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Theme: Are We Up To It - Suffering?

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:13-14 (NIV)

“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.”

A Thought: Recently our church congregation prayed for Youcef Nadarkhani an Iranian Christian pastor who converted from Islam. The Pastor was arrested two years ago on charges of apostasy for refusing to renounce his Christianity. Because he will not repent he now faces death by hanging. According to Barnabas Fund an international, interdenominational Christian aid agency, *“There has been a wave of arrests across the country, targeting ordinary church members and leaders”* (Christian Today magazine). Countless Christians through out the world are being persecuted and discriminated upon. All because they believe that Jesus died for our sins and that truth will set you free. In a small Laotian village seven church leaders suffered the indignities of having their legs in wooded stocks for sixteen days. The officials posted a fine of \$125 U.S. dollars and one cow worth no less than \$600. The fine was reduced, they paid the money and were released four weeks later. One visitor who interviewed three leaders stated, *“Despite these challenges, the believers remain undaunted and fervent for the Lord.”* Our Lord promises he will take care of us every second that we breathe....Jeremiah 31:25 (NIV) *“I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.”*

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

Talk to yourself:

- What does sacrificing for the Lord mean to you?
- Have you submitted your will to God?
- Pray for the Christians that are persecuted throughout the world. • For more information on the subject: www.barnabasfund.org

Scriptures to read: • Deu. 33:27; Psalm 9:9-10, 10:14, 34:4; Joshua 1:9;
• Jeremiah 15:15, 16:19; • Matt. 16:21; Mark 5:28-30; Romans 5:3, 8:18; Phil. 3:10;
• 2 Tim. 1:8; James 5:10-11; 1 Peter 1:6, 3:17, 4:12-13;

Quote: *“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals”* (BrainyQuote)

Bottom Line: George Barna one of America’s preminent Christian researchers has been studying the beliefs and behaviors of Christians in our country....his findings make it plain that we are a long way from sacrificing our will to our Lord Jesus. To put it bluntly the results of his survey are disappointing, especially in light of Christian brothers and sisters world wide are sacrificing their lives and suffering in the worst way. Barna’s research shows that less than three percent of Christians, *“Have surrendered control of their lives to God, submitted His will for their life, and devoted themselves to loving and serving God and other people.”* Barna goes on to say that only one out of ten Christians share their faith with a non-Christian. I know we are busy with day to day activities (important and not so important) that take up our daily lives. To be sure, I know personally that I have set God aside many times. Though we must ask ourselves if we have missed an opportunity to share our faith with a stranger. in a meaningful way, do we pray, fast or reflect on the Word of Truth? When in doubt think of the cross. Spend a few minutes with your children and share with them the horrid stories that Christians throughout the world are experiencing. Pray together. Let me leave you with this thought....a quote from an Iranian Christian *“I feel sorry for the Iranian authorities because they don’t realize that they’re up against the Holy Spirit.”* Gents, you can take that to the Spiritual Bank!

NOW.....THAT’S THE BOTTOM LINE.

Spiritual Dabbler, Your bro, Ray

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