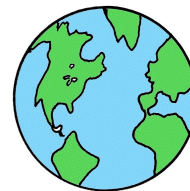


# BECAUSE THEY'RE CHRISTIANS



*Theme: Praying for persecuted Christians*

*Scripture: John 15:20b*

Has anyone ever been mean to you? Has anybody ever picked on you or called you names? Well, that's probably happened to everyone at some time. But let me ask you this: Has anyone ever been mean to you just because you're a Christian?

Did you know there are more than 50 countries around the world where it's against the law to be a Christian? If you lived in one of those countries you could be put in jail because you came to church today. All of us would be arrested!

Raise your hand if you have a Bible at home. If you lived in one of those countries and they found a Bible in your house they could put your parents in jail. You'd come home from school and there would be no one home. And you wouldn't know where they went!

In some countries your family and friends would refuse to talk to you if you became a Christian. In some countries you couldn't get a job if you were a Christian. In some countries they might beat you just because you were a Christian. "persecute" means? It means to be really mean to someone.

It kind of makes all those bad things that happen to us seem not so bad, doesn't it? I mean we're really blessed to live in a country that allows us to have Bibles and to come together to worship God.

Well, part of our job as Christians is to pray for other people. And it's especially important to pray for the Christians around the world who are being badly mistreated just because they believe in Jesus. So let's do that now:

Father God, we thank you so much that we live in a country where we can worship you and praise Jesus without being persecuted. We pray for those Christians who are mistreated simply because they believe in Jesus. Please give them courage, protect them and comfort them. And we pray you will also bless the people who are doing the persecuting. Please give them new hearts so that maybe instead of persecuting Christians they'll become Christians. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Song: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"*

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