

**Articles and Sermons :: "Is it my birthday today, or yours?"**

"Is it my birthday today, or yours?" - posted by Joyful_Heart, on: 2011/11/11 5:28

"Is it my birthday today, or yours?" the young Christian asked, a twinkle in her eye.

"Yours today," said her father. "Mine was last week." For Christians in Communist nations, birthdays were a great excuse to get together with other believers. Some families would gather each week for a birthday party that was really an underground church service.

Young people used these "parties" to strengthen their commitment to the gospel. In 1966 in Russia, three young boys and four girls were arrested for singing a hymn on a train.

In court, the seven young people fell to their knees. "We surrender ourselves into the hands of God," they said in front of the judge and the gathered witnesses. "We thank you, Lord, that you have allowed us to suffer for this faith."

After their confession, other Christians in the courtroom began to sing the very hymn for which the kids had been arrested. They said, "Let us dedicate our youth to Christ."

The Communists couldn't stop the church from meeting and growing. One Russian newspaper told of a pastor who had been sent to prison three times. Each time he was released, he immediately went and held Sunday school meetings.

These believers used whatever means possible to express their loyalty to God. They risked and suffered the condemnation of their country in service to God's church.

In order for our physical muscles to get stronger, they must first be broken down and stretched through exercise and hard work. Likewise, faith is a muscle that only grows when it is flexed. Suffering flexes the muscle of our faith. We are stretched and "broken" before God during times of trials. Yet we grow stronger as a result. Churches in restricted nations exhibit enormous strength because of their sufferings. Can the same be said of our faith in America? Exercise wears us out—we don't want to do it. Similarly, the thought of suffering may disturb you. However, you cannot grow if you don't flex your faith.

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