

Christianity Under Communism

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Yulie Stepro and R. David Pogge

This week we are going to talk to Yulie Stepro about what it was like to grow up in communist Russia. What she has to say is interesting and important. It is interesting because, it just is interesting. It is important because it shows what happens when a government hostile to Christianity gets control of the news media.

[Yulie Stepro interview - <http://krsf.net/mp3s/TWWU120122a.mp3>]

[music – Becky Richardson and Susan Pogge, “I’ll Walk With God” - <http://krsf.net/mp3s/LM0029.mp3>]

We have had it pretty easy in America. We have been able to practice our faith and preach the gospel without much government interference. But, in John 9:4, Jesus warns us,

As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

Jesus says there will come a time when opposition to Christianity will be strong. In John 16 He says,

All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you. ...

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Jesus told parable after parable stressing the need to get ready for His second coming. Since they are parables, it is easy to miss their meaning. So, Matthew 24, verses 30 through 51, record Jesus very plain warning about what must soon take place.

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the

days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus could not say it much more clearly. Because He loves us, He warns us. That's why Paul gave similar warnings in his letters to the Romans and Corinthians.

... The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:11-14)

What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. (1 Corinthians 7:29-30)

As we see our religious liberty slipping away, as the media becomes more and more anti-Christian, it will become more difficult for us to give the messages that Jesus and Paul gave. Let us work while it is day and labor in the light because we can see the night coming when we will have to labor in darkness.

[music – Kimmie Witzel and JoAn Witzel, "Are You Ready For Jesus to Come?" - <http://krsf.net/mp3s/LM0050.mp3>]