



Recently large parts of the country have been placed into Tier 3. Once again numbers are rising, and it can feel very disheartening.

I wonder how many of the characters that we are going to look at over the next few weeks in our 'Life in Lockdown' series may have thought sometimes – how much longer, Lord, do I have to put up with this?

The Psalms have many examples of people who sound like they have had enough – much more desperate situations than many of us face, but I am always encouraged by the number of times the Psalmists come back to the fact that God is Good, God is Faithful.

Song

Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name

Every blessing You pour out, I'll
Turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say

Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name
Blessed be Your name

When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name

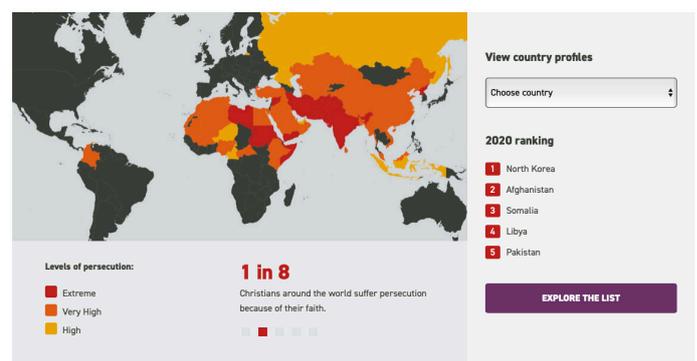
Every blessing You pour out I'll
Turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord

You give and take away
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord, blessed be Your name

Beth Redman | Matt Redman
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Faith and Danger

Open Doors works in over 60 countries, supplying Bibles, training church leaders, providing practical support and emergency relief, and supporting Christians who suffer for their faith. In the UK and Ireland Open Doors works to raise awareness of global persecution, mobilising prayer, support and action among Christians.



Transcript from video:

What would you do if your faith put you in danger? If it meant facing insults and abuse not getting a job or education being assaulted imprisoned even killed?

Hundreds of millions of Christians living in countries we're choosing to follow Jesus means danger and persecution and these are the five countries where their faith costs the most

Number 5

Pakistan - where Christians can be falsely accused of blasphemy they are denied education and work opportunities. Churches are bombed and Christians are jailed on false charges but Pakistani Christians are determined to meet to worship.

Number 4

Libya - where there are only some 150 Libyan Christians. Churches for Libyans are forbidden. Christian migrants are targeted executed by militants or sold into slavery but Libyans are coming to Christ through TV, radio and internet.

Number 3

Somalia - where Christians can be killed on the spot. All citizens are assumed to be Muslims. Militant groups want to eradicate all Christians. Owning a Bible can mean instant execution. But Christians meet in secret and many Muslims seek Christ.

Number 2

Afghanistan - where Christians have to hide even after death. Islamic extremism is everywhere. Christians are buried as Muslims because their relatives would be punished but people still meet Christ in dreams.

Number 1

North Korea - where leaders are worshipped like gods. There is no freedom. People live under constant surveillance. Fifty to seventy thousand Christians are imprisoned but in prisons and safe houses North Koreans are coming to Christ.

Open Doors exists to strengthen and support persecuted Christians wherever they are and for as long as they need it. Through the gifts and prayers of Open Doors supporters our global underground networks are able to reach millions of Christians with food and medicine, spiritual care, smuggled Bibles and Christian books, training and legal advice. Homes are rebuilt, lives are rescued, churches restored.

For over 60 years Open Doors has stood with Christians whose faith puts them in danger who dare to share Jesus no matter the cost, because as Christians we are family - one body, one church and when your family is in danger there's only really one question to ask: what will you do?

Prayer

Father God

**As one Church, united under your holy headship,
and knowing that we are all one family in Christ;**

We pray for those that suffer in your name all over the world,

our brothers and sisters, who share in that same great gift of salvation through your Son,

but who face injustice, oppression and even death because of their faith in you.

We want to walk with them as they walk through the valley of darkness,

and we pray knowing that you are a God of compassion, comfort and justice;

who always hears their prayers, never leaves them and will forever be their fortress and shield, whatever they face.

We pray - that you will grant them strength, courage, and protection from those who

seek to harm them because they follow you, for guidance and wisdom for when their path seems impossible to tread,

and hope for a future where they have the freedom to worship you without fear.

In the name of Jesus, Amen

Read Acts 12:1-19

Teaching

- We're told the Christians prayed 'earnestly'? What would that look like both for our church and for us as individuals?
- 'Rhoda demonstrated she was brave, bold and persistent'. How could we look to demonstrate those same qualities in our own Christian lives?
- Did you find yourself asking some questions as you read Acts 12? What are you going to do about answering some or all of those questions?
- Who am I in danger of looking down on & treating as inferior? How may I guard against this and, if I am guilty, what should I do about it with God's help?

Prayer

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing
that nothing can separate us
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lord, graciously hear us.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in
isolation.

In their loneliness, be their consolation
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work
many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Lord, graciously hear us.

For the Christian community
We are not people of fear:
we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:
we are people who protect our neighbours'
safety.

We are not people of greed:
we are people of generosity.
We are your people God,
giving and loving,
wherever we are, whatever it costs
For as long as it takes
wherever you call us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Communion



And at the Beginning of Passion
Already burnt into His bones
The brand of nail marks
And at the Beginning of Passion
Already scythed into His scalp
The scars of the thorn crown
And to follow
the vulgar coronation
the spiteful crucifixion
And the reason for this slaughter
As the ears of the passive donkey
Arched back like question marks
The sound of my name
And your name
on His lips

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Father forgive us when we so easily forget
what it cost Jesus to save us.
But you knew we would forget which is why
You gave us this communion meal, so we
wouldn't forget, but always remember.

“Do this in remembrance of me”.

Luke 22:19

Song

Who breaks the power of sin and darkness
Whose love is mighty and so much stronger
The King of Glory, the King above all kings

Who shakes the whole earth with holy
thunder
And leaves us breathless in awe and wonder
The King of Glory, the King above all kings

This is amazing grace
This is unfailing love
That You would take my place
That You would bear my cross

You lay down Your life
That I would be set free
Oh, Jesus, I sing for
All that You've done for me

Who brings our chaos back into order
Who makes the orphan a son and daughter
The King of Glory, the King of Glory

Who rules the nations with truth and justice
Shines like the sun in all of its brilliance
The King of Glory, the King above all kings

This is amazing grace
This is unfailing love
That You would take my place
That You would bear my cross

You lay down Your life
That I would be set free
Oh, Jesus, I sing for
All that You've done for me

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
Worthy is the King who conquered the grave

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Sing My Songs (Admin. by Song Solutions www.songsolutions.org)

In peace I will lie down and sleep - for you
alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety
Psalm 4:8