

## DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS

by

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Forty-Eighth Week - First Day

PAUL, AN EXAMPLE OF GODLY LIVING

***"But you [Timothy] have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra--what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:10-12).***

Was this suffering peculiar to Paul and to the times in which he lived? Let this question be answered by another: Has the offense of the cross ceased? It is to preclude this idea that the apostle adds, *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* All who do what? Not merely all who like himself go forth into the active warfare against "principalities and powers" for Christ's sake, but all who will do what every sincere Christian must do in all ages--*"all who will live godly in Christ Jesus."* This is the same intimation Paul and Barnabas made to the converts generally: *"Exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* (Acts 14:22).

Here again is an aim common to all believers in every age, made plain and inevitable as a matter of declaration, and made clear by invincible reasoning. We know that *"whatever is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world"* (1 John 2:16). These are the things the carnal mind seeks after and rests upon. But *"the carnal mind is enmity against God"* (Rom. 8:7), and necessarily *"the friendship of the world is enmity with God"* (James 4:4). He, therefore, who takes up his cross to follow the Lamb wherever He goes --"who will live godly in Christ Jesus"--does by that profession turn his back upon the world and renounce its friendship. Now in some way or another the world will be affronted and its hostility aroused at such a stand; and if our religion be of that neutral tint that does not arouse the enmity of the world, if men cannot see from our walk and conversation that we have been with Jesus, then woe unto us.

Though in our age and day we do not expect the persecution suffered by Paul and the early believers, still there is the alienation of relatives and friends, the forfeiture of many social advantages, and the exclusion from certain societies. There is the quiet neglect from neighbors, the cold shrug, the contemptuous sneer, and the derisive laugh. There is the distress of seeing the most lauded of our land casting contempt and scorn upon the Christian faith. All this,

however, is to be expected. These and the like form the burden of that cross which our Master calls us to take up and bear. Indeed, if our faith is the kind that passes by unnoticed by contemptuous and worldly men, it is questionable if it can withstand God's all-seeing eye.

Religion today is a more comfortable thing. The world seems to hate it less intensely, and even to a large extent regard it as something decent and creditable. Why is this? Has the world become less worldly? Has its enmity to the things of God abated? Or could it be that the church has become more worldly? If, indeed, your tastes are for worldly things, for worldly glory, for worldly fortune, for worldly satisfaction, or even for worldly affections, than you have not taken the Apostle Paul for your example. Are you able to bear the loss of all things in order to win Christ, as he did? Are you able to say with Peter, "I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death"? Then it only remains for you to examine your heart to satisfy yourself that this is true. But if you inwardly answer, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it?" then it is quite certain you are not a follower of Paul.<sup>1</sup>

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1 This last paragraph is from Monod, *St. Paul: Five Discourses*, and slightly paraphrased.