

UPSIDE DOWN: The Beatitudes

Lesson Nine • Matthew 5:10-12

The Joy of Persecution

The Eighth Beatitude

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10

Global Persecution

The most persecuted group of people in the world are CHRISTIANS.

Remember those who are in prison as if you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering as if you were suffering with them. Hebrews 13:3 NCV

The Joy of Persecution

1. The REALITY of Persecution Is Expected!

“Blessed are those who are persecuted...” Matthew 5:10

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely...” Matthew 5:11

*“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. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also.”
John 15:18-20 NIV*

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 2Timothy 3:12 ESV

Three Forms of Persecution

- Christ-followers will face PHYSICAL ATTACKS.
- Christ-followers will face VERBAL INSULTS.
- Christ-followers will face FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

2. The REASON for Persecution Is Righteousness!

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake...” Matthew 5:10

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake...” Matthew 5:11

Why Is Righteousness Persecuted?

The light of a righteous life EXPOSES the deeds of a sinful life, and that life devoted to righteousness will inevitably be persecuted.

This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. John 3:19-20 NIV

Are You Willing to Suffer Persecution for Christ?

Persecution is the believer’s BIRTHMARK, and the kingdom of heaven is their promised blessing.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10

3. The RESPONSE to Persecution Is Rejoice!

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:12

Two Reasons to Rejoice

- Because we are promised a great REWARD in heaven.
- Because we are identified with the PROPHETS before us.

Advancing the Gospel through Persecution

Persecution OPENS DOORS for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to advance, so pray: “O Lord, grant me the grace to live the Beatitudes for the sake of the Gospel!”

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Philippians 1:12-13 NIV