



Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

John 15:18-20: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

This scripture reveals that the very nature of being a Christian sets us apart from the world. Our values, beliefs, and allegiance to Christ can create tension with a secular culture that often opposes these values, especially in today’s fragmented society.

This scripture also reveals that, as Christians, we can expect to be persecuted for our faith. We are reminded of this in 1 Peter 1:6, which states, “In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”

Persecution has been an integral part of Christianity historically, and we are called to stand firm in the truth, aware that although we might be persecuted for doing so, we remain hopeful and reassured by God’s promise for us.

We invite you to read about Päivi Räsänen, a Finnish politician and devout Christian who is unafraid to live out her faith openly.



Päivi Räsänen

Censorship is a rising threat to our fundamental human rights, and it’s leading to a censorship crisis in the West. While often framed as a fight against “hate speech” related to secular ideologies, proponents of censorship often target Christians, restricting their right to share the Gospel and even criminalising them for doing so.

Päivi Räsänen is a key example of this persecution, having shared her faith publicly on social media. Her experience highlights the increasing hostility towards Christians as well as the global erosion of fundamental human rights, particularly freedom of speech and expression. Simply expressing ideas based on scripture is increasingly being regarded as “hateful”.

In 2019, Päivi tweeted a Bible verse from the New Testament book of Romans directed at her church, which was sponsoring the Helsinki Pride Event. Notably, she didn’t attack or accuse anyone of anything; she merely quoted scripture. This led to investigations that included revisiting a pamphlet she had written two decades earlier, emphasising the Biblical view of gender: “Male and female he created them.”

Due to her tweet, Päivi endured two trials and years of public scrutiny before she was unanimously acquitted of “hate speech” charges by the Helsinki District Court and the Court of Appeal. Despite her acquittal, the state prosecutor has appealed the case, seeking to overturn the decision. The charges are classified under the “war crimes and crimes against humanity” section of the Finnish Criminal Code, and the prosecution seeks substantial fines and further censorship for Päivi’s expression of faith.

Now, Päivi has submitted her defence to the Finnish Supreme Court ahead of her third trial for her Bible-verse tweet. If the Supreme Court accepts the case, a ruling may take another year or more – further subjecting Päivi to hardship. Commenting on the submission of her defence, Päivi stated:

“The heart of the trial is the question of whether teachings linked to the Bible can be displayed and agreed with. I consider it a privilege and an honour to defend freedom of expression, which is a core right in a democratic state.

“An acquittal by the Supreme Court would serve as a stronger precedent than lower court rulings for subsequent similar charges. It would provide a clearer and stronger safeguard for the freedom of Christians to present the teachings of the Bible — and it would strengthen the principle of freedom of expression in general.”

In a world where proclaiming the Gospel can lead to punishment, Päivi is an example of resilience, courage and conviction. Her journey challenges us to consider how we respond to cultural pressures and stand firm in the truth when so many are trying to deconstruct it.

I work for a Christian legal advocacy organisation called ADF International. We are proud to support Päivi’s legal defence and that of many like her. We advocate for fundamental human rights and the inherent dignity of all to live out their faith freely. One of our key missions is to create awareness around these issues and, in doing so, advance God’s kingdom.

As citizens of a democratic state, we must advocate for our right to free speech and expression as enshrined in human rights law. This right is the cornerstone to defending all our other rights; we use words to challenge injustices. Think of the consequences of censorship for Christians. When we fear legal repercussions for sharing our faith, we may shy away from sharing the Gospel and engaging in public discourse. This goes against what we are called to do as Christians.

You may be surprised to hear that many Christians support “hate speech” laws because they believe they safeguard Christians and marginalised groups. But evidence suggests it’s quite the contrary, therefore, we must oppose them. “Hate speech” laws are inherently vague and oftentimes intentionally subject to interpretation, which means they can be used as a weapon against a particular opinion, worldview or belief.

In Ireland, Justice Minister Helen McEntee announced that the Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences Bill 2022 will move forward without previously proposed speech restrictions due to a lack of consensus on the "incitement to hatred" aspect. Although this is a win for free speech, it’s important to consider that had this law passed, anyone under this law could have been imprisoned for five years for the possession of “hateful” content, with “hate” nowhere defined.

We must consider who defines “hate speech.” If you ask me, the state and government have shown division and confusion over its fragmented and unregulated view of truth. How can the same governments established to protect fundamental human rights now fight against them? Mark 3:25 states “And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” We must make every effort to oppose such laws and uphold human rights as guaranteed universally by international law.

John 17:17 states: “Sanctify them in truth; your word is truth.”

I would like to ask you to pray specifically for:

- Everyone involved in Päivi’s case, including her family and her legal defence team
- A favourable outcome for Päivi and freedom of speech in general
- That freedom of speech and expression will be respected. More courage and resilience among Christians

Moldova’s future

The Romanian government on Thursday issued a statement suggesting that Russia was using aggressive propaganda to undermine Moldova’s accession to the the European Union by the use of distorted historical facts and taking no account of the present realities. **Marcel Ciolacu, Romania’s Prime Minister, said that by Russia’s disinformation it was seeking to divert Moldova from its European path. He urged Moldova not to be intimidated by such action and stand firm. Between the wars, Moldova was historically part of Romania. Today they have close ties and the official language of Moldova is Romanian. "Romania stands shoulder to shoulder with Moldova in pursuing the European dream," the Romanian prime minister added. Let us remember Moldova in our prayers and its right to independence and freedom to decide its own destiny in a referendum on 20th October, the same date as its presidential election.**

Further Prayer:-

1. One year on from the October 7 massacre, let’s continue to stand in prayer with Israel and its right to defend itself from those who are against the very existence of the Jewish state.
2. As Europeans United in Prayer prepare to meet in Hungary from 20-25 October, let’s pray that God would shape their agenda and guide them in their prayers for Hungary and Europe

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