

The
BEATITUDES

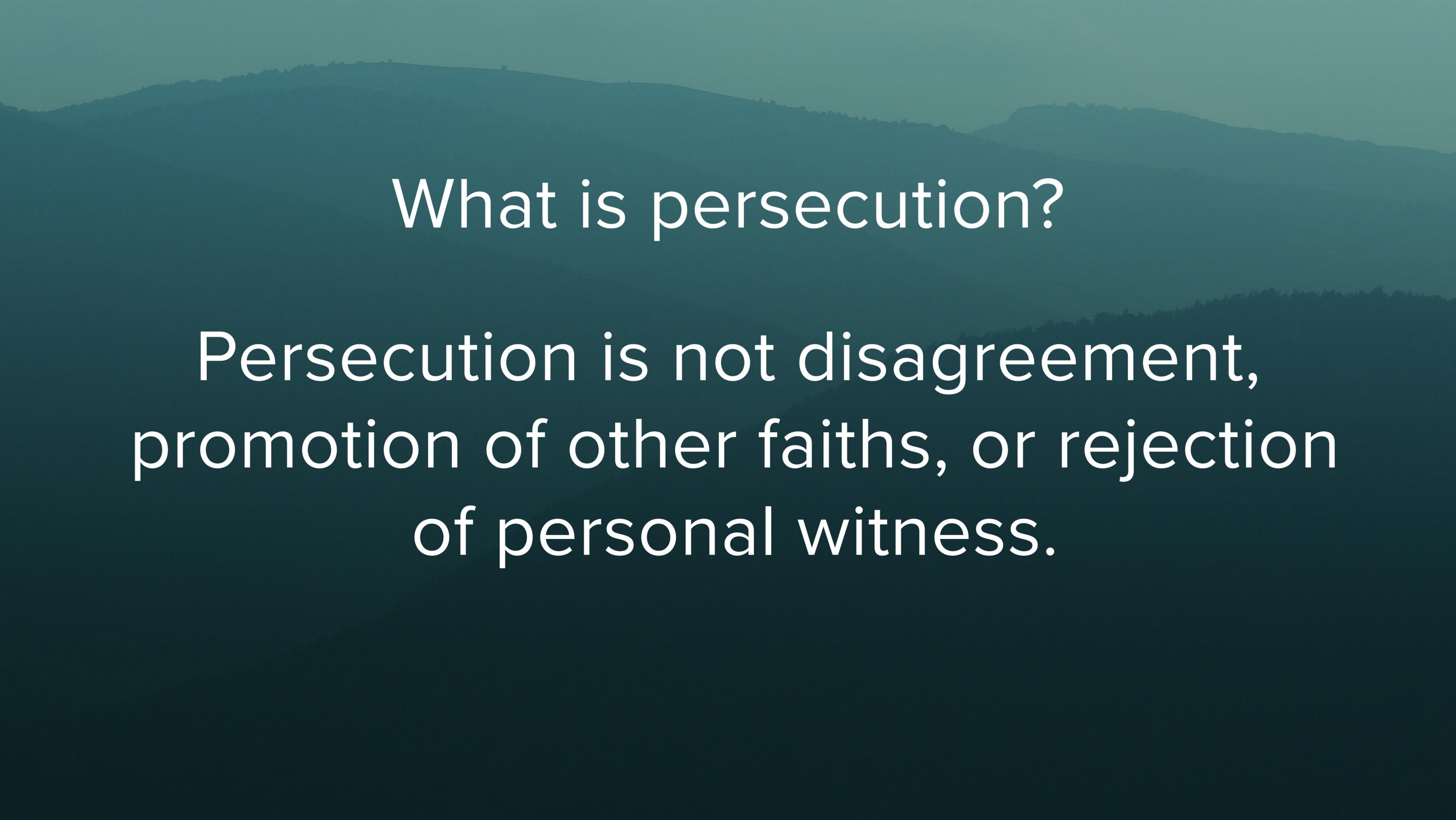
When My Faith Costs Me

Matthew 5:10

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



What is persecution?



What is persecution?

Persecution is not disagreement,
promotion of other faiths, or rejection
of personal witness.

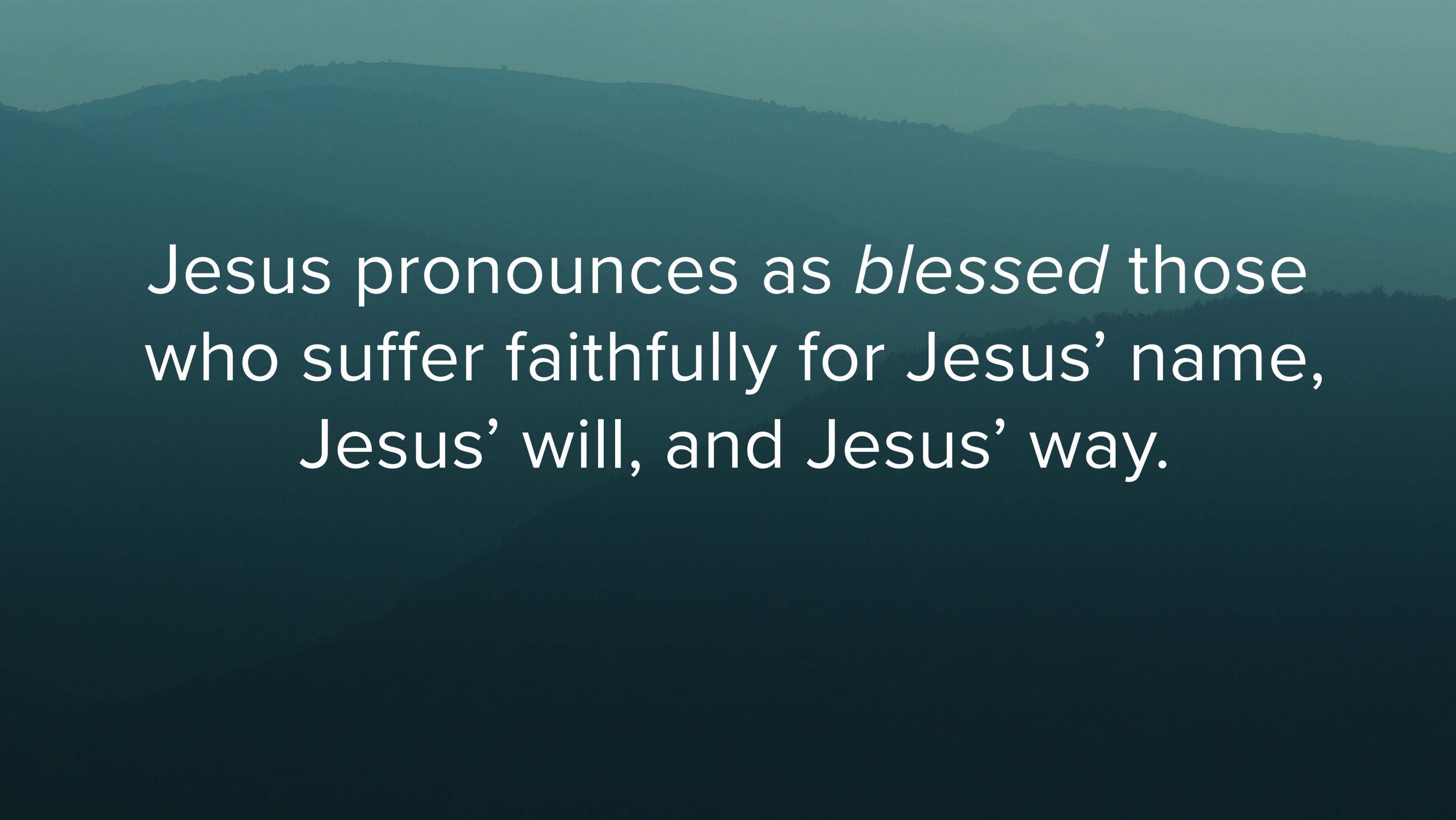
What is persecution?

Persecution is the “infliction of physical, emotional, or social suffering on an individual or group because of who they are or what they believe.”

JENNIFER GARCIA BASHAW

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted **because of righteousness**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you **because of me**. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



Jesus pronounces as *blessed* those
who suffer faithfully for Jesus' name,
Jesus' will, and Jesus' way.

1 Peter 4:14-16

¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ **If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.** ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.



“Do not expect to be blessed if you are being reviled for something evil, and what is being said is true.”

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



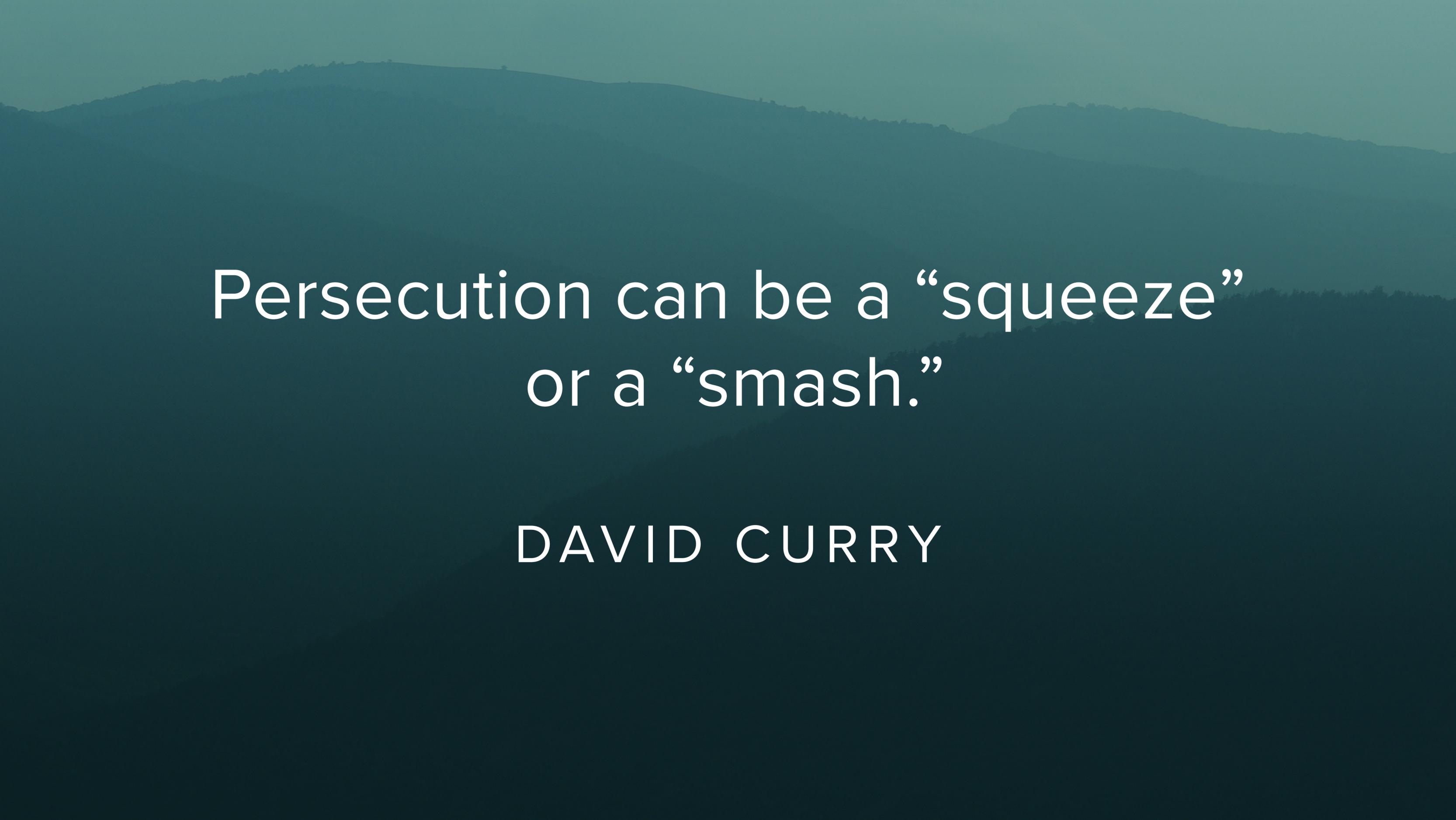
What does persecution look like?

Acts 16:16-24

¹⁶ Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” ¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

¹⁹ When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. ²⁰ They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar ²¹ by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.



Persecution can be a “squeeze”
or a “smash.”

DAVID CURRY

What's a Squeeze?

- Pressure to adopt attitudes, consent to ideas, or participate in activities that are contrary to beliefs
- Denial of professional opportunity or promotion because of beliefs

What's a Smash?

- Rejection or ridicule by family or social connections
- Loss of job
- Arrest or imprisonment
- Violence, threat of violence
- Loss of life

2 Timothy 2:1-7

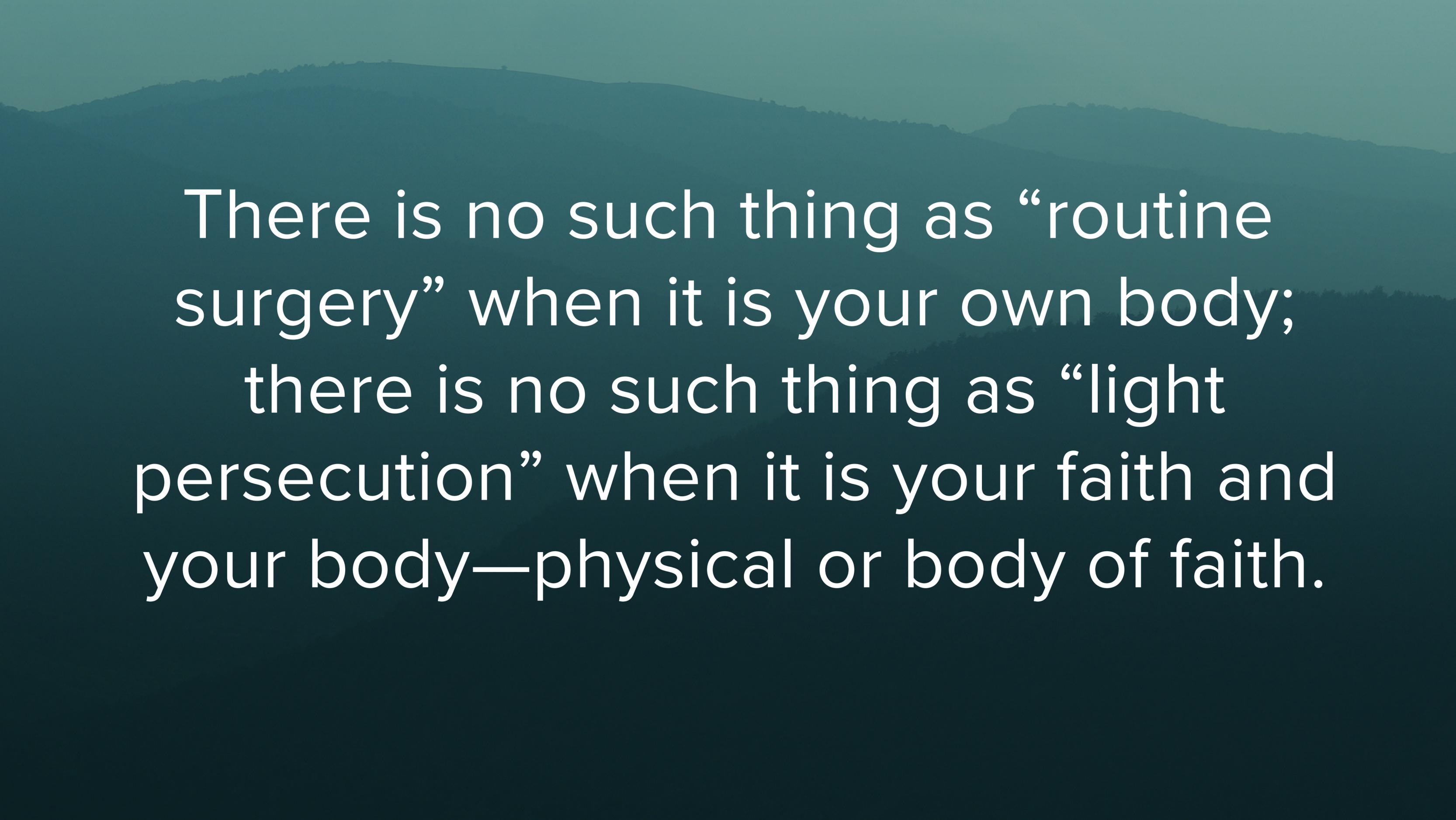
¹ You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

³ **Join with me in suffering**, like a **good soldier** of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

2 Timothy 2:1-7

⁵ Similarly, anyone who **competes as an athlete** does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules.

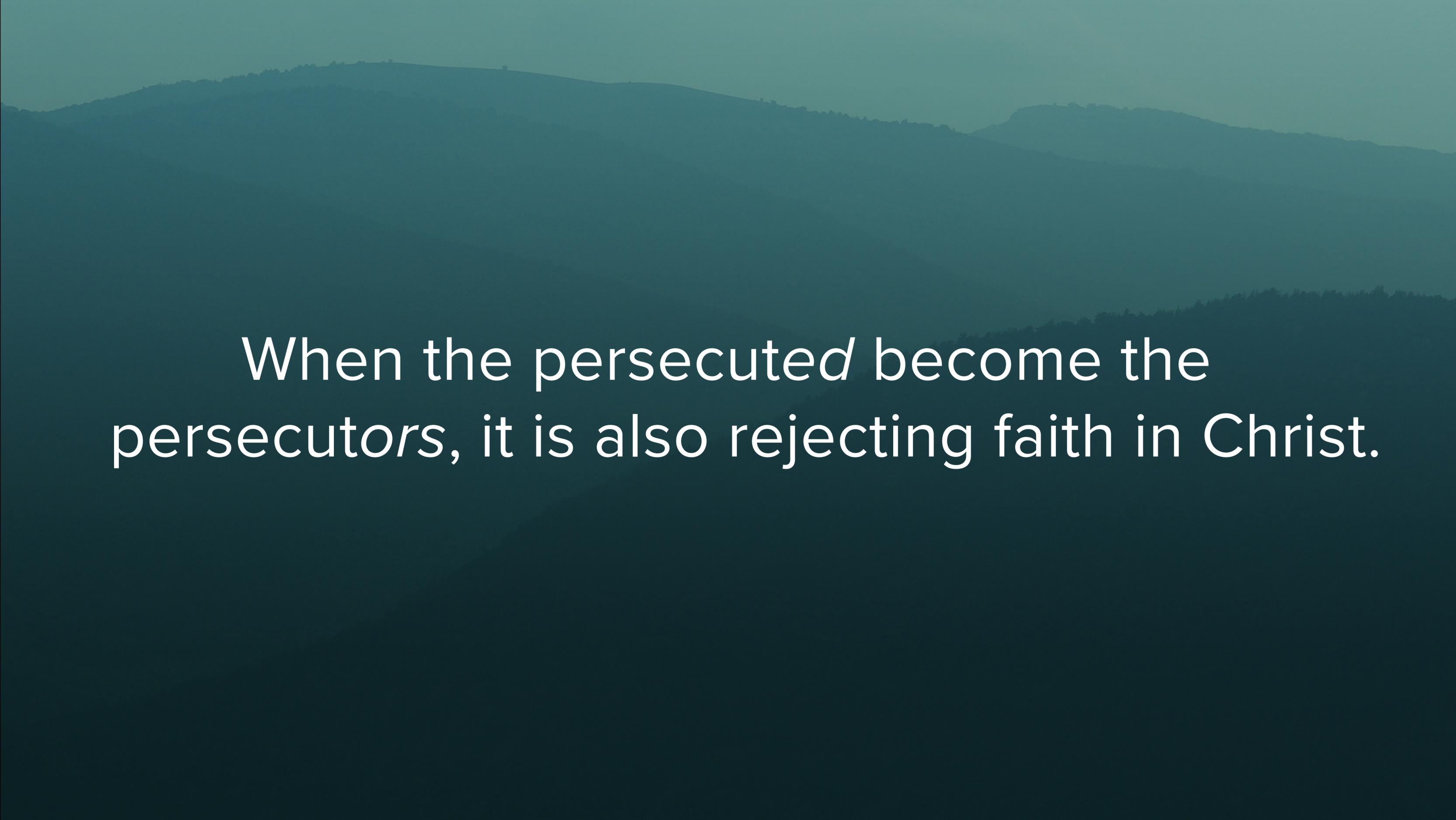
⁶ The **hardworking farmer** should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.



There is no such thing as “routine surgery” when it is your own body; there is no such thing as “light persecution” when it is your faith and your body—physical or body of faith.

WRONG RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

Apostasy – I reject my faith to avoid or limit persecution.



When the *persecuted* become the
persecutors, it is also rejecting faith in Christ.

WRONG RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

Apostasy – I reject my faith to avoid or limit persecution.

Aspiration – I seek out persecution to show my faith.

Philippians 3:10-11

¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

“Let me be food for the wild beasts, through whom I can attain to God. I am God’s wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.”

IGNATIUS

(1st Century Church
Leader in Antioch)



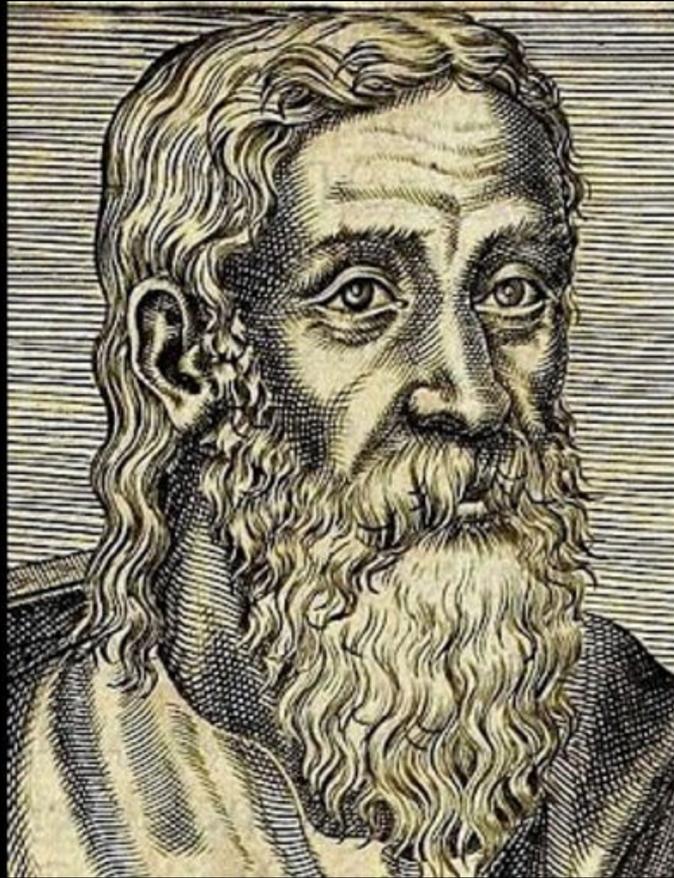
“It is one thing to be willing to die for the faith when compelled, another to throw oneself into danger unbidden. It is the part of a brave man to be prepared for martyrdom when it is necessary, not of one who tempts God to seek it rashly.”



CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE
(Bishop and Martyr, c. 200-258 AD)

RIGHT RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

Avoidance – I keep my faith and avoid persecution when possible.



“He who gives himself up of his own accord to the authorities does not act as the Lord commanded, for we are not to hand ourselves over; this is to become an accomplice in the crime of murder.”

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA
(Theologian, c. 150-215 AD)

Luke 21:20-22

²⁰ “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city.” — Jesus

RIGHT RESPONSES TO PERSECUTION

Avoidance – I keep my faith and avoid persecution when possible.

Acceptance – I keep my faith when persecution is unavoidable.

2 Thessalonians 1:4-5

⁴ Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your **perseverance and faith in all the persecutions** and trials you are enduring.

⁵ All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.

The background of the slide is a teal-tinted photograph of a mountain range. The mountains are layered, with the closest ones appearing darker and more detailed, and the ones in the distance appearing lighter and more hazy. The overall tone is a muted, monochromatic teal.

How can I prepare for persecution?



Be in the Word of God

Broaden Your Scope of Believers

Many persecuted Christians wish to be prayed for in these ways: that they would remain strong and have a powerful and untainted witness, that they would know God's presence in persecution, and that they would be able to have the Scriptures with them. They also very much wish that those who are not persecuted would ***remember them and continue to pray for them!***

PASTOR JAY BROWN

Belong in a Local Body of Believers



Befriend Those Who May Persecute You

Matthew 5:43-45

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

Why is there persecution?

Revelation 17:6

I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

Why is there persecution?

Persecution of people who promote Jesus' name, do Jesus' will, and follow Jesus' way is a challenge to Jesus himself.

Persecution is a challenge to the power and justice of God.



Daryl Davis