

Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake



Matthew 5:10-12

- The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew Chapters 5-7, contains the words of Jesus Christ as He taught His disciples at the outset of His earthly ministry.
- Matthew 5:1-12, begins with the “beatitudes” which describes the character of every Kingdom citizen.

A. As we study these Eight Beatitudes found in Matthew 5:1-10, it will help us to grow in our understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

1. I believe we will learn the distinguishing marks of what it means to be a true Christian and not a carnal Christian.
2. I believe it will cause us to search our own hearts and view our own lives from Christ’s perspective and not the world’s perspective.
3. I believe these qualities reveal the true character of the citizens of the Kingdom of God. The blessing for every Kingdom citizen is the hope and glorious reward that we can expect both now and for eternity.

- The Purpose: to teach us what it truly means to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.
- The Goal: to make us aware of our need for God and to help us to pursue a life that is well-pleasing in the sight of God.
- The word “blessed” is known to mean happy or fortunate. There is a happiness that supersedes what’s happening around us – that is the inner joy and peace that Jesus Christ gives to every true believer.

○ Lessons Taught:

1. (Matthew 5:3) – Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Being “poor in spirit” is to be in spiritual poverty; to be conscious of one’s continual dependence on God.
2. (Matthew 5:4) – Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
 - The word “mourn” means to feel or express grief or sorrow; to have a broken heart over or to be in wailing.

- It is a deep sorrow or to be broken hearted over the state of the world due to sin and the destruction it causes in the life of both believers and unbelievers.
 - (Matthew 5:5) – Blessed are the meek or humble, for they shall inherit the earth.”
 - Jesus Christ demonstrated meekness by His willingness to sacrifice His life for the life of many. (John 3:16, John 4:34, John 9:4-5)
 - The word “meek” means mild temper, gentle, or humble.
 - The word “meekness” does not mean weakness. In other words, it means power under control. (Proverbs 16:32, 25:28)
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4. (Matthew 5:6) – “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”
- To hunger and thirst is to have a starving spirit and a parched soul that craves for righteousness.
 - The blessed believers truly hunger and thirst (genuine craving) each and every day to life for Christ and bring glory and honor to His name.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matthew 5:7)
- To be “merciful” means to be actively compassionate.
 - It means to withhold punishment from guilty offenders. It means to forgive those who been justly accused of all wrongdoing.
 - God’s mercy is a reflected in the cross of Christ and it’s a direct reflection of His love, forgiveness and compassion for all mankind. (Ephesians 2:4-10)

- God's mercy not only shows us who He is, but it also reveals who we are. (1 John 3:11-18)
- Christ-centered people can see the world through God's perspective, and they willingly allow His love and mercy to flow in and through their lives.
- Those who are recipients of God's great mercy, should also be merciful toward others.
- God instructs every believer to be merciful. (Luke 6:30-36)

6. (Matthew 5:8) - Blessed are the Pure in heart, for they shall see God."

- 1) The word "pure" means to have a clean heart; to be honest, to be unmixed, unpolluted; to be cleansed, purged and forgiven. (Psalm 24:3-5)
- 2) It means to be holy; to have a single purpose, single focus or single-minded, devoted to Jesus Christ and to bring glory and honor to God.
- 3) Being pure in heart does not mean that a person is flawless, perfect or without mistakes.

7. (Matthew 5:9) – "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

A. What defines a peacemaker?

1. A peacemaker is someone who bring people together; to make peace between men and God; to solve disputes and erase divisions; to reconcile differences and eliminate strife; to silence false accusations and build relationships.
2. A peacemaker is someone who actively seeks to reconcile people to God and one another.
 - It mandates action and initiative to bridge the gap between one another.
 - The word "peacemaker" means to do or to make. It means harmony or wholeness.

Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake – Matthew 6:10-12

- Jesus pronounces blessings upon the life of true believers who are persecuted not for their wrongdoing, but for the sake of Jesus Christ.
- 1. Christian persecution is always within the context of Jesus Christ.
- 2. Persecution and all kinds of evil comes on account of one's association and proclamation of Jesus Christ.
- (vs. 11) – Jesus draws a clear line in the sand and make His point clear the reasoning behind believers being revile (insults, mock, or ridiculed) and persecute (intention to do harm), and speak all kinds of evil against you falsely – For one reason only, “Jesus said for My sake.”
- In other words, “Jesus said, because of Me and not for any other reason.”

- A. What does the word “persecution” mean?
 - The word “persecuted” means to endure suffering for Christ; to be mocked, ridiculed; criticized, lied on, ostracized, to be treated with hostility; to be martyred.
 - What does “persecution” mean for the lives of believers?
 1. It means that believers will be hated, hurt, harmed, attacked, tortured, martyred, and treated with hostility.
 2. It means that believers will be verbally abused, scolded, mocked, criticized, ridiculed and all other forms wickedness against them such as slander, cursed, lied on, or assassination of one's character.
 3. It means that “persecution” can come from familiar faces such as family, friends, enemies, co-workers, neighbors, communities, employer or government.
 - (John 1:11) – Jesus says, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”

- Jesus who was Jewish, was hated, beaten, mocked, rejected, persecuted and crucified on the cross by His own people. (Matthew 27:32-56)
 - (Luke 21:16-17) – Jesus forewarns His disciples, “You will be betrayed even by parents, and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.”
1. Jesus’ intentions were never to discourage us, but to prepare us for what is to come.
 2. True believers are committed to go all the way with the Lord Jesus Christ. Their eyes are focused on the Lord.
 3. True believers are always moving forward in the Lord and not looking back at the pleasures of this world. No more excuses!!
- (Luke 9:57-62) – As Jesus was traveling during his earthly ministry, he encountered a number of would-be followers.
 - The first man told Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go!” Jesus response, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (vs. 57-58)
 - In other words, “Jesus is telling the man, if you want to follow Me and be My disciple it is not going to be easy, there will be benefits and blessing, but their also will be hard times and sufferings.
 - (2 Timothy 3:12) – “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
 - The second man comes and Jesus says to him, “Follow Me.” The man pleads with Jesus, “Let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus says to him, “Let the dead bury the dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” (vs. 59-60)
 - In other words, “Jesus is telling the man, if you want to follow Me and be My disciple the time is right now.”
 - (Matthew 16:24) – Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desire to come after Me, let them deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”
 - The third man comes and said, “Lord I’ll follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” Jesus said to him,

“No one, having put his hands to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (vs. 61-62)

- **In other words, Jesus is telling the man, if you want to follow Me and be My disciple it will require total loyalty and commitment to Me.**

B. Who is Jesus referring to as blessed and who will experience persecution? (vs. 10)

- 1. The believer whose lifestyle, actions, and motivations accurately reflects the character of God. The word Christian means Christ-like.**
- 2. The believer who lives a holy and righteous life before God.**
- 3. The believer who proclaims Christ, lives by Christ’s command, and obeys Christ’s command.**
- 4. The believer who is a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.**
- 5. The believer who walks in obedience to God’s Word.**
- 6. The believer who hates what God hates and loves what God loves. God loves the sinner, but hates sin.**
- 7. The believer who stands boldly and is anchored firmly in Jesus Christ.**
- 8. The believer who truly loves God with all their heart, soul, mind and their neighbor.**

C. The true believer who endures persecution are those who have a genuine love for God, His Word, and for other fellow-believers. (John 15:10-16)

- 1. Persecution for Jesus Christ should draw us closer to God, His Word and to each other. (John 15:10-17)**
 - **The word “abide” means to remain, continue in, dwell in, to endure, to bear, and to last.**
 - **The believer is given the charge to abide, continue, remain, and to endure until the very end for Christ’s sake. (Matthew 24:13-14)**
- 1) The believer will either “abide in Christ or abandon Christ” during times of persecution.**
- 2) The believer will either “abide in Christ’s love or abandon Christ’s love” during times of persecution.**
- 3) The believer will either “abide in fellowship with Christ or abandon fellowship with Christ” during times of persecution.**

- The believer is to “abide” in the love of Christ by keeping His commandments and seeking to please Him. (John 15:10, 14, 14:21)
 - (John 15:11) – “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full or complete.”
- 1) Jesus Christ is the only one who can bring true joy in a believer’s life.
 - 2) The believer experiences Christ’s joy when they are focused on doing the will of God.
 - 3) The believer experiences Christ’s joy when they are focused on eternity with God and other fellow believers. (Hebrews 12:1-2)
 - 4) The believer experiences Christ’s joy when they are committed to studying, meditating, praying, and applying the Word of God to their life.
 - 5) The believer experiences Christ’s joy when they trust and stand on the promises of God.
 - 6) The believer experiences Christ’s joy when people are saved. (Luke 15:5, Philippians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, Psalm 126:5)
- The joy that God implants in the heart of believers through Jesus Christ can sustain them even through persecution, trials, and tribulations in life. (James 1:2-4)
 - (John 15:12-17) – Jesus reminds us in the verses of Scripture the importance of love, unity, obedience to His Word, fellowship, purpose, and bearing fruit.
 - Jesus Christ gives believers the antidote to overcoming persecution (John 15:12-17) – it’s not murmuring and complaining, division or divisive behavior.
- 1) The believer’s supreme love and commitment to Jesus Christ. (vs. 12-13)
 - 2) The believer’s bond with Christ and each other. (vs. 14-15)
 - 3) The believer’s purpose in Christ. (vs. 16)
 - 4) The believer’s obedience to Christ’s command to love one another. (vs. 17)
2. Persecution from the world is a reality for believers. (John 15:18-27)
 - The “world” refers to the unbeliever, unredeemed, the lost, or those who never given their life to Jesus Christ.

- The “world” refers to those whose lives are centered upon the pleasures in this world. (1 John 2:15-16, 2 Timothy 3:1-5)
- (vs. 18-20) – Jesus gives His disciples and to every true believer a strong warning of what’s to come from those of the world. Jesus gives...
 - 1) The warning – of the world’s hatred toward Himself (Jesus) and believers. (vs. 18)
 - 2) The knowing – the believer is to know that the world hated Jesus Christ first. (vs. 18)
 - 3) The reason – the believer is not of this world, but in Christ who chose us out of the world. (vs. 19)
 - 4) The reminder – if they persecuted Jesus, they will also persecute true believers. (vs. 20)
 - 5) Their ignorance – because they do not know the True and Living God who sent Jesus into the world. (vs. 21, 16:1-3)
 - 6) Their sins – because of Jesus Christ they have no excuse to live and die in sin. (vs. 22)
 - 7) Their hatred – against God and Jesus is due to their exposure of sin (vs. 23-24). The same will be true for believers who are committed to living a holy and righteous life before God.

- D. The believer’s victory is in Jesus Christ who has given us a Helper – the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Truth. He will testify of Jesus Christ. (vs. 26-27, John 16:7-11, 13, 33)
 1. The believer should never lose heart. Don’t be discouraged. (Hebrews 12:3, Galatians 6:9)
 2. The believer should never be surprised by the suffering, but rejoice that they share Christ’s suffering. (1 Peter 4:12-19)
 3. The believer’s joy is the prelude to the joy that is to come at the return of Christ when His glory is revealed (vs. 13, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
 4. The believer is blessed by God when they are reproached (insulted, criticized, disgraced, discredited) for Christ’s sake. (vs. 14)
 5. The believer should know nothing can separate us from Christ’s love. (Romans 8:35-39)