



SUNDAY

FOR THE **PERSECUTED
CHURCH**

Take
heart

**DIGITAL CHURCH
SERVICE GUIDE**



Open Doors

STAND WITH YOUR PERSECUTED FAMILY

Church leaders and Christians in Syria's persecuted church are calling on you. They are calling on you and your church to join them.

They are calling on you to stand as one with your persecuted family and to rise up against violent persecution!

Will you answer their call on this special Sunday for the Persecuted Church? For your prayers have tremendous power to stop the violence and start the healing process.

We have produced resources to help you and your church to pray. This short guide will help you plan your service.

Thank you so much!

Marc de Graaf
Director Open Doors The Netherlands



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Rev. Piet Vroegindeweij and Ibrahim Lahdo, both theologians, wrote a sermon outline based on the Bible passage 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. The outline refers to the situation of the church in Syria, the country that co-author Ibrahim was forced to flee. Entitled 'Take heart to do good in evil times', the sermon outline serves as a source of inspiration for proclaiming the Word in the service. It is divided into the following elements and themes:

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Please note: some viewers may find this story disturbing, and the video contains images that are unsuitable for young children.

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Almost every time we meet persecuted brothers and sisters, they ask us to pray for them. Here you will find specific prayer requests that you can use in your service.

Take Heart

TO DO GOOD IN EVIL TIMES

WRITTEN BY: REV. PIET VROEGINDEWEIJ AND IBRAHIM LAHDO

Rev. Piet Vroegindeweij is pastor of the Reformed Church in Kootwijkerbroek. Ibrahim Lahdo was a pastor in Syria but had to resign for security reasons. Since then, he has been affiliated with Open Doors Netherlands.

BIBLE READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18 (NKJV)

The treasure in earthen vessels

⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

⁸*We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—
¹⁰always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

¹¹For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

¹²So then death is working in us, but life in you.

¹³And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,

¹⁴knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

¹⁵For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

An earthly tent and a home in heaven

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the thin which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal.

SERMON OUTLINE

Exegetical remarks

1. The 'cheap' pot, verse 7: *'We have this treasure in earthen vessels...'* In the first century, these were everyday household items—fragile, easily replaceable, and worthless. Equivalent to the plastic cups of our time.
2. The wordplay of despair (ἀπορω versus ἐξαπορέω), verse 8: *'perplexed (AMP doubt), but not in despair'*. Paul uses a brilliant rhetorical wordplay in Greek. The same word is used in two forms:
 - a. ἀπορέω: To have no way no way out, i.e. be at a loss.
 - b. ἐξαπορέω: To be utterly at a loss, despond, losing all hope. It is a minor but meaningful difference. You can no longer comprehend it with your mind. Emotionally, you have completely broken down. As far as you are concerned, it is over and done with. But somewhere there is something (from God) that means the situation is not *totally* lost.
3. Verse 9: the word ἐγκαταλείπω, forsaken' means to abandon. To leave someone alone in a miserable situation.
4. The Sign of the Cross (necrosis), verse 10: 'always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus'. The word for 'dying' here is *nekrōsis*, which refers to a state of death or 'putting to death'. It occurs only once more in the New Testament in Romans 4:9, referring to the state of deadness in Sarah's (closed) womb; she miraculously conceived a child.
5. Renewal versus decay: verse 16 – *'Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed...'*
 - The word διαφθείρω (to decay/wither away) describes a passive process that occurs through ageing and trials. However, it is also mentioned in 1 Tim. 6:5 in reference to unbelievers, whose lack of knowledge of the truth has caused their minds to decay.
 - ἀνακαινώνω (to renew) is also a passive process, but it is an ongoing action of the Holy Spirit. Paul also writes in Colossians 3:10 that our new self is renewed to true knowledge of the image of God.

BACKGROUND TO THE SERMON:

The congregation in Corinth

The history of Christianity in Corinth begins with Paul's arrival from Athens (Acts 18). The Athenians' mockery of the Risen One still reverberates in his ears as he arrives in the bustling trading city of Corinth, where temples to every conceivable deity are found, along with a strong imperial cult. He stayed there for around 18 months (Acts 18:11). For Paul, this was an unusually long time to spend in one city. This suggests that Corinth was a strategic hub — a place of chaotic diversity, wealth, and immense spiritual need.

It was here that he met the important figures who would become his brothers and sisters in faith. He [worked alongside Aquila and Priscilla, refugees from Rome who shared his craft of tentmaking. He witnessed the conversion of Crispus, the leader of the local synagogue, and his entire household embraced Christianity. When the synagogue leaders turned against him, he found refuge with Titius Justus, a non-Jewish 'worshipper of God', whose house was located next to the synagogue.

Paul founded the church in Corinth. He had worked for them, wept for them and devoted his entire life to their development. However, by the time he wrote his second letter to them, their relationship had changed.

Paul, the vulnerable servant of Christ

This letter to the Corinthians provides a more profound insight into Paul than any other book in the New Testament. It is a letter born out of a crisis. In it, he shows an unprecedented vulnerability that we find nowhere else in his writings. Here, we see Paul not as some saint, but as a real flesh-and-blood person struggling to defend his ministry against people who cared more about image and eloquence than substance.

In the church in Syria and the Netherlands, Paul is depicted as a fearless hero who travelled from city to city with unshakeable confidence to establish churches, regardless of the circumstances. Untouchable by ridicule and opposition and undeterred by anything, he is a role model for success and making an impact. Paul is seen as an inspiring speaker and the powerful CEO of the early church.

This letter shatters that image of him. Paul was not a smooth speaker. The people of the church in Corinth, who were obsessed with Greek eloquence and refined rhetoric, always said, 'His speech is contemptible!' (2 Cor. 10:10). He was considered an amateur. Paul himself acknowledges this, saying that he is 'untrained in speech' (2 Cor. 11:6).

When people today see an enthusiastic, eloquent speaker, they may readily praise him as 'the new Paul!' Yet it was said that the real Paul had a 'weak' presence. He was not the charming figure who could rival the 'super apostles' (ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων), who surpassed him (2 Cor. 11:5). These 'most eminent apostles' were the Golden Vessels of their time. They had the looks, the voice and the CV. Paul, on the other hand, seemed like a failure.

Even his physical appearance was somewhat flawed. He may have had vision problems; in Acts 23, he could not recognise the high priest standing before him, which suggests he had poor eyesight. In Galatians 4:15, he tells the church, 'I can testify that if it were possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.' This condition probably made walking difficult for him and affected his overall appearance. He was a man who seemed weak, a man who squinted his eyes, and a man who perhaps bore the physical scars of countless beatings.

Moreover, Paul found it difficult to open up about his feelings. We always have high expectations of the 'giants of faith'. We want them to be made of stone. However, the contrast here is striking: Paul speaks of 'much affliction and anguish' and writes 'with many tears'. He admits that he was mentally and emotionally 'in perplexed' (2 Cor. 4:8). Paul was a man caught between two worlds, both of which expected him to be untouchable. As a leader of the Jewish faith and a prominent figure in the Eastern culture, he was expected to embody courage, honour and unwavering strength. In that world, showing emotion was often considered extremely shameful. Yet Paul did something revolutionary: he demonstrated that God's strength does not require our perfection. He was a man who struggled, who felt

'less than', and who was keenly aware of his own shortcomings. In his culture, that was seen as a weakness. In God's kingdom, however, it was his greatest strength.

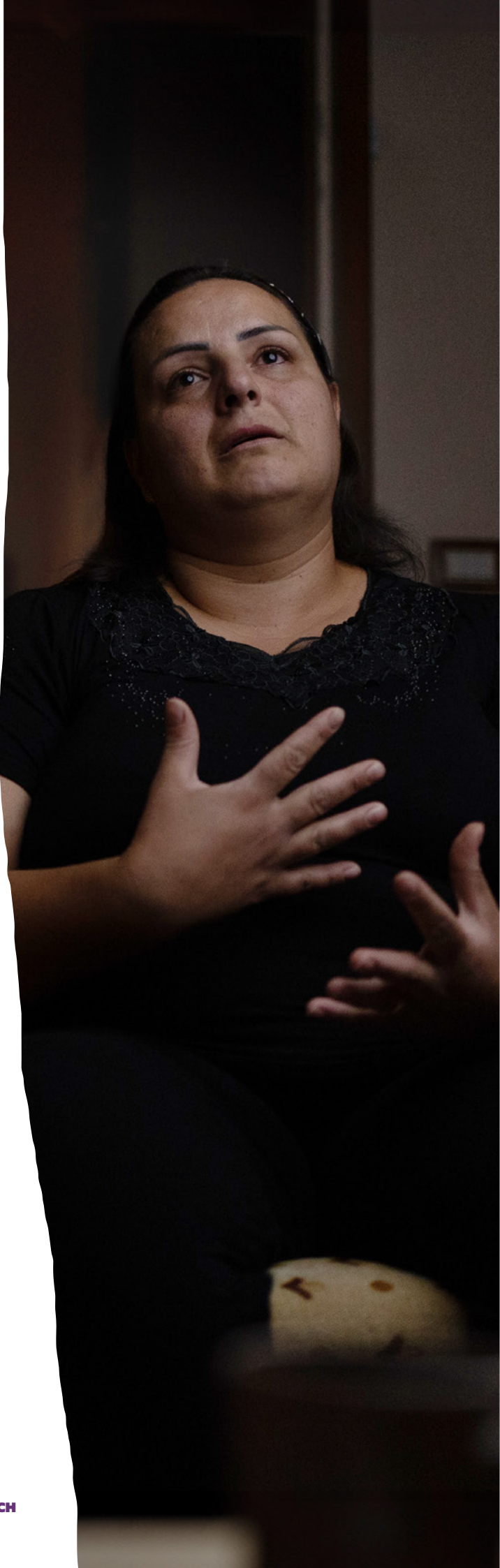
In Western culture, there is a movement that celebrates vulnerability. For Paul, however, there is another reason not to be ashamed of weakness and failure. It is not because it makes him strong, but because God's strength is made visible through his weakness.

The church in Syria today

In 2026, Syria was identified as the biggest climber on Open Doors' World Watch List. It has risen from 18th to 6th place. Christians in Syria are under threat of extinction. Since the war began in 2011, their numbers have fallen from 1.9 million to just 300,000. Many fear for the future as Islamic influence grows.

The report on Syria¹ published by Open Doors in January provides a clear picture of the situation. It powerfully illustrates how Christians are being threatened and intimidated after the fall of Assad, while the West is being given the impression that everyone is welcome there. Church leaders are trying to offer hope in the face of this increased pressure, but they are also struggling with deep feelings of both hope and despair. For them, these verses from 2 Corinthians 4 are a daily reality.

¹ See: www.opendoors.nl/place6



LINE OF THOUGHT

LINE OF THOUGHT 1

In this part of the letter to the Corinthians (chapter 3), Paul begins by discussing letters of recommendation. The Corinthians wanted proof of his authority. In modern terms, they wanted to see his CV and LinkedIn profile. Imagine Paul's LinkedIn page for a moment. On this platform, we are trained to present ourselves as 'golden vessels'. We post our successes, diplomas and 'excellent' results. We present every failure as a 'growth opportunity'. We present an image of someone who's never been broken, someone who is themselves the 'treasure' (rather than clay jars containing treasure),

But Paul's CV is the worst you will ever read. He doesn't claim to be a golden vessel; he says he is an earthen vessel. You can use it for everything — storing oil, grain or even rubbish. If it broke, it wasn't repaired — it was thrown away and a new one was bought for a few coins. It was worthless.

By calling himself an 'earthen vessel', Paul is saying: *"I am cheap. I am fragile. I am common. I am not main character in this story."* He highlights this specifically to show that the 'surpassing greatness of the power' belongs to God and not to us. This is a poetic, literary contrast where the first attribute always captures Paul's frailty, and the second reveals God's hand at work.

Message: the LinkedIn church versus the persecuted body

The church in the Netherlands is often under pressure to be 'impressive' – to have the best music, the most eloquent speakers, and the most effective programmes. We want a CV that looks good. However, this way of thinking is more characteristic of the world than of Christ. Let us reconsider our definition of 'success'.

Persecuted Christians and church leaders are vulnerable individuals who bear the scars of Christ. They endure great hardship and suffer greatly, both spiritually and emotionally. Yet, in their suffering, they radiate the glory and peace of Christ.

In the eyes of the world, the church in Syria is declining. Its buildings are in ruins and its congregation

is shrinking. By today's standards, they are failing. However, according to Paul, they are the most successful among us because the treasure is so visible through their cracks.

The focus of the church should be to demonstrate the 'all-surpassing power of God'. Let us stop judging our churches by how much 'gold' they have, and embrace the brokenness we all share.

LINE OF THOUGHT 2

Although threatened and abandoned by people, God holds us fast in Christ

Verses 8 and 9 contain four striking contrasts:

Paul's human CV (earthly vessel)	God's perspective (glorious power)
a. Hard pressed	Not crushed
b. Perplexed (at a loss)	Not in despair (no total loss)
c. Persecuted (hunted)	Not forsaken (abandoned)
d. Cast down (crushed)	Not destroyed

These contrasts contain the secret of Christian perseverance.

a. Hard pressed, but not crushed
The words 'hard pressed' refer to intense pressure, like grapes being pressed in a wine press. Paul felt the weight of the world bearing down on him. Yet he says that he is 'not crushed'. Internally, there is still room. What is inside the vessel, or more precisely 'Who' is inside it, prevents the external pressure from collapsing the walls of the pot.

b. Perplexed but not in despair
This is a striking statement. In 2 Corinthians 1:8, Paul says he was 'despairing even of life'. How can he say here that he is *not* in despair?

The Greek word for 'perplexed (in doubt)' (ἀπορέω) means to have no way no way out, i.e. 'be at a loss'. The word for 'despair/desperate' (ἐξαπορέω) is simply

a more intense version of the same word. Paul uses a play on words here that is not possible in our own language: 'We are at a loss, but not a total loss.' This means that although Paul's mind was confused and his emotions were overwhelming, his spirit remained steadfast. He admits that he did not have the answers and was at a loss. He did not have a five-step plan for solving his problems. He was confused! But he was not hopeless. The important lesson here is that you can be a faithful Christian and still be confused about what God is doing.

c. Persecuted, but not forsaken

This brings us to the most powerful word in the text: 'forsaken' (ἐγκαταλείπω). This word appears ten times in the New Testament. It is the same word used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew verb בָּיַע. In the New Testament, Jesus uses it in his most famous words from the cross: 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?).

This is a quote from Psalm 22:1. Jesus 'sang' this 'Prayer in Affliction'. By saying, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?', he expressed the intense weight of God's abandonment. It is a dizzying depth of the highest affliction. At the same time, the rest of the psalm also resonates in the quotation. The mockery of His trust in God (v. 9) but also the end of the Psalm. And in that intense abandonment, the following remains: 'For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.' (Psalm 22:24). Peter refers to this reality of not being forsaken by Jesus in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:27), even through death and the grave. Armed with this profound knowledge, both the New Testament and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament employ this term to convey the promise that God will never forsake His people (see Hebrews 13:5 and the well-known verse from Joshua 1:5). However, Paul uses this same verb twice in the New Testament to refer to people who abandoned him in difficult situations. He mentions Demas, who 'abandoned' him because he loved the world, when 'At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me.' (2 Timothy 4:9, 16).

Paul knows that you feel most abandoned when you are persecuted. Demas was not the only one; it was a whole crowd of people who turned their backs on him. After his sudden conversion, it was the Jewish leaders in Damascus. Most painful of all was the church in Corinth, which he had founded and which rejected him for not being 'eminent' enough. Paul draws this contrast to show that even when human support disappears, the divine presence remains. Although he was persecuted and abandoned by people, he was never abandoned by God.

d. Cast down, but not destroyed

This final contrast also illustrates the brutality he had to endure. A physical example of this is the stoning in Lystra, where the crowd was incited by radical Judaists, causing the atmosphere to change from idolisation to contempt. They dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead, but – as if by a miracle – he got up and continued on his way (Acts 14:19; 2 Cor. 11:25). This is a reality for persecuted Christians today, who are subjected to horrific physical torture.

Message: encouragement to do good in bad times

In all these contradictions lies the profound awareness that individuals have the capacity to inflict immense harm upon you, and that this has a profound impact on you. However, inside the earthen vessel, there is an inner core and a hidden power of God which, however impossible it may seem, gives you new courage. Courage to do good.

We can learn from Paul, as well as from Elias and Hanan from Syria (see their story on page 12), to remain courageous in doing good despite oppression. Let us be encouraged by them to keep doing good in our environment, regardless of any pressure or temptation. Their resilience inspires us to boldly proclaim the gospel, no matter how much pressure the church is under, and no matter how much pressure your physical health is under. That is because God's future is coming, and the 'light' affliction pales in comparison to that glory.

LINE OF THOUGHT 3

Connected to Christ

For Paul, it was essential that he, as a servant, was deeply connected to Christ. One with Him. It was about following Him through suffering to glory. Persecution and abandonment were nothing unusual for him. He was walking the same path as Jesus, the Kurios. The threat of death and being despised and mocked by enemies is all part of it. It serves the proclamation of the gospel. Just as Christ's sacrifice atones for sins and is the source of cleansing and renewal, so Paul's sacrifice and dedication are for the sake of those who oppose and criticise him.

On the road to Damascus, Jesus Himself had said to him: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' In persecuting his followers, Christ himself is persecuted. The persecution of Christians is the persecution of Christ. It shows unity with Him. However, if that means suffering, then it also means glory!

When Jesus was handed over (παράδωμι) - a key word in his condemnation - His followers were also 'handed over to death' (v. 11). The fruit of this witness is that it leads others to life. The Great Commission comes at a high price, but it is worthwhile. Identification with Christ gives us the courage to do what is right.

Illustration: Thaer is an earthen jug representing God's power in present-day Syria

Thaer from Syria is a believer with a Muslim background. Since 2011, he has been displaced and forced to flee his home at least three times during the long years of war. Imagine losing everything three times. Being 'knocked down' three times. Recently, after the fall of Assad's dictatorial regime at the end of 2024, he had to flee again.

By worldly standards, Thaer is an uprooted and vulnerable individual with no permanent home. He has every reason to feel perplexed and despondent. But look at the treasure in the cracks.

As soon as he was in his new hiding place, he began to be a pastor to others like himself. He didn't wait until he was 'safe' or 'whole' to start serving. He served despite his brokenness. He recently witnessed a miracle: in the midst of a war zone and a life of constant

flight, he stood in the water and baptised many new believers from a Muslim background. To the world, he is the epitome of vulnerability, but in the Kingdom of God, he is a giant. Even when he was fleeing and his own life was in pieces, he did not stop. Outwardly, he is exhausted by fear and uncertainty. But inside, God renews him daily. His life is not perfect or shiny; it is cracked and broken. Yet it is through these cracks that the light of Jesus shines even brighter.

Thanks to his contact with a Syrian Christian in the Netherlands, he knows that many people worldwide are praying for him. He is the living embodiment of Paul's words: 'Though I am persecuted, I am not forsaken.'

LINE OF THOUGHT 4

Faith experiences to speak beyond shame

In verse 13, Paul quotes from Psalm 116. 'I believed, therefore I spoke.' This seems an odd choice of words. Paul knew that people would look at him and ask, 'What kind of faith is this? Talking about death and suffering shows a lack of faith! You are speaking 'negative' things!' In a culture of shame, you don't talk about such things.

However, the whole psalm is relevant here, too. If you go back to the original, it says, 'I believed, therefore I spoke, I am greatly afflicted.' You could also translate it as: 'Even when I said, 'I am deeply saddened', I still believed.' Paul quotes the psalmist to prove the opposite of what people might expect. Talking about your suffering is central to faith. Telling God and your fellow brothers and sisters that you are suffering is an act of faith. It is the belief that God is great enough to handle your 'broken pot'.

Paul concludes this passage by looking to the future. He acknowledges that his 'outer self' is decaying. He does not deny the physical toll of his ministry. He affirms the same contrast: while the outer man is wasting away, the inner man is being renewed/recreated day by day. This realisation nourishes good cheer and urges to do good at every opportunity.

Message: Have the courage to break through the 'comfort filter'

We live in a time when we value 'attractive' stories. We want to hear good news about how God works, but not about the reality of 'Jesus dying' in our bodies.

A Syrian Christian living in the Netherlands recounts: "Once, when I was speaking in the Netherlands about the persecution in Syria, a man came up to me afterwards and said: 'I want to focus on my own emotional health. Hearing these stories affects me too much. I don't want that.'"

On another occasion, I told the story of a friend who was about to be beheaded because of his faith. My interpreter paused for a moment. He didn't feel comfortable using the Dutch word for 'beheaded' in the translation. He thought it was 'not nice'. Instead, he used the word 'murdered'. He told me that using heavy words makes people feel bad.

I was very upset. At that moment, I felt abandoned. I felt that my story and that of my people was being filtered because it made people uncomfortable. Paul was not a charismatic speaker who incited a 'fire' to make people feel good. He spoke to show people the Cross. The New Testament is not a feel-good story; it's a reality check. It is about the 'death of Jesus' being manifested in our 'mortal flesh'.

God wants us to realise that the world does not bring good news. This is the contrast that Paul emphasises here. He sees it in his own fragile body, in the unbearable situations around him and in the crowd of believers who abandon him. However, he asserts that God is the good news."

Have the courage to listen to the stories of the persecuted church. Even if they make you feel uneasy. This requires us to give up our comfort. Faith is not a shield that protects us from hearing the 'difficult stories'; it is the strength that enables us to bear those words alongside those who live them. We can discover that strength together by hearing and allowing the stories to sink in.

Remember that 'if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it' (1 Cor. 12:26). Therefore, if we truly want to suffer alongside the persecuted Church as one body, we must be open to the reality and intensity of it. The worst thing for persecuted Christians is not the pressure of persecution itself,

but being abandoned by their fellow Christians. What encourages persecuted Christians the most is not the end of persecution, but the prayer and support of fellow Christians who suffer alongside them.

SONGS

Which songs can you include in the service? Here are a few suggestions.

♪ WHOM SHALL I FEAR

In this life, we will experience problems and darkness. Yet we can trust in Him, the God of the angelic hosts. And if He is with us, whom shall we fear?

Listen to and watch this song video:



♪ I FORGIVE YOU

'I Forgive You' is a song sung by Gilbert from Iran. He was just 17 years old when his father, Pastor Haik Hovsepian, was brutally murdered with 26 stab wounds. Gilbert himself was later imprisoned and tortured. He says, "That hatred turned into forgiveness, and that is the greatest miracle I have ever experienced."

Listen to and watch this song video:



The song videos can also be found in the PowerPoint in the materials package.



THE STORY OF ELIAS AND HANAN

Pain is evident on Elias's face as he stands at the entrance to the Mar Elias Church in Damascus. It is his first time back at the scene of the attack that took place on 22 June 2025. He looks at the spot where the attacker blew himself up. This is where his two brothers died while trying to stop the attacker. Elias lost in total seven family members in that attack, including his brothers, a sister, four other relatives, a neighbour, and a close friend.

LIVING AND DYING FOR THE LORD

Elias, who is limping and has medical pins protruding from his thigh, says, "We have experienced faith and fear here, and we cannot deny that." He was seriously injured in the attack. Elias continues: "But we know that the Lord will not abandon us. We believe that we live and die for the Lord. Either way, we belong to the Lord."

WATCH THE VIDEO

Elias and his wife Hanan share their story in this 8.5-minute video. Click the button below to watch or download the video. You can also find the video in the PowerPoint presentation during the service.

opendoors.nl/sundayvideo

Consider in advance when to show the video, as some of the content is not suitable for young children.

EARTHEN JUGS FULL OF GOLD

This story and video show how 'earthen jugs' are being subjected to violence and destruction in Syria today. It is heartbreaking to see that Christians, including their children, are paying the highest price as martyrs. But that is not the whole story.

The story reveals the courage of Elias's brothers as they attempt to stop the destroyer at the cost of their own lives. The video also shows how God protected Elias' family, who all miraculously survived the attack. It demonstrates the resilience of their faith when they say: "God has not abandoned us. We will continue to go to church." In the damaged church building, wounded believers gather together around the light of Christ.

YOUR CHURCH'S RESPONSE

STRENGTHEN WHAT IS IN DANGER OF DYING

The Church in Syria is under threat and attack. Fifteen years of civil war and dictatorship have caused one and a half million Christians to flee the country. In a country where the Church has existed for almost two thousand years, only 300,000 Christians remain. Under the new government, the remaining Christians are facing mounting pressure.

The attack Elias and Hanan describe is being exploited to spread fear. Threatening messages appear on church walls, saying, "You're next." Vehicles fitted with loudspeakers drive through Christian neighbourhoods, pressuring Christians to convert to Islam. Christians are now also receiving threats from their neighbours. These increasing threats, attacks and assaults on churches are causing widespread fear among Christians.

Yet the church in Syria wants to continue reaching out to people, to truly be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Through local partners, Open Doors helps the church seize these many opportunities. These partners strengthen the church by providing emergency aid, care and training for Christians.

SUPPORT PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST



With **63 euro**, you provide persecuted families with **essential support** in times of crisis.



With **34 euro**, you contribute to **trauma care** for severely persecuted Christians.



With **27 euro**, we can give three believers a Bible to help them grow in their faith.

HOW TO DONATE

Scan the QR code (iDEAL) in the PowerPoint or manually transfer the collection proceeds to Open Doors.

IBAN: **NL08 INGB 0000 007733**

Payment reference: **6858 2208 2937 7870**

Should we receive more donations than needed, Open Doors will allocate them where help is most needed.

HOW TO PRAY

Whenever we meet persecuted brothers and sisters, they almost always ask us to pray for them. Here are some points for prayer and thanksgiving that you can include in the service.

- Despite the attack, Elias and Hanan continue to follow the Lord Jesus. Elias says, "From the beginning of this tragedy, we have continued to thank Him. As Job said, 'Shall we accept good from God and not adversity?'" Thank God for the faith of this family, and pray that their faith will grow even stronger.
- Children and women affected by the June 2025 attack are receiving help from Open Doors' local partners to process their trauma. Others who have experienced violence are also receiving this support. Please pray for a good recovery from their (inner) wounds and for wisdom for the local partners.
- Pray for Ibrahim, the eight-year-old son of Elias and Hanan. The attack has had a profound effect on him. Pray that the support he receives at the trauma centre will help him to find peace and make a full recovery.
- Pray for Open Doors' local partners in Syria. They have also experienced many hardships in recent years, ranging from the 2023 earthquake to the current threat posed by the new government. This affects them personally. Ask God for help for them in everything they are going through. Pray that fear will not hinder their daily work. Thank God for their dedication.
- Many Syrian Christians want to leave the country. Pray that they will choose to stay and answer the call to serve their homeland. Pray that the testimony of Jesus Christ will continue to be heard in Syria. Pray for those who are leaving, that they continue to serve Jesus and pray for their homeland.
- Thank God for the Christians who have decided to stay. Please pray for their protection and that they may be a shining light and salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-14).
- Pray for peace, security and stability in Syria. Pray for the Syrian government. Pray that those who attack and threaten Christians may come to know the peace of the Son of God.

NIGHT OF PRAYER

for the persecuted church

You can find materials
and information at:

opendoors.nl/night

JOIN THE NIGHT OF PRAYER

Following the Sunday for the Persecuted Church, there is the Night of Prayer from **Friday, June 5th to Saturday, June 6th**. Praying together in the dark for Christians whose faith must remain hidden. Please join us, together with your congregation.





Your church's willingness to draw attention to the persecuted church is much appreciated. We wish you all the best with your preparations and a blessed service.



OpenDoors