



## Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Richard Wurmbrand was a Romanian Pastor who was imprisoned in Communist Romania for his Christian faith. According to one of his books, *Reaching Toward the Heights*, Pastor Wurmbrand became a leader in the underground church in 1945 when the Communists seized his native land. In 1948 he and his wife, Sabina, were arrested, and he served fourteen years in Red Prisons, where he was brutally and repeatedly tortured, including three years in solitary confinement in a subterranean cell, never seeing the sun, the stars, or flowers. He saw no one except his guards and torturers. Christian friends in Norway purchased his freedom for \$10,000 in 1964.

After this, Pastor Wurmbrand literally became The Voice of the Martyrs. Upon being released from prison, Wurmbrand wrote and published his testimony in a book entitled, *Tortured for Christ*. In it, he detailed some of the horrifying persecutions he, and others, suffered while imprisoned. Through it all he persevered in his faith and continued to minister to persecuted Christians throughout the world.

Before his death in 2001, Pastor Wurmbrand told the story of a Cistercian abbot who temporarily broke his vow of silence and solitude in order to conduct a television interview in Italy. At one point, the interviewer asked, "What if you were to realize at the end of your life that atheism is true, that there is no God?" This Cistercian monk answered, "Holiness, silence, and sacrifice are beautiful in themselves, even without the promise of reward. I still will have used my life well."

At first, the monk's response sounds beautiful and biblical. However, upon further analysis, we find that the apostle Paul gave the exact opposite answer:

*"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. ... Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' "*  
(1 Corinthians 15:19, 30-32).

Obviously, the apostle Paul and the Cistercian abbot saw things quite differently. The abbot saw the Christian life as beautiful, peaceful, and beneficial. Paul, however, saw the Christian life through the lens of suffering persecution for Christ (see 2Cor.6:4-5; 11:23-27). To Paul, it is absolutely absurd for a Christian to suffer persecution for Christ if there is no resurrection!

The monk and the apostle lived radically different "Christian" lives. Paul's life represents the faithful followers of Christ in the New Testament, whereas the monk's life represents the Americanized "Christianity" as a good life of comfort, kindness, and prosperity. This leads people to say, "Even if there is no God – even if Christ was not raised, even if there is no heaven, even if Christianity is a hoax – the Christian life is still the best life." This is dangerous at best and damning at worst.

For a Christian life free from opposition or persecution does not truly represent what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ (see Matt.5:10-12; Jn.15:20; 16:1-4; Acts 14:22; Phil.3:10; 2Tim.3:12; Heb.10:32-34; 11:35-38). As Christians, we are called to suffer for Christ. We are not to be friends with this world (Jms.4:4), we are not to love this world (1Jn.2:15), and we are not to belong to this world (Jn.15:19; 17:14; Phil.3:20; 1Jn.3:13). In the New Testament, the sufferings of Christian persecution were normative. It is therefore good for us to ask ourselves, "How am I suffering for Christ?"

Together in and for Christ,  
Pastor David  
(8/11/25)

## **Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #32):**

*Leviticus 25-27; 1 Chronicles 1-4; Psalm 93-95; Proverbs 16; Daniel 1-6; John 3-4; 2 Thess. 1-3*

## **Recommended Reading:**

*"Tortured for Christ" by Richard Wurmbrand*