

“Let not your heart be troubled....”

We're in bad shape. The government has killed some of our leaders. Most of the culture does not accept who we are and what we believe. In some places we have to worship secretly, under ground. In some places it's not safe to travel because of dangers from criminals or dangers from disease (I know one guy that's having some type of stomach problems from some unknown disease). Besides all that, it's becoming tougher to carry out the great commission - so many people are either self-satisfied or downright rejecting anything Christian. Drugs are a problem, immorality is rampant, and even idol worship is easily found in many places. Attitudes are going south, competition for belief systems is tough and depression is common.

In practical terms, inflation is getting worse so our money is worth less and less. In some places food and basic necessities are becoming scarce. We never know what the next political administration will bring. Corruption is common at all levels of government and everything they control is becoming more and more expensive

We've had heads of state assassinated and there have been many other attempts. We've had salacious scandals within federal and local elected officials and no one even cares anymore. Some public buildings are in dis-repair, some roads seem to never get fixed and we are left to wonder what is happening with all of our taxes, especially since the taxes have gone up so much in recent years.

Jesus said it wouldn't be easy and He warned us that some would hate us because we were following Him. Now, here we are in 64 AD, Nero is on the throne and Christians are being persecuted and even executed in many cities, particularly here in Rome. What's a Christian to do?

Oh, YES! We remember now. Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, and also believe in Me." "You wrote down those words of Jesus, didn't you, John?" "Yes, I did, word for word, just like the Holy Spirit gave them to me. Peter, what's your take on all this turmoil here in 64 AD?"

"Peter, what was it you wrote about facing tough ordeals? I wrote what the Holy Spirit said, 'Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.' I also wrote, 'Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.'"

"Hey, I have an idea, let's go over to my place and have a party, I feel like rejoicing with exultation." "Yeah, me too. Let's sing on the way."

(This is simply an imagined conversation in AD 64, when all these difficulties were actually happening. What will our response be? Lets' rejoice with exultation!)

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