

A WORD ON WORSHIP

REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM NOVEMBER 22, 2015

BY PASTOR ANDREW KICKERT, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hear Sunday Sermons at www.SunriseTC.org

Revelation 6:9-10

"When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'"



My heart has been heavy as I read and hear news reports of IS (Islamic State) and their attacks in Paris. IS released a video, in which they announced a threat, "Our message to the entire world is that we are the soldiers of the Caliphate state and we are coming." So much of what we are seeing unfold in the Middle East characterizes what has happened to Christians throughout history in that region as well as other restricted nations. Throughout church history, there are numerous examples of radical religious groups and political tyrants that have persecuted God's people to the point of death.

During the fifth century, Christians in a city in present-day Iraq called Kirkuk came under severe persecution. (Kirkuk was a part of the Persian Empire at that time.) Influenced by Zoroastrian priests, the emperor, Yazdegerd II, didn't think Christians were capable of being loyal subjects of his empire, so he ordered they be eliminated - murdered - in A.D. 448. History estimates 153,000 leaders, clergy and laypeople were rounded up, taken to a mount outside of Kirkuk and slaughtered. The chief prosecutor, Tamasgerd, was so moved by the Christians' resolve that he, too, placed his faith in Christ and followed them in death.

As we read and hear reports of the brutality happening in Paris, pray for members of IS. Pray they come face to face with Jesus Christ and give their lives to Him. Pray they will be overcome with the courage and endurance of the believers they persecute and choose to place their faith in Christ - like the chief prosecutor Tamasgerd during the massacre of Christians in Kirkuk in the 5th century. Pray for those workers on the front lines who risk their lives to witness in hostile circumstances. Finally, reach out to Muslims in our community and show them the love of Christ with the intent of winning them for Him. So many have come to the U.S. in pursuit of a better life and more will be coming. They, too, need to hear about Jesus Christ.

We are studying the Book of Revelation and we know who will ultimately win the battle - the Lord Jesus Christ. Until that day, when Jesus makes His final return to take His rightful place, you must stand with our persecuted family by choosing to fellowship with them through your prayers and actions. One day we will be in the cross hairs of persecution and will need the prayers and support of the Body of Christ as we stand for Jesus Christ.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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