

Letter from American Pastor Saeed Abedini, imprisoned in Iran for his Christian faith:

January 10, 2013

When I heard that empty Christmas settings were placed during Christmas as a reminder of my imprisonment and those imprisoned for Christ, tears of joy filled my eyes. I was able to share about this with other prisoners and they were shocked by the love and support we have for each other in Jesus. I told them how in the Bible we are all considered brothers and sisters (despite race, color, or nationality) and we are to share in each other's pains. This comes from our Lord.

The Word of God says that when we are persecuted for our faith, we are to count it all joy. When I think that all of these trials and persecutions are being recorded in heaven for me, my heart is filled with complete joy.

The Bible says that the Joy of the Lord is our strength. Without the joy of the Lord we cannot live. It is this joy in our life that gives us strength to continue in this life. Without strength, we cannot continue the work of the Lord and without joy, there is no strength.

I always wanted God to make me a godly man. I did not realize that in order to become a godly man we need to become like steel under pressure. It is a hard process of warm and cold to make steel. This is the process in my life today: one day I am told I will be freed and allowed to see my family and kids on Christmas (which was a lie) and the next day I am told I will hang for my faith in Jesus. One day there are intense pains after beatings in interrogations, the next day they are

nice to you and offer you candy. These hot and cold days only make you a man of steel for moving forward in expanding His Kingdom.

When for 120 days you sleep in a room with a giant light that is constantly lit, not allowing you to separate day from night, and when you can only see true sunlight for a few minutes a week, that's when you are becoming His Workmanship and you can be a vessel in bringing His Kingdom in a dark place and you are able to share the Gospel of Peace and Life to the dying world. And this is where you learn you can love your enemies with all of your heart.

I am looking forward to the day I can see all of you who are behind me with your prayers and to embrace you in my arms. Thank you for the love you have showed me.

What is in us is stronger than what is in the world and it has conquered the world.

Pastor Saeed Abedini, in chains for our Lord Jesus Christ