are not imprisoned for our faith, but many other influences can restrain us from sharing it. There is a prison of shame, a prison of bitterness, prisons of self-doubt, guilt, and unforgiveness. In these ways, we imprison ourselves, and we become our own persecutors. As a result, our life-giving faith doesn't show itself fully to those around us.

Perhaps you have something in your heart that keeps you from being a witness for Christ. God wants to take our self-imposed prisons and use them as testimonies of our faith for others. He wants us to break free. What an insult it would be to choose to imprison our faith when so many of our brothers and sisters around the world have imprisonment chosen for them.

Today is a good day to thank God for the physical freedom he has given you, but it is also a great day to break out of your self-imposed prisons, to let your light shine for him. Scribble God's Word on those dark places of your heart, and later someone else will find the power of Jesus through your freedom.



*God, so many of our brothers and sisters are in prisons all over the world today because of their love for you. Please ease their suffering today, stop their tormentors, give them a voice for you inside their cells, and then free them from those cells. Reveal to me what might be imprisoning my own heart, and help me to break free as well. Please give me a burden and the boldness to share the Good News of Jesus with others, with the courage I see in the persecuted church.*