

News Story Summary

In Lahore, Pakistan suicide bombers recently attacked two churches. Fifteen worshipers were killed and another 70 were injured. There has been a rise in the persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan and reports indicate that this will be a growing issue in that region. In response to the attack, a mob of Christians “blocked a major highway, ransacked a bus terminal, and executed two people who they suspected of being involved in the attacks.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the sentence “Suicide bombers kill 15 people outside Pakistani churches.”)

Focus Attention

As group members arrive, ask: How should we respond to evil in the world? After most have arrived, mention the news story from Pakistan and highlight the response of some Christians.

Say: There are a lot of reasons to be angry as we live in a world. How we respond to evil around us, or even done to us, represents the church and Jesus to the world. Explain that Zechariah spoke to a nation that was experiencing persecution and encouraged them to look forward to the coming Messiah. Challenge the group to consider during the study how Zechariah’s encouragement can be applied to our world.

Challenge

Drawing attention to the news story about the response to persecution in Pakistan. Lead the group to identify a response that would have been in line with the principles identified by Zechariah.

Say: When we only focus on the current struggle we are dealing with sometimes it is easy to forget that God has a restoration plan already in place.

Ask: To what specific issue in your life do you need to respond in more of a Christ-like manner? What stops you from turning that issue over to God, and once again focus on the greater promise of restoration that is coming?

Prayer: As a group, ask God to bring peace to the issues that group members are facing. Ask God to use the Holy Spirit and the promised second coming of Christ to help us to respond. Also, lift up Christians around the world who deal with the constant threat of death because of their Christian faith, asking God to give them strength to represent Him well.