

Blessed are the Persecuted Matthew 5:10-12

Introduction

People we know who aren't trusting Jesus are in the prison of Satan's kingdom. But there's a key that God uses to free Satan's captives — the good news of Jesus. Satan knows this — and does everything he can to keep us from talking about Jesus. One way Satan does this is by making us fear persecution. Which is why this is the topic of the last beatitude.

What kind of persecution is Jesus talking about? (vv.10-11)

It's "for righteousness' sake" (v.10) — brought about by our love, mercy, humility. It's "on Jesus' account" (v.11) — so it's because people hear about Jesus. So it's persecution experienced by loving, merciful people who speak of Jesus. This includes being reviled, being persecuted, and having evil spoken against you (v.11).

Who is it that will be persecuted? (5:9)

Every follower of Jesus will be persecuted — Because Jesus lists persecution as one of the beatitudes — which describe Jesus' followers. Because it's the persecuted who receive the Kingdom of Heaven — which is salvation. You can see this also in 2 Timothy 3:12.

How should we feel about being persecuted? (5:10-11)

"Blessed" — "rejoice and be glad."
Luke 6:22-23
Acts 5:41-42

Why would we feel joyful, and glad about being persecuted? (5:10,12)

Because we will receive the kingdom of heaven (10)
Because our reward in heaven is great (12)
The reward is seeing God (8)

How can we obey Jesus' call to rejoice in persecution?

By starting where Jesus starts — with the first two beatitudes.

When we do that we will feel God's comfort, which will so satisfy us that we will won't fear persecution — because we will receive the kingdom.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT
MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012

HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

How much do you fear persecution? (1 — not much; 10 — much)

Do you agree that Jesus is saying that every believer will be persecuted? Why or why not?

Is Jesus *really* saying that we should rejoice and be glad when we are persecuted? Really?

Have you ever been so excited about seeing God — that you had no fear of persecution? Share how that came about — and what happened.

Do you see the difference between trying to obey this by will-power, and by trusting the promises Jesus mentions?

What have you experienced recently as you have come to Jesus poor in spirit and mourning? Have you received the power of the Kingdom? Have you felt His comfort? Why or why not?

What are you going to do differently because of these Scriptures?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012