

15 Torture Wisdom From The Underground Church.

Excerpted and adapted from: Preparing For the Underground Church: Richard Wurmbrand Voice of the Martyrs SE Frank Phillips Boulevard, Bartlesville OK 74003 (918) 337-8015

You may yet live to see the Church forced to hide as it has in many centuries and lands that let the forces of evil gain a foothold in the land. There have been more martyrs for Christ in this century than all other centuries put together. "The Church Underground is the Church of one-third of the world, men who never thought before they would have to belong to it." Richard Wurmbrand, author of Tortured For Christ shares some of his secrets of aggressive survival in preparing for suffering and persecution:

(1) You will not be a member of the Underground Church unless you know how to suffer. You can have the mightiest faith, but if you are not prepared to suffer you will be taken by the police. You will get two slaps and you will declare anything. Preparation for suffering is one of the essentials . A Christian does not panic if put in prison .. prison is a new place to witness for Christ. For a pastor, prison is a new parish .. with no income but great opportunities. Morse code is part of this training ... through this you can preach the Gospel to those on your right and on your left. ... Do not fear the prison. Look on it as a new assignment from God.

(2) Truth about the Truth. How much each can suffer depends on how much we are bound up to a cause, how dear to us and how much it means to you. Gifted preachers and writers of Christian books have become traitors. Everything depends on whether we have remained in the sphere of words or if we are merged with Divine reality. God is the Truth. The Bible is the truth about the Truth. Theology is the truth about the truth about the Truth. . The Truth is God alone.

Words, theologies, exposition: None of these is of any help in time of suffering. It is only the Truth Himself Who is of help. When you pass through suffering you realize it was never meant by God that Psalm 23 should strengthen you. It is the Lord Who can strengthen you, not the Psalm which speaks of Him .. It is not enough to have the Psalm. You must have the One about Whom the Psalm speaks. .. Holy words are only the means to arrive at the Reality expressed by them. If you only have the words of the Lord, you can very easily be broken. If you are united with the Reality, the Lord Almighty, evil loses its power over you; it cannot break the Lord Almighty.

(3) Spiritual Exercises: Preparation for underground work is deep spiritualization. As we peel an onion, God must peel from use what are mere words, sensations of enjoyment in religion, to arrive at the reality of our faith. ... We not only have our prayer, but moments of meditation and contemplation. We can read of those sawn asunder, burned at stakes, thrown to wild beasts, but we must also visualize them. My last Sunday School class before I left for Romania I took not to a church, but a zoo. Before the cage of lions I told them: "Your forefathers in faith were thrown before such wild beasts for their faith. Know that you also will suffer. You will not be thrown to lions, but you will have to suffer at the hands of men who will be much worse than lions. Decide here and now if you wish to pledge allegiance to Christ."

In prison you lose everything. Nobody resists who has not renounced the pleasures of life beforehand. The Christian who prepares himself for this now will not suffer the loss in prison. Do not allow doubts about the essential doctrines of the Bible. Every theological or philosophical doubt makes you a potential traitor. Don't live with doubt; seek a solution.

Tests Of Torture: Torture has a moment of explosion and the torturer waits for this critical moment. Learn how to conquer doubts and to think thoroughly. There is always one moment of crisis when you are ready to write or say the name ...you have been tortured so much nothing counts any more. The fact that I should not have pain also does not count. Draw this last conclusion at the moment of crisis; it gives you an intense inner joy. You will feel Christ with you in that decisive moment. Jailers today are trained and refined in awareness of crisis. If they cannot get anything from you in that moment then they abandon torturing; they know its continuation will be useless. Read Foxes Book of Martyrs; learn how others overcame the moment of crisis.

It is important to understand what Jesus said "Take no thought for the morrow..". It seems impossible to bear long years of prison. You are not asked to bear it all at once. Do not bear even one day at a time - bear one hour at a time. One hour of pain everybody can bear. What amplifies pain is the memory that I have been beaten and tortured so many times and tomorrow they will take me again. Tomorrow I or they may not be alive. At first torture is a terrible shock and pain; it does not continue to be so. . You forget - you become absolutely indifferent to everything. This is the critical moment when you need to breathe rightly.

Practice breathing right - it is one of the means of resisting torture. Try once to quarrel with someone while breathing quietly, rhythmically and deeply. You will find you cannot. Under torture, breathe as a traitor cannot. The oxygenation gives a resistance to the whole body which balances your reaction and gives you a poised attitude.

An underground worker should know not only with his head but to his fingertips that he belongs to a Body which has been flogged for 2,000 years, a mocked body, a body spat upon and one crowned with many thorns with nails driven into hands and into feet. I will never think of Jesus Christ as only having been crucified 2,000 years ago. The sufferings of Jesus in His mystical Body must become a reality with me.

LOVE CHRIST MORE THAN YOUR FAMILY. Your heart may break, but your answer should be "I love God." Learn to be silent. A Christian is a man who speaks little but with great weight. In the Underground Church every superfluous word can do harm. If you have believed in the past you are blessed. I do not know how sound the theology is, but we did not live on theology at the time. We lived on past memories. The Bible teaches we should "bless the Lord and not forget His past blessings". Remember the past even if you pass through the dark night of the soul. Deal with solitude by traveling the world in prayer. READ THE BIBLE from memory. Every night I composed a sermon and delivered it; I memorized three hundred and fifty of them. I composed books, poems, jokes. Your mind must be continually exercised. It must be alert, it must think."

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