

Northeast area group

Reading report #2 (response to partner group report)

We opened with prayer, then read Luke 23:32-43: Jesus' crucifixion. Then we read our partner group's report (Congo).

As you listened to your partner group's report, what caught your attention?

They put a lot of emphasis on the persecution side. Might this be cultural? Perhaps persecution more expected in their society. Because Christ was persecuted, those who follow him will also be persecuted.

Their report was brief, while ours was very long. I can't picture them sitting around in front of a writing board discussing it the way we are doing.

"Disciples are prepared for the worst"—perhaps also recognizes a different reality than we experience. Did in fact the disciples say how they felt in this passage? Not really; perhaps they are imagining this because the disciples were seeing Jesus die. Perhaps someone "preaching."

They also emphasized that Christ wouldn't reject them if they followed him.

Phrase "applied demonstration of forgiveness." It certainly was that. This was emphasized by them.

What questions might you have about what they said?

What were the details of the group with whom we are communicating? Gender? Age? Since they are focusing on persecution, what have they done to prepare themselves for this persecution?

"Nick of time" phrase made me wonder about the significance of them focusing on the very last minutes of this event. Perhaps they were focusing on the wonder of God reaching you even at the last minutes. They are more evangelical. Do they see imminent death as an opportunity to save? Isn't this "cheap grace"? Don't we think of living our lives long term and salvation being a consequence of us consistently living our lives according to God's will? Perhaps they live more "in the moment" because perhaps they are always faced with imminent demise.

What invitation do you hear in your partner group's report?

God is willing to accept all who come to him. He calls us to forgiveness. He invites us to follow his example even to death. Christ applied what he believed to his life, which is a model for us also. "Our behavior must follow Christ in words, thoughts, and actions even to death." So they are saying that there is value to living a good life even if there might be an "out" for those who believe only at the last minute.