

GOSPEL PEARLS

Our persecutions

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Jesus said to his disciple "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their

parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10: 16-23)

Jesus does not promise his disciples will reap honours in this life. He does promise, however, they will suffer persecution. This suffering can even start from within one own household. Not that Jesus is happy with the persecution we receive from our own relatives, but it does reflect reality. Having said this, we must admit that the struggle is not necessarily against other men but often against ourselves. This is because nobody likes being despised, hated, marginalized and persecuted by his own family members. May we ask Jesus for strength during our daily persecutions, both great and small.