“Why the Persecuted Church Matters”

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-6; Matthew 5:10-12

The Persecuted Church Today: The church is more persecuted today than ever before.

- More than 388 million Christians live under high levels of persecution and discrimination: 1 in 7 Christians worldwide.
- 2026: 4,849 Christians killed for faith-related reasons; 3,632 churches and Christian buildings attacked. 4,712 Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced or imprisoned; 3,302 abducted.
- The World Watch List ranks the 50 most dangerous countries to live in as a Christian (visit the booth in the lobby).

Open Doors: It began with a call to strengthen what remains.

- More than 70 years ago, Brother Andrew smuggled Bibles behind the Iron Curtain to a church that was isolated and “about to die.”
- He showed up for them, bringing Bibles in their own language for the first time.
- Today: a global underground network in 70+ countries, providing Bibles and resources and training leaders who suffer persecution.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE? (MATTHEW 5:10-12)

I. The persecuted church is on His heart. (1 Corinthians 12:25-26)

- They are part of our family, whether we know them on this side of heaven or not.
- Their stories often go unheard, but never to Him. He hears their cries and sees their pain.

II. The persecuted church is a healthy barometer for our own faith. (Hebrews 11:36-39)

- In North America we are used to being the teacher more than being taught.
- They live for Jesus without a “what will you do for me?” attitude. “The world was not worthy of them.”

III. The persecuted church inspires us to believe in the power of the gospel. (Acts 8:1-8; Acts 5:38-39)

- The church has flourished most in times of greatest persecution.
- The church is growing in China, Nigeria and North Korea, and it can grow in Canada too.

Questions for individual or small group reflections

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

- What does Jesus say about the church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1)?
- What five things does Jesus call the church to do in verses 2-3?
- What promise is given to the one who is victorious (3:5)?

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

- What does this passage teach us about Jesus and his care for his church?
- What does it mean to “strengthen what remains”?

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?)

- Where might I need to “wake up” in my own faith?
- How can I show up for persecuted brothers and sisters?
- Which World Watch List country will I pray for this week?

“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Nov 1, 2026 | International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church Pastor Chris Chase, The Olive Branch