

SERIES: LUKE: THE SON OF MAN, THE SAVIOR
HAS COME, WEEK 43

TITLE: HAPPY ARE THE HARASSED

TEXT: LUKE 6:22-23

INTRODUCTION: (1) **"HAPPY ARE THE
HARASSED."**

* NOW CERTAINLY THAT STATEMENT GOES
AGAINST THE GRAIN OF NATURAL THINKING
AND WISDOM.

** I MEAN NORMALLY WE DO NOT ASSOCIATE
HAPPINESS WITH PERSECUTION, DO WE?

*** YET THIS FOURTH AND FINAL BEATITUDE
CLIMAXES WITH THIS GREAT AND SOBERING
TRUTH.

**** THAT THOSE WHO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY WILL
INEVITABLY BE PERSECUTED FOR IT.

(2) GODLINESS GENERATES HOSTILITY AND ANTAGONISM FROM THE WORLD.

* AND THE CROWNING FEATURE OF THE HAPPY, BLESSED PERSON IS PERSECUTION.

** FOR YOU SEE CHRIST'S PEOPLE ARE REJECTED PEOPLE. HOLY PEOPLE LIVING OUT THE OTHER BEATITUDES ARE BLESSED, BUT THEY PAY A PRICE FOR IT!

*** AND OF ALL THE BEATITUDES, THE FOURTH ONE SEEMS THE MOST CONTRARY TO HUMAN THINKING AND EXPERIENCE.

**** FOR WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLD DOES NOT ASSOCIATE HAPPINESS WITH TEARS, BEING POOR IN SPIRIT, OR HUNGERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT HOPEFULLY WE UNDERSTAND THAT.

(3) BUT SOMETIMES EVEN WE AS CHRISTIANS HAVE A HARD TIME ASSOCIATING HAPPINESS **WITH PERSECUTION. THAT'S PRETTY RADICAL!**

* YET JESUS SAID BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED. HE SAID HAPPY ARE YOU WHEN PEOPLE HATE YOU, OSTRACIZE YOU, INSULT YOU AND SCORN YOUR NAME AS EVIL, BECAUSE OF ME.

** IN FACT, HE SAID WHEN THAT HAPPENS YOU SHOULD REJOICE AND BE GLAD, TO LEAP FOR JOY, FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN - WOW!

*** AND THIS MORNING, **IF WE BELIEVE CHRIST'S** WORDS TO BE TRUE, WHICH TRUE BELIEVERS DO, WE MUST REALIZE THAT TRUE HAPPINESS **COMES FROM BEING HARASSED FOR CHRIST'S** SAKE.

**** WE MUST REALIZE THAT IF WE LIVE OUT THE FIRST THREE BEATITUDES, IF WE MOURN OVER OUR SIN, HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ARE POOR IN SPIRIT THAT THERE WILL BE A REACTION TO US FOR WE WILL BE DIFFERENT!

(4) IF THE FIRST THREE BEATITUDES ARE A PART OF OUR LIVES, WE ARE GOING TO RUB SOME PEOPLE THE WRONG WAY AND THEY ARE NOT GOING TO LIKE US.

* SO IN ESSENCE THE LAST BEATITUDE IS A RESULT OF LIVING OUT THE FIRST THREE. THE FIRST THREE MAKE US STAND OUT AND BE MISUNDERSTOOD SO THAT PEOPLE WILL BRISTLE AROUND US AT TIMES.

** WHICH LEADS TO THE TITLE OF OUR MESSAGE
TODAY, "HAPPY ARE THE HARASSED."

***** AND UNDER THAT THEME WE'LL LOOK AT 2 THINGS AS WE EXAMINE THIS FINAL BEATITUDE.**

**** NO. 1 THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSECUTION, V. 22; AND NO. 2 THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING PERSECUTED, V. 23.

6. AND WITH THOSE TWO POINTS BEFORE US, **LET'S MOVE TO OUR FIRST ONE TODAY, THE PRINCIPLE.** LOOK AT V. 22 PLEASE.

I. THE PRINCIPLE, (READ V. 22)

A. NOW OUR LORD USES FOUR VERBS TO TALK ABOUT THE BLESSED MAN OR WOMAN WHOM IS TRULY HAPPY IN THIS FOURTH AND FINAL BEATITUDE IN LUKE.

* AND JESUS IS TALKING TO HIS OWN, THE 12 AND DISCIPLES OF HIS, FOR THESE PEOPLE ARE PERSECUTED FOR THE SAKE OF THE SON OF MAN AT THE END OF V. 22.

** IN OTHER WORDS THIS PERSECUTION TAKES PLACE BECAUSE OF CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER, NOT FOR UNKIND BAD BEHAVIOR, BUT BECAUSE AND ON BEHALF OF JESUS.

*** AND SAD BUT TRUE, SOME CHRISTIANS ARE PERSECUTED NOT FOR THEIR CHRISTIANITY, BUT FOR THEIR LACK OF IT.

**** THEY ARE RUDE, UNKIND, IMPATIENT, SELFISH, INSENSITIVE AND THOUGHTLESS. SOME ARE REJECTED BECAUSE THEY SEEM AS PROUD AND JUDGMENTAL AS THE WORLD.

1. OTHERS ARE DISLIKED BECAUSE THEY ARE LAZY AND IRRESPONSIBLE AND DO NOT KEEP THEIR WORD.

*** AND SOME CHRISTIANS GET A MARTYR'S COMPLEX, A POOR ME COMPLEX, BECAUSE WE ARE TREATED IMPROPERLY BECAUSE OF BAD CHARACTER AND ATTITUDES, OUR SIN, NOT FOR THE SAKE OF THE SON OF MAN, THE LORD JESUS.**

** PETER SAID THIS, ALONG THIS LINE OF THINKING IN I PETER 3:13, 14 & 17 (QUOTE THEM).

*** I PETER 4:15 SAYS: MAKE SURE THAT NONE OF YOU SUFFERS AS A MURDERER, OR THIEF, OR EVILDOER, OR A TROUBLESOME MEDDLER.

**** QUOTE I PETER 4:16.

2. NOW MY POINT FROM THESE VERSES AND OUR TEXT IS, WE ARE NOT BLESSED FOR BEING TREATED WRONGLY FOR WRONGDOING, BUT **FOR DOING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR JESUS.**

* AS THE LAST BEATITUDE IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IN MATTHEW 5:10 SAYS: (QUOTE IT).

** SO THE PERSECUTION COMES FROM DOING **WHAT'S RIGHT, FOR THE SON OF MAN'S SAKE,** ACTING LIKE HE WOULD ACT.

***** NOW SPECIFICALLY THE WORLD'S HOSTILE REACTION TO CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS WHOM ARE TRULY BLESSED, IS DESCRIBED BY THINGS THEY DO IN PERSECUTION TO BELIEVERS WHOM LIVE LIKE CHRIST, THAT ARE POOR IN SPIRIT, WHOM HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, THAT MOURN OR WEEP OVER SIN.**

**** AND FOUR VERBS ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THIS PERSECUTION. NO. 1 THEY HATE YOU, THEY LIT. DETEST YOU, THEY PURSUE YOU WITH HATRED.

3. AND WHO WANTS TO BE HATED? NOT ME. BUT THE QUESTION IS HOW MANY OF US ARE HATED FOR THE SAKE OF THE SON OF MAN?

* AND THE PROBABLE ANSWER IS, HARDLY ANY OF US.

**** THE REASON BEING, WE DON'T WANT TO CAUSE ANY WAVES, WE ARE QUIET WHEN WE SHOULD SPEAK, WE WANT PEOPLE TO LIKE US, WE ARE AFRAID, WE FEAR MAN, QUOTE PROVERBS 29:25.**

*** SO WE BACK DOWN, YET SOMETIMES WE SHOULD BE HATED BY NOT SAYING ANYTHING? YOU SAY RAY, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

**** WELL, A TRULY RIGHTEOUS LIFE IS A REBUKE TO A LOT OF PEOPLE AND EXPOSES SIN. BELOVED, A HOLY LIFE IN AN UNHOLY WORLD IS A REBUKE TO SIN AND EXPOSES UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

4. ARE YOU HATED BY ANYONE BECAUSE OF HOLY RIGHTEOUS BEHAVIOR AND YOUR VERBAL WITNESS AND COMMUNICATING THE EXCLUSIVITY OF THE GOSPEL IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY?

*** OR WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DON'T LIE ABOUT YOUR EXPENSES, OR YOU DON'T LIE TO GET A SALE? WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU BELIEVE IN PURITY? ARE YOU A PRUDE?**

** WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION? HOW CAN YOU REJECT SCIENCE?

** WHAT DO YOU MEAN THAT YOU BELIEVE IN THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMEN? WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU BELIEVE IN THE SANCTITY OF LIFE? THIS PREGNANCY WAS AN ACCIDENT AND WOULD BE A CAREER BREAKER.

*** WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU BELIEVE YOUR CHILDREN SHOULD OBEY YOU AND RESPECT YOUR AUTHORITY?

**** WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU BELIEVE IN THE HEADSHIP OF A FATHER AND HUSBAND IN MARRIAGE?

5. WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU BELIEVE IN SUBMISSION AS A WIFE TO YOUR HUSBAND? AND ON AND ON I COULD GO. YOU GET THE IDEA.

* RIGHTEOUS LIVING IS A REBUKE TO A SINNING SOCIETY AND WILL BECOME MORE OF A REBUKE IN A GODLESS HUMANISTIC, RELATIVISTIC, PLURALISTIC, IDOLATROUS CULTURE.

** JESUS SAID BLESSED ARE YOU THAT ARE HATED FOR ME.

*** NO. 2, BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN PEOPLE OSTRACIZE YOU, AND OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY EXCLUDE YOU AND SEPARATE FROM YOU.

**** AND THE GREEK VERB USED HERE LIT. MEANS TO MARK OFF BY BOUNDARIES AND SO SEPARATE FROM AND CONTEXTUALLY WE ARE TALKING ABOUT SOCIAL OSTRACISM.

6. PULLING BACK FROM YOU AND SEPARATING FROM YOU BECAUSE JESUS IS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR.

* AND I WONDER DO YOU HAVE ANY CONTACTS OR FAMILY MEMBERS THAT HAVE PULLED AWAY FROM YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR FAITH AND CHRISTLIKENESS? ARE YOU SOCIALLY REJECTED AT WORK, SCHOOL, THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

** JESUS SAID THAT WOULD HAPPEN TO HIS FOLLOWERS.

***** AND TO SPEAK PLAINLY, THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN MORE BECAUSE AT TIMES, THERE ARE PEOPLE THAT DON'T EVEN KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS!**

****** AND THERE ARE TIMES WE ACT SO WORLDLY, THEY DON'T SEE ANY DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES.**

7. AND TO USE A WORD THAT CLAUDIA VALLEN USED AT OUR FLOCK LAST WEDNESDAY, WE ARE INCULTURATED, WE HAVE BECOME LIKE THE CULTURE, WE ARE CULTURAL COMFORMISTS, WE CONFORM RATHER THAN TRANSFORM, QUOTE ROMANS 12:1&2.

* NOW THE QUESTION IS, HOW ARE WE OTHER WORLD MINDED? IN OUR CONVERSATION AND ACTIONS WHAT IS COMMUNICATED AS MOST IMPORTANT TO US?

** DO WE LIE, DO WE TALK ABOUT MONEY ALL THE TIME, DO WE LISTEN TO OFF-COLORED STORIES AND JOKES?

*** WHAT PRIORITIES ARE CONVEYED IN OUR WORLD VIEW? IS A CHRIST-CENTERED WORLD VIEW COMMUNICATED?

**** BELOVED, DOES ANYONE REJECT US AND SEPARATE FROM US BECAUSE OF OUR FAITH?

8. MOVING ON, NO. 3, ARE YOU INSULTED FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST, ARE YOU REVILED? DO YOU SUFFER REPROACH FOR JESUS, VERBAL REPROACH?

* AND THE SAME QUESTIONS CAN BE ASKED FROM THE LAST VERB, DO PEOPLE EVEN KNOW THAT YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE?

** AND OF COURSE IF YOU WANT TO BE POPULAR, LOOKED ON AS COOL, IF YOU HUNGER **FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S ACCEPTANCE OVER CHRIST'S, YOU WILL NOT BE.**

*** AND THEN NO. 4, THE 4TH VERB IS SCORNED, TO SPURN YOUR NAME AS EVIL ON ACCOUNT OF THE SON OF MAN, DO PEOPLE SLANDER YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY LIFE, BECAUSE JESUS IS SAVIOR AND LORD.

9. AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS THE WORLD'S HOSTILE REACTION SUMMED UP IN THE 4 VERBS TO US IS EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE AMONG THE BLESSED, SINCE THE WORLD DOES NOT REJECT HIS OWN.

* I MEAN THE UNDERLYING REASON FOR HATRED, OSTRACISM, INSULTS AND SCORNFUL DENUNCIATION COMES BECAUSE OF OUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE SON OF MAN – JESUS.

** JOHN SAID IN I JOHN 3:13 (QUOTE IT) ALSO QUOTE II TIMOTHY 3:12 AND MATTHEW 5:10&11.

*** AND JESUS SAID IN JOHN 15:18-21 -

V. 18 - **"IF THE WORLD HATES YOU, YOU KNOW THAT IT HAS HATED ME BEFORE IT HATED YOU.**

V. 19 - IF YOU WERE OF THE WORLD, THE WORLD WOULD LOVE ITS OWN; BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT OF THE WORLD, BUT I CHOSE YOU OUT OF THE WORLD, BECAUSE OF THIS THE WORLD HATES YOU

V. 20 - REMEMBER THE WORD THAT I SAID TO **YOU, 'A SLAVE IS NOT GREATER THAN HIS MASTER.'** IF THEY PERSECUTED ME, THEY WILL ALSO PERSECUTE YOU; IF THEY KEPT MY WORD, THEY WILL KEEP YOURS ALSO.

V. 21 - BUT ALL THESE THINGS THEY WILL DO TO **YOU FOR MY NAME'S SAKE,** BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW THE ONE WHO SENT ME.

**** **A. W. PINK SAID AND I QUOTE: "IT IS STRONG PROOF OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY THAT MEN'S CURSES AND CHRIST'S BLESSINGS SHOULD MEET ON THE SAME PERSON."** (END QUOTE) THE QUESTION IS WHAT WOULD YOU **RATHER HAVE? MEN'S CURSES OR CHRIST'S BLESSINGS?**

(10) AND WE SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED WHEN PEOPLE PERSECUTE US OR SLANDER US FALSELY AND INSTEAD OF BEING FEARFUL AND DESPONDENT AND DEPRESSED WHEN PEOPLE TREAT US THAT WAY AND HATE US, WE ARE TOLD TO BE GLAD AND LEAP FOR JOY, WHICH **LEADS US TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING PERSECUTED.** LOOK AT V. 23 PLEASE.

II. THE PRIVILEGE, (READ V. 23)

A. NOW IT SOUNDS STRANGE BUT IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST, FOR WHEN WE DO OUR REWARD IN HEAVEN WILL BE GREAT AND NO. 2 AGAIN IT GIVES EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE TRUE KINGDOM PEOPLE, FOR IN THE SAME WAY, THEY TREATED THE PROPHETS, THE DISCIPLES AND THE APOSTLES BEFORE US.

* AND BECAUSE OF THOSE TRUTHS OUR RESPONSE WHEN WE ARE PERSECUTED SHOULD BE TO REJOICE AND BE GLAD! TO LEAP FOR JOY!

** IN FACT, THIS IS NOT OPTIONAL FOR A CHRISTIAN FOR THE VERBS BE GLAD AND LEAP ARE BOTH IMPERATIVE VERBS IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE MEANING THAT THESE RESPONSES ARE COMMANDS.

*** WE ARE COMMANDED TO BE GLAD AND LEAP FOR JOY. AND NOT TO BE GLAD AND LEAP FOR JOY **WHEN WE SUFFER FOR CHRIST'S SAKE IS TO BE UNTRUSTING AND DISOBEDIENT.**

**** WE SHOULD REGARD IT AS A PRIVILEGE TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST AFTER ALL OF HIS SUFFERING FOR US (WE THAT ARE HIS) AND FOR HIS LOVE AND MERCY IN SAVING US AND HIS FAITHFULNESS IN KEEPING US.

1. AND IT SHOULD BE OUR JOY TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST. IN FACT TO BE GLAD IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS TO EXULT, TO REJOICE GREATLY, TO BE OVERJOYED.

* AND THE LITERAL MEANING OF LEAP FOR JOY IS TO SKIP AND JUMP WITH HAPPY EXCITEMENT. AND THAT SHOULD BE OUR RESPONSE.

** AND THE PRINCIPLE OF REJOICING AND BEING GLAD ABOUT PERSECUTION IS COMMUNICATED BY PRINCIPLE AND ACTION THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE.

*** FOR EXAMPLE IN I PETER 4:12&13 IT SAYS: (QUOTE THEM).

**** IN ACTS 5:40&41 IT SAYS OF THE APOSTLES:
“AND AFTER CALLING THE APOSTLES IN, THEY
FLOGGED THEM AND ORDERED THEM TO SPEAK
NO MORE IN THE NAME OF JESUS, AND THEN
RELEASED THEM. SO THEY WENT ON THEIR
WAY FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE COUNCIL,
REJOICING THAT THEY HAD BEEN CONSIDERED
WORTHY TO SUFFER SHAME FOR HIS NAME.”
QUOTE V. 42.

2. IN ACTS 16:25 IT SAYS: “BUT ABOUT
MIDNIGHT PAUL AND SILAS WERE PRAYING AND
SINGING HYMNS OF PRAISE TO GOD, AND THE
PRISONERS WERE LISTENING TO THEM.” AND
THIS IS AFTER PAUL AND SILAS HAD BEEN
BEATEN WITH RODS AND WERE THROWN IN
PRISON UNJUSTLY.

* PAUL SAID IN PHILIPPIANS **2:17: “BUT EVEN IF**
I AM BEING Poured OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING
UPON THE SACRIFICE AND SERVICE OF YOUR
FAITH, I REJOICE AND SHARE MY JOY WITH YOU
ALL.”

** AND THEN PAUL SAID TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE IN COLOSSIANS 1:24A: **"NOW I REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS FOR YOUR SAKE."**

*** SO BEING GLAD AND LEAPING FOR JOY FOR PERSECUTION WAS A RESPONSE BY FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. AND SHOULD BE OURS.

**** DIETRICH BONHOEFER SAID ALONG THIS **LINE: "DISCIPLESHIP MEANS ALLEGIANCE TO THE SUFFERING CHRIST, AND IT IS THEREFORE NOT AT ALL SURPRISING CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE CALLED UPON TO SUFFER. IN FACT IT IS A JOY AND A TOKEN OF GRACE."** (END QUOTE)

- NOW WHY? WELL, BEYOND THE REASONS I'VE GIVEN, TWO MORE IN THE REST OF V. 23.

3. NO. 1 OUR REWARD WILL BE GREAT IN HEAVEN. AND THE TRUTH IS WHATEVER WE DO FOR THE LORD NOW, INCLUDING SUFFERING FOR HIM - REAPS ETERNAL DIVIDENDS.

* WE WILL RECEIVE MUCH MORE IN HEAVENLY REWARD THAT WE CAN EVER BE WORTHY OF. FOR WE ARE NOT WORTHY. BUT REWARD IS PROMISED, GREAT REWARD.

** BUT NOT ONLY GREAT REWARD BUT ALSO WE ARE TO BE GLAD AND LEAP FOR JOY BECAUSE THE WORLD PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS WHO WERE BEFORE US IN THE SAME WAY THAT IT PERSECUTES US.

*** IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN WE SUFFER FOR **CHRIST'S SAKE WE ARE IN THE BEST POSSIBLE COMPANY.**

**** TO BE AFFLICTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE IS TO STAND IN THE RANKS OF PROPHETS LIKE JEREMIAH, WHO WAS SCOURGED LIKE ZECHARIAH WHO WAS STONED AND LIKE ISAIAH WHO ACCORDING TO JEWISH TRADITION WAS SAWN IN TWO BY MANASSEH.

4. AND WHAT FOOTSTEPS TO FOLLOW! AND APPLICATION FOR US TODAY CAN POINT US TO THE APOSTLES, WHO WERE ALL MARTYRED EXCEPT FOR JOHN WHO DIED IN EXILE ON PATMOS. AND THE ISSUE IS NOT SO MUCH DYING FOR CHRIST IN OUR CULTURE BUT LIVING FOR CHRIST AND DYING TO SELF.

*** AND WHEN WE SUFFER FOR CHRIST'S SAKE WE** KNOW BEYOND A DOUBT THAT WE BELONG TO GOD, BECAUSE WE ARE EXPERIENCING THE SAME REACTION FROM THE WORLD THAT THE PROPHETS EXPERIENCED.

AND AS I WRAP IT UP TODAY (1) LET ME SAY THAT THE ASSURANCE OF OUR SALVATION DOES NOT COME FROM KNOWING WE MADE A DECISION A PROFESSION IN THE PAST, BUT A PRESENT RIGHTEOUSNESS OR A PRESENT DESIRE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. WE PERSEVERE IN CHRIST BY HIS GRACE. THERE IS ABIDING FRUIT.

* AND WE DESIRE RIGHTEOUSNESS AS BELIEVERS ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT ALWAYS LIVE AS RIGHTEOUSLY AS WE SHOULD.

** BUT WHEN WE DO, THE WORLD WILL REACT TO US. AND NONE WHO HAVE SUFFERED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR CHRIST, WILL BE LEFT OUT. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PERSECUTION GIVE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION AND BEING A TRUE KINGDOM PERSON, AND OURS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

*** AND ALTHOUGH PEOPLE MAY TRY TO TAKE OUR REPUTATION OR WE LOSE RAISES OR PROMOTIONS BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS OR THEY TRY TO HURT US, OR FOR THOSE WHO LOSE THEIR LIVES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, THEY CANNOT TAKE HEAVEN AND GREAT ETERNAL REWARD AWAY.

*** I CLOSE WITH A TRUE STORY ABOUT A MAN NAMED JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

(2) JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, A GODLY LEADER IN THE FOURTH-CENTURY CHURCH PREACHED SO STRONGLY AGAINST SIN THAT HE OFFENDED THE UNSCRUPULOUS EMPRESS EUDOXIA AS WELL AS MANY CHURCH OFFICIALS.

* WHEN SUMMONED BEFORE THE EMPEROR ARCADIUS, CHRYSOSTOM WAS THREATENED WITH BANISHMENT IF HE DID NOT CEASE HIS UNCOMPROMISING PREACHING.

** HIS RESPONSE WAS, **"SIRE, YOU CANNOT BANISH ME, FOR THE WORLD IS MY FATHER'S HOUSE."** **"THEN I WILL SLAY YOU,"** ARCADIUS SAID. **"NAY, BUT YOU CANNOT, FOR MY LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD,"** CAME THE ANSWER. **"YOUR TREASURES WILL BE CONFISCATED"** WAS THE NEXT THREAT.

***** TO WHICH JOHN REPLIED, "SIRE, THAT CANNOT BE, EITHER. MY TREASURES ARE IN HEAVEN, WHERE NONE CAN BREAK THROUGH AND STEAL." "THEN I WILL DRIVE YOU FROM MAN, AND YOU WILL HAVE NO FRIENDS LEFT!"** WAS THE FINAL, DESPERATE WARNING.

(3) "THAT YOU CANNOT DO, EITHER," ANSWERED JOHN, "FOR I HAVE A FRIEND IN HEAVEN WHO HAS SAID, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU OR FORSAKE YOU."

* CHRYSOSTOM WAS INDEED BANISHED, FIRST TO ARMENIA AND THEN FARTHER AWAY TO PITYUS ON THE BLACK SEA, TO WHICH HE NEVER ARRIVED BECAUSE HE DIED ON THE WAY. BUT NEITHER HIS BANISHMENT NOR HIS DEATH DISPROVED OR DIMINISHED HIS CLAIMS. THE THINGS THAT HE VALUED MOST HIGHLY NOT EVEN AN EMPEROR COULD TAKE FROM HIM.

** BELIEVER REMEMBER: QUOTE MATTHEW 5:10-12.

***** HAPPY ARE THE HARASSED. (LET'S PRAY)**