

Blessed are the Persecuted

Gospel of Matthew, Part 20

Matthew 5:10-12

Sermon Outline

I. Expecting Persecution

- A. Persecution is a consequence of becoming the beatitudes.
- B. Persecution is one mark of a Christian. (Jn. 15:18+, Phil. 1:27)
- C. Our lack of persecution should create tension and questions.

II. The Blessing of Persecution

- A. What Jesus is not saying. . . .
- B. What Jesus is saying. . . .
 - 1. *Blessed are those who are persecuted **for the sake of righteousness.** (v. 10)*
 - 2. *Blessed are you when people persecute you . . . **because of Me.** (v. 11)*

III. Rejoicing in Persecution

- A. The challenge of embracing but not disengaging.
- B. The call to an eternal perspective.

Blessed are the Persecuted

Gospel of Matthew, Part 20

Matthew 5:10-12

Questions for Discussion & Reflection

1. What have you learned about the beatitudes? What are they? What do they show us? Where do they drive us? Do we pick and choose which of these we want to be?
2. How does this eighth beatitude differ from the previous seven in more ways than one? Why do you think this? What does this eighth beatitude have in common with the first?
3. What is persecution? What forms does it take? Have you been persecuted? How does it feel to be persecuted?
4. Does Jesus describe persecution as an ordinary or extraordinary part of the Christian's life? Read Jn. 15:18, Phil. 1:27 and 2 Tim 3:12 to learn what else the bible says about persecution.
5. What do we do with the fact that we experience so little persecution in our own day and time?
6. How does Jesus qualify persecution that is blessed? What does persecution that Jesus describes communicate to us?
7. What is the first command in the Sermon on the Mount in verse 12? How do we normally respond to persecution when it comes?
8. Why is it our natural tendency to shrink away and isolate from the world when we are persecuted? What do the rest of the beatitudes force us to do? How do we embrace persecution without disengaging from the world around us?
9. How does Jesus once more turn our attention and perspective to eternity in this eighth beatitude?