

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED (MATT. 5:10-12)

I. Introduction - Review Of Beatitudes

- Repeated Formula of Propositions w/present reality and future promise. (Mt. 13:16)
- About The Ideal Christian - Qualities Of Character
- Spiritual Qualities, Which Run Counter To What Most People Think, Make A Person Happy.
- Jesus – the Great High Priest blesses His people. To bless is to: 1) invoke Divine favor, 2) confer well-being 3) blessed is used as a title for those beatified (“exalted above others”)

Q. What does Jesus assert are characterizes that make a person blessed/happy v. what the world would assert makes a person happy?

CHRISTIAN	NON-CHRISTIAN	REWARD/PROMISE
Spiritual Poverty	Material Wealth	Possess K. of Heaven
Mourn (Loss)	Happy/Joyfull	Comforted
Meek	Power/Status/Pride	Inherit the Earth
Hunger/Thirst for Righteous	Seek Pleasure & Worldly Comforts/Satisfy Sinful Nature	Satisfied
Merciful	Self-fulfillment	Receive Mercy
Pure in Heart	Covetous	See God
Peacemakers	Put #1 (self) First	Called Sons of God
Persecuted	Treat Justly/Human Rights, etc.	Great is Reward in Heaven

PERSECUTED: Read Matthew 5:10-12

II. Text of the Eighth Beatitude

- A. Different beatitude in that it does not assert a spiritual quality possessed by the Christian, but the consequence/outcome of possessing these spiritual qualities
- B. Beatitude with a double blessing
 - 1st stated In 3rd person like the others
 - 2nd stated In The 2nd person
- C. Persecution to be a normal mark of the Christian life.

III. The Meaning Of Persecute

- A. Q. In the text (v. 10-12) what types of persecution does Jesus list? (Insult, falsely accused you of evil, persecute - verbal assaults = insult, scoffing, legal = false accusations, persecute ...

- You will be persecuted like they persecuted the prophets. (Heb. 11:35)

Jeered	tortured	imprisoned unjustly
Flogged	chained	stoned
Sawed in two	sword	sheepskins/goatskins
Destitute	mistreated	insulted

- Jesus announces it will be no different for you. Christians have been:
 - Fed to lions (like Daniel but were not spared)
 - Burned alive by fire (like Shadrach, Meschech, & Abednigo but not spared)
 - Crucified
 - Boiled in Oil

- B. Dioko – translated “persecute” is not defensive but offensive. Means to pursue, run after, persecute, and drive away.

IV. Cause (Why) Of Persecution

- A. From text what are the causes of persecution?

- v. 10 For the sake of righteousness

2 Tim 3:12 "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"

- v. 11 For the sake of Christ

- B. Q. What was the first act of persecution in the Bible? (*Abel Heb. 11:4 Commended as a righteous man*)

- Two Seeds – Antithesis – the unregenerate/unrighteous pursuing, trying to drive away the righteous.

Gal. 4: 28, 29 "Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

- It's spiritual: Natural man v. Spiritual Man

- There are people in this world that hate Christians.

- C. Persecution is a problem with the heart. What are the reasons (i.e. in the heart of man) for persecution?

- Jealousy - They are jealous of what the believer possesses.

Acts 5: 17, 18 " Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

- Anger/Rage -

Acts 5:33 "When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death."

- Guilt

Rom. 1:29-32 "They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know

God's *righteous decree* that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

- The general revelation of God's decree reveals what they know is wrong and do that which goes against their conscience. They are under condemnation and guilt.
- They give approval - that's what they mean by "tolerance" today - giving approval. In the name of tolerance, Christians will be persecuted (driven away). Christians do not approve of what the natural man does. E.g.: homosexuals- It's their guilt

Acts 5:28b "...you have Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

- Remember, it's spiritual warfare (holy war). it's been this way throughout history. There's something offensive about people who possess the spiritual qualities we've been studying in the beatitudes (review from overhead) – these are offensive.

D. Hatred toward God and His Son, Jesus Christ

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."

E. Christ Himself is persecuted

Acts 9:4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

F. The Message is persecuted

Acts 22:4 "I (Paul) persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,..."

- There's a danger of corrupting the message to avoid persecution.

Gal. 6:12 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

Q. How do you see the Christian message today being corrupted - perhaps as a way of acceptance by the world or to avoid persecution?

- Taking the path of least resistance in life. Making the Christian message palatable to the world avoids conflict.

Lk 6:26 "Woe to you when men speak well of you."

V. Our Attitude/Response To Persecution

Q. How Should Christians react, should they?

Act like victims	Retaliate	be overcome by fear
Feel rejected	grin and bear it	

A. Text: "Rejoice and be glad" (v. 12)

Why rejoice?

- Your reward is great in heaven
- It's an honor - you're in good company (prophets/apostles)
- Because the Great High Priest has "blessed" you and he who is blessed by
The Great High Priest is blessed indeed.
- Because you share in Christ's sufferings

I Pet. 4:12-16 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Acts 5:40-41 His [Gamaliel's] speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

-Flogging was no slap on the wrist - 40 lashes minus one.

B. Man's Search for Meaning

VI. Christ's Attitude/Response To the Christian's Persecution

- Stephen

Acts 7:54-60 When they heard this they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus

standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him..."

We see Jesus standing. This is the only place in Scripture where we see this imagery. Jesus is always seated at the right hand of God.

VII. Conclusion – Promises/Reward

Finish Persecution Row