

## News Story Summary

For the past several months, Franklin Graham has been touring the 50 United States on a tour called Decision American 2016. In his speeches, he warns that, in the past year, 7,100 Christians around the world were killed for their faith. Churches are being burned, looted, and bulldozed, and pastors are frequently killed. In dozens of countries, Christians are denied educations and jobs, and are shunned and mocked. Graham points to examples of people being ridiculed in the US for their Christian beliefs. In Illinois, a Christian owner of a Bed and Breakfast has been fined \$81,000 for refusing to host a same-sex wedding. Bakers in Oregon have been forced to shut their business and pay state fines after refusing to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex wedding. A 71-year-old Christian florist is battling the state after declining to provide service for a gay wedding in New Mexico and Colorado. Graham's goal is to instill in Christians the urgency of prayer and making wise decisions about which leaders to support in the upcoming elections. He reminds listeners that the Bible tells us to expect persecution for our faith, but we must do everything in our power to further the gospel and to facilitate freedom for Christians to continue to be salt and light in this dark world.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase "Franklin Graham Decision America".)

## Focus Attention

Relay the news story. Ask: *How do you feel about Franklin Graham's assessment of the impending Christian persecution in America? What changes have you seen in our culture that creates an atmosphere of animosity toward Christians? How have you personally experienced animosity for your faith?* Explain that Peter was writing to a group that was beginning to experience persecution for their faith in Jesus. Challenge the group to look for encouragement and actions called for by Peter when facing persecution and animosity.

## Challenge

Remind the group of the news story. Ask: *What verses in today's passage speak to the concerns being expressed by Franklin Graham? How can we implement the actions Peter called on his readers to follow?*