



Collusion or Collision
What Jesus Said About Collision
From Sermon 6.20.21

Read *Luke 21:12-19*

Review from Sunday's sermon: Never leaving His followers in the dark, Jesus gave a pretty comprehensive timeline of events leading up to His return. We know of the Great Tribulation. We'd read of (and observed) the influx of false teachers and false doctrine into the Church. But, Jesus also prophesied that persecution would follow true believers throughout Church history. Along with the prediction, however, Jesus also provided promise and encouragement. This would have meant everything to that early Church. And, now, should prepare and strengthen us.

1. Did persecution of the Church end, following the conclusion of the 1st Century A.D.? Not hardly. There was probably no harder Church era than that of the first 3 Centuries.

1a. Does it only resume during the Great Tribulation? No. It's estimated that about 70 million people have died for being a Christian over the past 2000 years. Countless others persecuted.

1b. Why is this reality harder for us to relate to, as American Christians? Because, unlike any other eras or regions of the world, we have enjoyed unprecedented social status, peace and safety.

2. Under the Purpose of Spreading of the Gospel: What are the two tendencies Christians/churches fall into that hinder the sharing of the Gospel? 1—we get too comfortable in the world/our world. We become like them = their pleasures, activities, values, pursuits, lifestyles. Or, 2—in a desire to guard holy living, we form a holy huddle and have little to no interaction with the lost.

2a. Which one would you say you struggle with most? Various Personal Answers

2b. How did God use persecution to get the 1st Church moving? The Jews set out to arrest and destroy the Jerusalem Church. Most had to leave everything and run for their lives. As they went, they took both the Gospel and their testimony with them. See also *Acts 8:1*

3. How might that apply to us? Various insights. Although trying and unpleasant, God may use these challenging days to mobilize the church. We can get too comfortable just playing church, week-to-week and not be the missionaries and evangelists He's called us to be. It may grow our faith and discipleship.

4. Read *Romans 5:3-5*. For now, our trials and collisions are relatively mild and infrequent. They are, however, meant to prepare us for something else. Explain and discuss. Trials are the only source of true, lasting growth and strength. When responded to biblically, they always produce perseverance.

4a. Consider the following analogies and how they apply to our collisions:

- A boxer/fighter: They have to learn, train, experience pain and failure. Response to first time getting hit or knocked down. See also *1 Corinthians 9:24-27*
- A Soldier: Must learn basics in boot camp, train/practice, trust weapon & team, push/ start with controlled conditions and scenarios...go fight. Get out of the foxhole. See *2 Timothy 2:3-4*

5. How is our very salvation tied to Paul's persecution? Timeline: His arrest. A hearing with Caesar. Evangelized the guards & household members. Church takes root. Rome Christianized under Constantine. Headquartered in Europe. Reformation and the Church of England. Flee to New World. Protestant Church in America. Us.