



© Outreach Media 2016. All rights reserved.

In Northern Iraq, under ISIS rule, it's a crime to be a Christian. Followers of Jesus are forced to convert to Islam, pay an unaffordable tax or face death. Thousands have fled their homes. In Vietnam, Christians are persecuted by the Communist government. Whilst religious freedom is legally permitted, meetings are closely monitored, publications are restricted and sometimes church and personal property are destroyed. Violence against Vietnamese Christians is increasing. Even in Turkey, a Muslim country that prides itself on being modern and secular, the Christian church is harassed by the authorities. Believers, particularly converts from Islam, are actively discriminated against and some murdered.

But why do these people, these followers of Christ, risk such persecution? Why end up in jail or even lose their lives for the name, "Christian"? Wouldn't it be just so much easier to crawl into the woodwork and just say what people want you to say? Just agree with them, how hard could that be?

When Jesus said he was the "Way, the Truth and the Life" he was making three very big statements. Firstly, he didn't say he was one 'way' among many, but 'the' way. That is, the way to God and forgiveness. Secondly, Jesus also said he was 'the' truth. Which means that like God the Father, no lie is found in him. But more than being truthful, Jesus was saying we could find the truth through him. Finally, Jesus is the giver of new life, of eternal life.

When men, women and children trust in Jesus and find God's way, nothing else on earth seems so important.

Following Jesus is so liberating that even the world's worst oppressors can't keep Christians down. They want to honour him by giving him praise and glory, even in the toughest of circumstances and share the good news with those that they love.

Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me". This means we all need to take these words seriously - there are no other options. It seems that when people live in fear and danger they realise the urgency and importance of this message, even if in sharing it they can pay a very high price.

Here in Australia, in our mostly comfortable lives, we mustn't forget Jesus' words and how important they are. We may feel like we have a smorgasbord of options but if Jesus is the only way to the Father then Australians, just as much as people suffering in Iraq or elsewhere, need to get to know him. Will you start this year resolving to do just that?

Prayer: Dear God, give me strength this year to trust in Jesus, the way, the truth and the life.

Verse: John 14:6 Jesus said ... "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"