

SOLITARY REFINEMENT

SERMON SERIES PLANNING GUIDE (Three-Week Sunday Series)

presented by



A NOTE TO PASTORS: This guidebook provides assistance in planning a three-week sermon series on the Biblical worldview of persecution, and how members can serve as a 'voice of the martyrs.' Ideally, this series should be presented as a means of follow-up, commencing on the Sunday after the *Solitary Refinement* presentation.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Dear Pastor,

I'm very thankful that you are conducting the sermon series on *Solitary Refinement* at your church.

My prayer is that the series will open up a conversation on the Biblical worldview of persecution, the reality of suffering believers around the world, and your members' consequent response on ways they can serve as a 'voice of the martyrs.'

We at VOMC are praying for you and your congregation. May God bless all your endeavours to continue faithfully serving Him and His people in your community and beyond....

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Doug J. McKenzie
Chief Executive Officer
The Voice of the Martyrs Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT THE SERMON KIT CONTAINS	2
PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING GUIDE	3
WEEK ONE: OUR GOD SUFFERS WITH US	4
<i>SERMON OUTLINE 1: OUR GOD SUFFERS WITH US</i>	5
WEEK TWO: WE ARE INVITED TO SUFFER WITH HIM	8
<i>SERMON OUTLINE 2: WE ARE INVITED TO SUFFER WITH HIM</i>	9
WEEK THREE: FULFILLING WHAT IS LACKING IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS	12
<i>SERMON OUTLINE 3: FULFILLING WHAT IS LACKING IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS</i>	13
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

*“Oh, my God! You are the goodest good guy.
If I was you and you were me, honestly,
I don’t think I would forgive me. But You
sacrificed your only Boy - to save me.
I love you with all my heart.”*

Words of the Russian soldier when he met Christ.

WHAT THE SERMON KIT CONTAINS

PLANNING GUIDE

- Service order and sequence
- Three customizable sermons

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

(Separate download)

- Three-week Small Group Discussion Guide

DIGITAL RESOURCES

(Separate downloads)

- Social media graphics
- PowerPoint slides
- Bulletin insert template

VIDEOS

(Separate downloads)

- Promo video
- Countdown video

GIVEAWAYS

(Suggestions only)

Book: Tortured for Christ

This book can be purchased online at www.vomcanada.com.

Look for *Tortured for Christ* under the “Resources” tab.

PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING GUIDE

This guide provides details on how to conduct the *Solitary Refinement* series at your church. Please tweak or edit as necessary to better suit the needs of your ministry and community.

SERIES TITLE

Solitary Refinement

SERIES DESCRIPTION

What does the Bible say about persecution? What is an appropriate Biblical response to the persecution being experienced around the world by our brothers and sisters in Christ? How can we be a 'voice of the martyrs' in the areas that God has called us to serve?

HOW AND WHEN

The sermon series would be best scheduled after the group has viewed the *Solitary Refinement* production. However, this series can be conducted even if members have not had the opportunity of watching the drama presentation. The design is modular for the Sunday sermon series, yet the optional weekly small group study can run either concurrently or independently.

WEEKLY SMALL GROUP STUDY

The three-week small group study complements the sermon series kit.
(Separate download: "Small Group Discussion Guide")

SERIES TOPICS

WEEK ONE: OUR GOD SUFFERS WITH US

We find comfort in Christ, knowing that we serve a God who suffers with us.

WEEK TWO: WE ARE INVITED TO SUFFER WITH HIM

Christians suffer for the cause of Christ around the world, and yet each one suffers differently. An invitation to suffer with our Lord gives believers the strength needed to live in a hostile world and not be surprised by fiery trials.

WEEK THREE: FULFILLING WHAT IS LACKING IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

The counterintuitive Gospel of Jesus Christ reminds us that Godly suffering glorifies the Saviour and fans the flames of the Gospel to the ends of the world.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Use Hashtag: #SolitaryRefinement

Media link to be shared with members => <https://vomcanada.com/Dramas/Drama-Social/>

Encourage members to post promotional videos, quotations and talking points from the sermon to continue the conversation.

WEEK ONE: OUR GOD SUFFERS WITH US

OBJECTIVE

To dispel the inner script that we are alone when we suffer. Looking at Christ, knowing that He suffers with us is a great source of comfort to suffering Christians and, in turn, allows us to be more like Him in both suffering and love.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Acts 9:4. "...Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 9:1-16

PREPARATION

The slide, *What's On Next Sunday: New Sermon Series - Solitary Refinement*, can be screened at the end of the previous Sunday service.

Members watch *Solitary Refinement* before the commencement of the series.

PRE-SERVICE

Bulletin inserts
(Download from the Digital Download folder)

Countdown video
(Download from the Digital Download folder)

SERVICE

Worship Song (Recommendation only)
What A Saviour, Hillsong Worship (<https://goo.gl/jjSSiS>)

Video
Are you an "N" Christian? Forgiveness!
Download: <https://goo.gl/EDCUhr>

Sermon
(See outline in this Sermon Series Planning Guide)

SERMON OUTLINE 1: OUR GOD SUFFERS WITH US

Acts 9:5a. *“And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting’”* (NKJV).

I. OBSERVATIONS

- A. The unexpected personal involvement of our Lord.
- B. The expected people’s response (of Ananias)
 - Just like a rose that exudes fragrance when its crushed, Christians are to be no different from the One whom they call their Lord: “The Rose of Sharon.”

II. SUFFERING PRESENT SINCE THE EARLY DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY (Acts 8:1;4)

- A. The early church may have run from persecution, but not from the Gospel.
 - “Great persecution” only spreads the great fragrance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- B. Present-day church continues to be persecuted.
 - CBN News¹ - “World's largest religion also most persecuted.”
- C. Christians have a history of being persecuted.

III. THE CONTEXT

- A. Saul introduced (Acts 7:58).
 - Shows his total agreement.
 - Marks the beginning of his active involvement in persecuting Christians.
- B. Saul destroying the church (Acts 8:3).
- C. Saul on his way to Damascus (Acts 9).
 - Saul’s passion: 135 miles is a week’s journey in Biblical times.
 - Saul’s transformation: different Master and different mission.
- D. 2,000 years later
 - October 2015²: “Christians almost completely destroyed by ISIS fanatics in Syria,’ says Aleppo Archbishop.”

1 <https://goo.gl/prR8FW>

2 <https://goo.gl/u8Qxw1>

IV. PERSECUTION AFFECTS EACH OF US DIFFERENTLY

- A. Acts 8:1
 - Apostles remained in Jerusalem, seemingly unaffected in the midst of persecution.
- B. Acts 8:1-3
 - Christians are imprisoned, killed or scattered.
- C. Acts 8:8
 - New Christians in Samaria (Philip the evangelist).
- D. Acts 9:2
 - Christians in Damascus had impending threat of arrest.
- E. Acts 9:10
 - Christians in Damascus (such as Ananias) would minister to the “Persecutor.”
- F. Acts 9:25
 - Christians help other persecuted Christians.
- G. How does persecution affect us?
 - Especially in the North American context.

V. OUR COMFORT: WE HAVE A GOD WHO SUFFERS WITH US

- A. Persecution is no surprise (John 15:18).
 - Our suffering is neither a surprise to God nor to His followers.
- B. Our confidence is in Christ alone (Matthew 16:18).
 - Christ is building His church and no one can stop Him.
- C. God walks the path of suffering with us.
 - Truth in the OT: Isaiah 53:4; Isaiah 63:9; Judges 10:16
 - Truth in the NT: Matthew 27:28-29; 1 Peter 2:21; Philippians 3:10; Acts 9:4
- D. Our suffering is exceeded only by a love that’s out of the world (Matthew 5:44).
 - Christian faith and Christian love are countercultural.
 - Suffering can never thwart this love.
- E. The world sees Christ in us.
 - As they see our response in suffering.
 - As they see our love in spite of suffering.

VI. CLOSING PRAYER

POST-SERMON

SLIDE PRESENTATION

The slide, *What's On Next Sunday: "We are invited to suffer with Him,"* can be screened at the end of the service.

(Download from Sermon Series Media folder)

WEEKLY SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

If relevant, announce the small group topic: *Week 1. Devotional Study.*

(Download from Small Group Discussion folder)

WEEK TWO: WE ARE INVITED TO SUFFER WITH HIM

OBJECTIVE

The command to follow Jesus is an invitation to suffer with Him. Phrases like “deny yourself,” “take up your cross” and “die daily” are not pithy statements for Bible study time, but action phrases for true Christian living.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Acts 9:16. “For I will show him many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 9:1-16

PREPARATION

The slide, *What’s On Next Sunday: “We are invited to suffer with Him,”* can be screened at the end of the previous Sunday service.

PRE-SERVICE

Bulletin inserts
(Download from the Digital Download folder)

Countdown video
(Download from the Digital Download folder)

SERVICE

Worship Song (recommendation only)
Let It Be Jesus, Christy Nockels, Passion (<https://goo.gl/5qNAvQ>)

Video
Are you an “N” Christian? Sacrifice!
Download: <https://vimeo.com/181252839>

Sermon
(See outline in this Sermon Series Planning Guide)

SERMON OUTLINE 2: WE ARE INVITED TO SUFFER WITH HIM

Acts 9:16. "For I will show him many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

I. OBSERVATIONS

A. ANANIAS BRINGS THE MESSAGE TO SAUL, "THE CHRISTIAN KILLER."

- Ananias was to present himself to both Judas and Saul in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 9:11,17).
- (Saul was staying in the house of Judas; Ananias was to enter hostile territory in the name of the One who was despised by these men.)

B. YET A BEAUTIFUL EXPRESSION OF MINISTRY TAKES PLACE

- God could have healed/restored Saul's sight without Ananias.
- (The visit of Ananias was not indispensable, and yet God uses him for restoration.)

C. OPENS THE DOOR FOR THE GENTILES TO RECEIVE THE GOSPEL

- This was brought about, as we read later in the Book of Acts, at the expense and suffering of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.
- It continues to be God's *modus operandi* more than 2,000 years later.

D. PAUL IS CHOSEN FOR BOTH THE METHOD AND THE MISSION

- Method: Chosen to suffer much
- Mission: Chosen to bear My Name

II. THE METHOD: CHOSEN TO SUFFER MUCH

A. THE WELCOME MESSAGE WAS, IN FACT, A MARCHING ORDER

- There was no sugar-coating re: the reality of suffering as a follower of Christ.
- Paul had no need to be told that aligning with Christ would mean suffering (vv. 15,17).
- He got right on the job - "Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues" (v. 20).

B. PAUL SUFFERS FOR CHRIST THROUGHOUT THE MINISTRY

- Paul lists his suffering for Christ, being almost coerced to do so (2 Corinthians 11:24-28).
- (Describe some of the sufferings, time permitting.)

C. PAUL UNDERSTOOD THAT SUFFERING EQUIPPED HIM

- 2 Corinthians 1:4; 4:17-18
- Suffering did not leave him bitter, but actually brought him closer to his Lord (Philippians 3:10-11).

D. PAUL FINISHED WELL

- 2 Timothy 4:7 gives us an example and a challenge.

III. THE MISSION: CHOSEN "TO BEAR MY NAME" (Acts 9:15)

A. IT IS THE NAME OF THE ONE WHO WAS CRUCIFIED

Paul is to take this name to:

- The Gentiles (Acts 22:21)
- Kings (Acts 26)
- Children of Israel

B. THE NAME OF CHRIST IS STILL DESPISED AMONG THEM

- Also, the Lord's method and mission haven't changed.

IV. IT IS THIS CHRIST WHO INVITES US TO FOLLOW HIM

A. WE ARE CALLED TO BEAR THE CROSS (Matthew 16:24)

- This is said right after Christ announces His impending death on the cross.
- It is not only Christ who suffers and dies; it will also be the fate of all who follow Him.
- "The cross is not simply an exhortation for the disciple. It is held out precisely as the criterion for being a disciple of Jesus." - Hurtado

B. THE CALL TO BEAR THE CROSS SHOULD NOT BE TRIVIALIZED

- The "cross" has come to be understood as anything that is unpleasant.
- The "cross" is not ordinary human troubles and sorrows such as disappointments, disease, death, poverty, and the like.
- Nor is it to be completely spiritualized - as some mystical, existential meaning that is totally removed from the reality of first-century Christianity (and faced by persecuted Christians around the world) by use of mere pithy statements such as "dying to self," "self-denial," or "giving everything to God."

C. TO THE EARLY DISCIPLES, THE CROSS MEANT TWO THINGS

1. Crucifixion was a terrifying, disgusting, unspeakably horrifying and shameful way to die. (Seneca³ advised suicide rather than face the agonies involved.)
2. Crucifixion was administered solely as a state punishment.
 - It was not carried out by mobs, but the result of "due process."
 - "So the call is beyond that of just suffering; it implied a preparation for severe social consequences, condemned as a subversive or criminal of the worst kind."
- Glenn Penner

³ Seneca, Epistle 101 to Lucius

V. A CHRISTIAN'S IDENTITY IS THE CROSS HE/SHE CARRIES

A. CROSS IS A SYMBOL OF SUFFERING

- It is not merely an ornament worn, but a statement made.
- A cross-carrying Christian indicates his or her willingness to suffer for Christ.

B. QUOTATION FROM RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS:

He wrote the following in *Death on a Friday Afternoon*:

“It is not that Christ did not do enough, but that He invites us to participate with Him in the salvation of the world. When Jesus calls us, He calls us to come and die. We will die anyway. The question is whether we will die senselessly or as companions and co-workers of the crucified and risen Lord.”

C. THIS IS HOW RICHARD WURMBRAND CHOSE TO SUFFER AND IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST

1. He stood up at the congress in front of Stalin, the Communists and 4,000 religious leaders to say:

“Comrade Chairman: I, too, would like to praise our fearless leader whom we owe obedience and loyalty - Jesus, the Christ, and His Kingdom - which is...not of this world. Let us take up our cross... and follow Him!”

2. After 14 years of imprisonment, he writes in his book, *Tortured For Christ*:

“I am here today to tell you what that stand cost me. But also to tell you...that it was worth it.”

D. HOW WILL YOU RESPOND TO THE CALL OF CHRIST?

- Will you suffer for Christ just like His disciples did?
- Will you let Christ use you in and through your suffering?

VI. CLOSING PRAYER

POST-SERMON

SLIDE PRESENTATION

The slide, *What's On Next Sunday: "Fulfilling what is lacking in Christ's sufferings,"* can be screened at the end of the service.

(Download from Sermon Series Media folder)

WEEKLY SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

If relevant, announce the small group topic: *Week 2. Devotional Study.*

(Download from Small Group Discussion folder)

WEEK THREE: FULFILLING WHAT IS LACKING IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

OBJECTIVE

Paul writes to the church at Colossae that he is fulfilling what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. What does that mean? And what is the challenge to us as "a voice of the martyrs" around the world?

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:24. "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church" (NKJV).

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 1:24-29

PREPARATION

The slide, *What's On Next Sunday: "Fulfilling what is lacking in Christ's sufferings,"* can be screened at the end of the previous Sunday service.

PRE-SERVICE

Bulletin inserts
(Download from the Digital Download folder)

Countdown video
(Download from the Digital Download folder)

SERVICE

Worship Song (recommendation only)
Give Me Your Eyes, Brandon Heath (<https://goo.gl/1LnZpo>)

Video
Are you an "N" Christian? Joy!
Download: <https://www.vomcanada.com/i-am-n-videos?slg=iamn-joy>

Sermon
(See outline in this Sermon Series Planning Guide.)

SERMON OUTLINE 3: FULFILLING WHAT IS LACKING IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

Colossians 1:24. "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church."

I. A QUICK OBSERVATION

A. NOT IMPLYING THAT THE WORK OF CHRIST ISN'T SUFFICIENT TO SAVE

- The Greek term, "Thlipsis," used here doesn't describe the redemptive sufferings of Jesus.

B. THIS IS ABOUT:

- Paul is saying his sufferings showcase Jesus Christ.

II. CONTEXT OF THE EPISTLE TO COLOSSAE

A. COLOSSIAN HERESY

- "Colossian heresy" that Christ was not fully human.

B. COLOSSIANS IS PAUL'S DEFENSE AGAINST

1. Heresies

- Gnosticism, legalism, mysticism and asceticism

2. Attack on his ministry

- The charge was that Paul's suffering indicated his ministry was ineffective and not of God.

C. PAUL SHOWS:

1. Suffering is not shameful.

- Pain is not purposeless.

2. Suffering fulfills what is lacking in Christ's suffering.

- He rejoices "in" his suffering (not "for" suffering, as in the case of a masochist who enjoys suffering).

III. A BIBLICAL LOOK AT SUFFERING

A. EXPRESSION: "THE CRUX OF THE MATTER"⁴

- This is the expression used for "It's the heart of the matter."
- The word "crux" has the same root form as the word "crucifixion."
- At the heart of the Christian faith (the Gospel) is the cross.
- At the heart of Christian faith is the suffering Christ.
- If we take away His death, we take away our eternal life.

⁴ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/crux>

B. OUR SUFFERING IS THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERING

1. PAUL (Philippians 3:10)

- We are in it together - Christ and I.

2. PETER (1 Peter 4:12-13)

- Peter refers to Nero's persecution of Christians.⁵
- Sharing in Christ's sufferings.

C. OUR SUFFERINGS CONFIRM THAT WE BELONG TO HIM

1. OUR LORD SAID THIS TO HIS DISCIPLES (John 15:18; Matthew 10:24)

2. PETER (1 Peter 4:14)

3. QUOTATION⁶ BY R. C. SPROUL: "Suffering does not invalidate the Gospel of Jesus Christ; it is the evidence that sufferers really are God's people."

- We tend to think that successful, happy and persecution-free people are the best witnesses of the God they follow. But the Bible doesn't think so!

D. OUR SUFFERING IS NO COMPARISON TO THE WEIGHT OF GLORY THAT AWAITS US

(2 Corinthians 4:17)

- QUOTATION BY JOHN MACARTHUR: "Suffering frustrates Satan. He wants suffering to harm us, but God brings good out of it."

E. THINK ABOUT THE SUFFERING AROUND THE WORLD

- IRAQ⁷: More than three million Iraqis have been displaced, many of whom are Christians.
- SYRIA⁸: There are more than 6.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDP).
- SOUTHERN SUDAN⁹: Christian women and children are routinely sold into slavery, and there are persistent reports of crucifixions of Christians in remote areas.
- ERITREA: Christians are imprisoned in metal shipping containers.
- NORTH KOREA: For 14 years straight, North Korea has remained the most repressive country where Christians are persecuted the most.
- INDIA¹⁰: There is a case of anti-Christian violence every day (2015).
- The list goes on....

⁵ http://www.christianity.com/devotionals/one-year-devotions-for-men/fiery-trials-one-year-devotions-for-men-march-13.html?utm_source=nextArticleBox&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=next-article-box

⁶ <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/filling-christs-afflictions/>

⁷ <https://www.frrme.org/about-frrme/iraq/>

⁸ <http://www.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/figures-analysis>

⁹ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/aprilweb-only/4-29-44.o.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/01/4257104/>

F. HOWEVER, IN THE MIDST OF THESE TRAGEDIES....

(The following information reveals that God works in mysterious ways.)

- *The Times*¹¹ newspaper in the United Kingdom, reports that Christianity is growing at a rate of 20 percent in Iran (which is ninth on the watchlist).
- Career missiologist David Garrison¹² has written *A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is Drawing Muslims Around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ*. The following is an excerpt about his research which was published by *Christianity Today*:

“What did God use to bring you to faith in Jesus Christ? Tell me your story.’ This was the core question Garrison asked as he travelled and conducted more than 1,000 face-to-face interviews. In his background research, he documented 82 historic Muslim movements to Christ, consisting of either at least 1,000 baptisms or 100 new church starts over a two-decade period. The first sizable movement of Muslims toward Christianity did not occur until the mid-19th century, nearly 1,300 years after Mohammad established Islam. Garrison said 69 of these movements today are still in process.”

G. PROMISES GIVEN BY OUR LORD

- The promise of persecution in this world is richly blended with the promise that because He has overcome the world, we can have His presence, His peace and His power.
- John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me [presence] you may have peace [peace]. In the world you will have tribulation [persecution]; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world [power].”

H. RICHARD WURMBRAND ASKED:

- “If suffering were offered to you as a gift, would you accept it?”
- In other words, “Would you be willing to fulfil in your flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions?”

IV. WHAT DOES PAUL’S ADMONISHMENT MEAN - FULFILLING WHAT IS LACKING IN CHRIST’S AFFLICTIONS?

- Paul’s desire is that his sufferings may be the means of revealing Christ to others.

A. THE SUFFERING DISCIPLE IS GOD’S MEANS OF REVEALING THE GOSPEL

- If a suffering Messiah is the *crux* of the Gospel, then a suffering disciple is a means to *reveal* that Gospel and the reality of Christ.

B. MAKE VISIBLE THE MESSIAH

- Paul is saying that through my suffering, I’m able to “make visible” the suffering Messiah for the sake of others.

¹¹ <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4213556.ece>

¹² <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/april-web-only/why-muslims-are-becoming-best-evangelists.html>

C. WHAT'S LACKING IS BEING FULFILLED

- Those who have not seen the suffering Christ can now, through Paul's suffering, envision Christ.

D. EPAPHRODITUS PROVIDES AN EXAMPLE OF FULFILLING THAT WHICH IS LACKING

(Philippians 2:30)

- The church at Philippi wanted to serve and support Paul but weren't able to because of the distance.
- Epaphroditus took the dangerous journey at great risk (he nearly died), thus fulfilling that which was lacking in their service.

E. PAUL SAYS (IN OTHER WORDS):

- I don't add to the suffering of Christ for their salvation; I only showcase it to them in my flesh.

V. WHAT'S THE RELEVANCE TO OUR TIMES?

- Our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world are fulfilling what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.
- Their sufferings become the channel of a personal presentation of Christ.

A. ERIC FOLEY¹³ (VOM KOREA):

Eric Foley talks about a North Korean man who was intrigued that Christians would rather suffer and die than recant their faith. He found it fascinating that the North Korean government would spend so much energy and money to eradicate God by teaching He did not exist. At the first opportunity, this person escaped to South Korea where he found a Christian - and essentially discovered Christ. Then he went back to North Korea to become a martyr: "How can I not give my life to the One who gave me His?"

B. THE COUNTERINTUITIVE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

1. QUOTATION BY DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: "When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."
2. QUOTATION BY JOHN PIPER: "The martyrs of 30 years from now are made today, in services like this, on days like today. It seems so far away, but it's not. It's just as far away as a commitment."

¹³ <http://dotheword.org/about/>

C. IT'S OUR TURN

1. "WE ARE IT"

- It begins today with a little faithfulness.
- Join the team to "raise awareness" about your Christian brothers and sisters around the world.
- Fulfill what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

2. THERE IS THIS EXPRESSION:

- "My feet are killing me."
- I hope we are not feet that kill the work of the body of Christ.
- I hope we are not adding to the affliction of the body, but rather fulfilling what is lacking by making the suffering Messiah known through our sufferings.

3. BE THE FEET, THE HANDS, THE TOES, THE KNEES, THE EARS

Brothers and Sisters, come let's join in by fulfilling what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

- We need hands to cup the mouth as it proclaims.
- We need toes that tiptoe as we reach the crowd.
- We need knees that bend in prayer.
- We need ears that listen to the cry.
- We need hands that labour.
- We need hearts that break over sin and indifference - and over the persecution of God's people.

4. WILL YOU BE A 'VOICE OF THE MARTYRS'?

- "Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die" (Proverbs 31:8).

VI. CLOSING PRAYER

POST-SERMON

SLIDE PRESENTATION

The slide, *What's On Next Sunday: [The next sermon series]*, can be screened at the end of the service.

WEEKLY SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

If relevant, announce the small group topic: *Week 3. Devotional Study*. (Download from Small Group Discussion folder.)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

(Separate download)

This guide provides information on how to facilitate a three-week small group meeting for those who have viewed the *Solitary Refinement* stage play.

This discussion guide can be used both in conjunction with or independent of the sermon series.

THE ENTIRE KIT CONSISTS OF:

(Use as planned)

1. Sermon Series Planning Guide
2. Sermon Series Media Kit
3. Small Group Discussion Guide (Three-Week Series)
4. Follow-Up Discussion Guide (Single Session)



SOLITARY REFINEMENT