

INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to invite you to turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5 as we look this morning at verses 10-12.
2. In our last two studies in the epistle of Jude we talked about *How to Survive the Last Days.*”
3. Jude told his readers to *remember the words of the apostles* and to *build yourselves on your faith.*
4. *The apostles said there would be mockers in the last days and they would be characterized by their ungodly desires; by their destructive activities; by their sensual character; and by their lack of spiritual life.*
5. Having taken note of these false teachers, Jude now tells his readers to *build yourselves on your faith.*
6. They were to do this by *praying in the Holy Spirit; by keeping themselves in the love of God; by looking for the return of Christ; by having mercy on others; and by resting in the keeping power of God.*
7. As we talked about the mercy they were to show toward others, we said that Jude mentioned three groups: *those who doubt, those who are endangered disbelievers, and those who are confirmed sinners.*
8. As we revisit this subject this morning I want us to look at what Jesus said in Matthew 5:10-12.

9. Because there is danger anytime you are around false teachers and their disciples, rescuing anyone can bring about undesirable results.
10. I believe Jesus gives us insight as to what to do when this happens.
11. He says in Matthew 5:10-12, “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
12. According to the context of Matthew chapter 5, Jesus has given to His disciples and the multitudes 7 Beattitudes up to this point.
13. Each of these Beattitudes relate to how one enters into the kingdom of God.
14. The last Beatitude, in verses 10-12, refers to the reaction the world has to those who live what Jesus teaches in verses 3-9.
15. “It is generally agreed that verses 11 and 12 are a kind of elaboration of this Beatitude, and perhaps an application of its truth and message to the disciples in particular.
16. At first, this Beatitude seems to be rather different from all the others in that it is not so much a positive description of the

Christian as an account of what is likely to result because of what has gone before and because the Christian is what we have seen him to be.

17. Yet ultimately it is not different because it is still an account and description of the Christian.
18. He is persecuted because he is a certain type of person and because he behaves in a certain manner.
19. The best way of putting it, therefore, would be to say that, whereas all the others have been a direct description, this one is indirect.
20. ‘This is what is going to happen to you because you are a Christian,’ says Christ” (D. Martin Lloyd Jones, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 128).
21. Persecution is the result of godliness.
22. Paul said to Timothy in 2 Tim.3:12 - “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
23. Living godly will certainly cause a reaction from the ungodly.
24. In fact it will be the very means by which some enter the kingdom.
25. Luke recorded in Acts 14:22, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”

26. Those words echo what Jesus said to His disciples in John 16:33 when He said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”
27. Persecution and tribulation are the results of living a godly life.
28. Martin Luther gave an accurate definition of a Christian as “Christianus quasi crucianus,” which means, “Christians, as if crucified ones.”
29. But most people today do not see a Christian in this way.
30. They think that everything will be fine and that you can go through this life, as a Christian, and not upset anyone with your Christianity.
31. Paul says that living godly will bring about persecution.
32. That means, just being a Christian will cause suffering and pain.
33. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 that “Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have

been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.”

34. Hebrews 11:32-38 says, “And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.”
35. Does this sound like the ungodly passively sit back and tolerate you're the righteousness of Christ in your life? NO!
36. Just being a Christian irritates the world.
37. I was reading the news on Sermonaudio.com and two stories were listed showing exactly how the world feels about Christians.

38. The first one was titled: “Religion of Peace: Eliminate Christians.”

“Militant Islamists in Pakistan have called for the elimination of Christians and the public hanging of a Christian accused of blasphemy.

According to a news release from human rights organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide, or CSW, about 3,000 Muslims gathered for Friday prayers at the Jamia Mosque in Sangla Hill on Dec. 2. It was at that location three weeks earlier that three churches, a school, a convent and Christian homes were attacked in Pakistan's worst outbreak of anti-Christian violence since 2002.”

39. The second article was titled: “Chinese Christians Arrested.”

“Just two weeks before Christmas, the Chinese government yesterday arrested 29 Christians for holding an "illegal religious gathering."

According to the China Aid Association, citing eyewitness reports, 40 law enforcement officers with eight police vehicles raided a house church leadership meeting.”

40. Referring to persecution here in the United States, David Limbaugh writes in his book “Persecution”:

“While tolerance is touted as the highest virtue in our popular culture, Christians are often subjected to scorn and ridicule and denied their religious freedoms. In no way does this book

mean to imply that other groups are not subjected to discrimination or to deny the seriousness of that discrimination. The difference, however, is that it seems that when other groups (or individuals from those groups) experience discrimination or mistreatment the popular culture decries it. But when it comes to anti-Christian discrimination, the culture's attitude seems to be, 'Yes, please do shut up those Bible-thumping idiots!'" (Introduction, ix).

41. Again the reaction from the world is not because Christians are model citizens who obey the law, submit to those in authority, love their neighbor as well as their enemies, but because they exist.
42. Those who are truly born again and live the example of Christ are persecuted for it.
43. According to the apostle Paul, persecution is God's will.
44. Paul said in Philippians 1:29-30, "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me."
45. Commenting on the subject of persecution, Thomas Manton, said, "Though Christ died to take away the curse from us, yet not to take away the cross from us. Those stones which are cut out for a building are first under the saw and hammer to be hewed and squared. The godly are called 'living stones' (1 Pet.2:5). And they must be hewn and polished by the persecutor's hand that they may be fit for the heavenly

building. The saints have no charter of exemption from trials. Though they be never so meek, merciful, pure in heart, their piety will not shield them from sufferings. They must hang their harp on the willows and take the cross. The way to heaven is by way of thorns and blood. Though it be full of roses in regard of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, yet it is full of thorns in regard of persecutions” (The Beatitudes, 259-260).

46. As we look at this beatitude, we see “The Lord’s opening thrust in the Sermon on the Mount climaxes with this great and sobering truth: those who faithfully live according to the first seven beatitudes are guaranteed at some point to experience the eighth. Those who live righteously will inevitably be persecuted for it. Godliness generates hostility and antagonism from the world. The crowing feature of the happy person is persecution! Kingdom people are rejected people. Holy people are singularly blessed, but they pay a price for it” (John MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 220).
47. Let’s look at verse 10 as we see *the blessing*.

I. The Blessing (vv.10-11)

A. It is a Double Portion (vv.10-11)

“Blessed” occurs twice in verses 10-11.

Gr. Makarios, “happy, fortunate, blissful.” The fullest meaning of the term had to do with an inward contentedness that is not affected by circumstances.

One person defines it as “being free from daily cares and worries.”

B. It is for Righteousness’ Sake (v.10)

Persecution is “for righteousness’ sake” (v.10) or “for my sake” (v.11).

D. Martin Lloyd Jones asks “Why are the righteous thus persecuted? And, especially, why is it that the righteous are persecuted rather than the good and noble? The answer, I think, is quite simple.

The good and noble are very rarely persecuted because we all have the feeling that they are just like ourselves at best. We think, ‘I am capable of that myself if I only put my mind to it,’ and we admire them because it is a way of paying a compliment to ourselves. But the righteous are persecuted because they are different. That was why the Pharisees and the scribes hated our Lord. It was not because He was good; it was because He was different.

There was something about Him that condemned them. They felt all their righteousness was being made to look very tawdry (cheap). That was what they disliked” (135).

1. The only persecution that God blesses is the one which is for righteousness not sinfulness
 - a) Luke 6:22 says, “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.”
 - b) 1 Pet.3:14 - “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.”
 - c) 1 Pet.4:14 - “ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

D. Martin Lloyd Jones says, “Being righteous, practicing righteousness, really means being like the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore they are blessed who are persecuted for being like Him. What is more, those who are like Him always will be persecuted” (The Sermon on the Mount, 133).

2. If you suffer because of sin you are not blessed but chastised

- a) Peter says in 1 Peter 4:15 - “Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler.”
 - b) Heb.12:3-6 - “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; 6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.”
3. Christians need to understand persecution
- a) It is inevitable (v.11)

“*When* they revile and persecute you” same as James 1:2, “*When* you encounter various trials.”
 - b) It is promised
 - (1) In regard of God: He has decreed and designed it
 - (a) God’s decree: “We have been destined for this” (1 Thess.3:3)

(b) God's design: "Whoever brings the suffering, God sends it" (Thomas Watson).

(1) Trials - Daniel 12:10 - "Many shall be tried."

Thomas Watson says,

"Persecution is the touchstone of sincerity. It discovers true saints from hypocrites.

Unsound hearts pretend fair in prosperity, but in time of persecution fall away

(Mat.13:20-21). Hypocrites cannot sail in stormy weather.

They will follow Christ to Mount Olivet, but not to Mount Calvary...If trouble arises,

hypocrites will rather make Demas their choice than Moses their choice. They will prefer

thirty pieces of silver before Christ. God will have persecutions in the world to

make a discovery of men. Suffering times are sifting

times" (The Beatitudes, 262).

(2) Purity - God lets His children be in the furnace that they may

be ‘partakers of His holiness’
(Heb.12:10).

The cross “purges out pride,
impatience, love of the world”
(Watson).

- (3) Open enemies - The wicked
hate the godly.

“It is true the saints have their
infirmities, but the wicked do
not hate them for these, but for
their holiness, and from this
hatred arises open violence.
The thief hates the light,
therefore would blow it out”
(Watson).

There are also secret enemies,
“who pretend friendship but
secretly raise persecutions
against the godly. Such are
hypocrite and heretics. Paul
calls them ‘false brethren’ (2
Cor.11:26)” (Watson).

- (2) Since they persecuted the “prophets who
were before you,” they will persecute you
(v.12)

- (3) Since they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute you
 - (a) John 15:18-21
 - (b) John 16:2-3
 - (c) Mat.25:9

II. The Attitude (vv.11-12)

“Those who have been persecuted.”

“All of the other beatitudes have to do with inner qualities, attitudes, and spiritual character. The eighth beatitude speaks of external things that happen to believers, but the teaching behind these results also has to do with attitude.

The believer who has the qualities required in the previous beatitudes will also have the quality of willingness to face persecution for the sake of righteousness. He will have the attitude of self-sacrifice for the sake of Christ” (John MacArthur, Matthew 1-7, 224).

A. The Meaning of Persecuted

The Greek word that Jesus uses for persecution is dioko. It occurs 3 times in verses 10-12:

“Persecuted” (v.10), “persecute” (v.11), “persecuted” (v.12)

The word has the basic meaning of “chasing, driving away, or pursuing. From that meaning developed the connotations of physical persecution, harassment, abuse, and other unjust treatment” (MacArthur).

Thomas Watson says “the Greek word ‘to persecute’, signifies ‘to vex and molest’, sometimes ‘to prosecute another’, to ‘arraign him at the bar’, and ‘to pursue him to the death’. A persecutor is a ‘pricking briar’ (Ezekiel 28:24); therefore the church is described to be ‘a lily among the thorns’ (Canticles 2:2) [The Beatitudes, 260].

B. The Means of Persecution

1. A persecution of the hand

- a) Stephen said to those of the Synagogue of the Freedmen who were disputing with him, “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?” (Acts 7:52).
- b) Paul said in Romans 8:36, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day LONG; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

Thomas Watson says, “This I call a bloody persecution, when the people of God are persecuted with fire and sword” (260).

2. A persecution of the tongue (which is two-fold)

How to Survive the Last Days (Pt.3) [5/4/08] © 2008
Matthew 5:10-12
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a) Revilings (v.11a)

Gr.oneidizo, “to reproach, revile, to heap insults upon” (Fritz Rienecker, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, 12). It literally means “to cast in one’s teeth” (MacArthur)

“To cast insults is to throw abusive words in the face of an opponent, to mock viciously” (MacArthur).

This is tongue persecution.

- (1) Ps.55:21 says his words “are drawn swords.”
- (2) Luke 6:22 - “Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.”

b) False accusation (v.11b)

“And falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

“Whereas insults are abusive words said to our faces, these evil things are primarily abusive words said behind our backs” (MacArthur).

Slandering is also tongue persecution.

- (1) Christ was charged to have had a demon

John 8:48 - "The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?""

- (2) Paul was slandered in his doctrine
(Rom.3:1-8)

Thomas Watson says, "Let us take heed of becoming persecutors. Some think there is no persecution but fire and sword. Yes, there is persecution of the tongue. There are many of these persecutors nowadays who by a devilish chemistry can turn gold into dung, the precious names of God's saints into reproach and disgrace" (261).

III. The Promise (vv.10, 12)

A. The Kingdom of Heaven (v.10)

1. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-7
2. 2 Timothy 2:12 - "If we endure, we will also reign with Him."
3. Romans 8:16-18 - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs

with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

B. A Great Reward (v.12)

“For your reward in heaven is great.”

1. Luke 6:23 - “Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.”
2. Revelation 2:10 (Smyrna) - “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

CONCLUSION

1. Before we close, Jesus tells us how we are to respond to presecution.
2. He says:
 - a) Have a joyful attitude (v.12)
 - (1) “Rejoice” Gr.chairo, “to be happy”

(2) “Be glad” Gr.agalliaomai, “to rejoice greatly”
(Rienecker)

b) Have a loving heart (Luke 6:27)

“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”

c) Have a prayerful concern (Luke 6:28)

“Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

d) Have a forgiving spirit (Rom.12:17-21)

“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine , I will repay," says the Lord. 20 "But if your enemy is hungry , feed him, and if he is thirsty , give him a drink ; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

3. Being a Christian as Jesus defines for us right here should cause a reaction in the world and when you rescue those under the sway of false teachers you may very well be persecuted by them or by the false teachers themselves. So be ready!

4. It is certainly not desirable to have any of these reactions in our life.
5. We desire peace with all men.
6. But remember—you can't have true lasting peace apart from the truth.
7. Much of the peace that we enjoy today is because there were those who were bold enough to confront error.
8. Will you be the one to continue that fight for the truth?
9. Let's pray.
10. Lord's Supper.