

TAKE IT FROM THE TOP

Week 7

Matthew 5:10-12

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Happiness comes when we decide whom we are going to make happy.

I. The Reason for Persecution

1. If you live life by the truths outlined in the beatitudes, the world will _____ you.

John 15:20

Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

- We don't pursue persecution to be _____, but persecution will pursue the godly.

2 Timothy 3:12

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

- If I am not experiencing any persecution for my faith, I have to wonder about the _____ of my faith.
- When Jesus came, a righteous _____ was set; people wanted to wipe out a standard they could not meet.

Maybe the reason that Christianity is so tolerable in this world is that our standard is so low.

John 3:19-20

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

- If we are going to have the characteristics of the kingdom, we will be _____ in some crowds. That is why we need the _____ of believers.

2. We are in a _____.

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

II. Promises in the Midst of Persecution

1. Persecution is a _____ trial used to bring an _____ good.

2 Cor. 4:17

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Romans 8:18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2. Persecution means God can _____ me and Satan is _____ by me.

Acts 5:41

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

3. Persecution reminds me that I am a _____ of _____.

III. The Response to Persecution

1. Remember your _____.

2. Refuse to _____.

Romans 12:17, 19

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁹Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Your security comes in knowing that you are living a godly life in the midst of an ungodly age, not merely in a decision you made years ago.

3. Respond _____.

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

4. _____ over it.

I Peter 4:14

If you are insulted because of Christ, you are blessed for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

5. Remain faithful.

I Peter 4:19

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

The beatitudes challenge us to come to Christ on his terms, not ours.