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Written by the Rev. Don Dawson, director of the WMI, and brought to you by the World Mission Initiative at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Scripture

Psalm 43

- 1 Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust
deliver me!
- 2 For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?
- 3 O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.
- 4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp,
O God, my God.
- 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

Devotional

The persecution of Christians headlines the news. ISIS fighters have killed 10,000 Christians. The Boko Haram have martyred thousands more. It seems like Christians are under assault like never before—in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, etc.

If many of us who are insulated from the persecution feel the offense, think how those who are caught in the middle of the violence must feel. Where are you, God, when your people are suffering so much? Why do you abandon the faithful?

The Psalmist expressed this same sentiment in his lament. “Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” Yet, the Psalmist did not pray for the death of his enemies, nor for freedom from persecution. Instead, he prayed, “Send out your light and your truth....” In a similar manner, oppressed Christians today pray for God to give them strength in the midst of the persecution, not deliverance from it. “Hope in God” is their motto.

Prayer

Almighty God, come quickly to help all who follow you. Strengthen those who are oppressed, ostracized, beaten, and killed for your name's sake. Abide with them by the power of your Spirit, so that they will not fail in their time of trial. Bring them through the floods and fire. May their testimony be an inspiration to all believers and a witness to those who persecute them. For the sake of Jesus, Amen.