

“Blessed Are Those Who Are  
Persecuted  
For Righteousness’ Sake”

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# The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12)

- **The poor in spirit (v. 3)**
  - Those who see their *spiritual destitution*.
- **Those who mourn (v. 4)**
  - Those who *truly sorrow* over their sins.
- **The meek (v. 5)**
  - Those who are *strong yet submissive*.

- **Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. (v. 6)**
  - An intense desire to *be right and do right.*
- **The merciful. (7)**
  - Those who out of gratitude for God's mercy *demonstrate mercy to others.*
- **The pure in heart. (8)**
  - The *single-minded*, those *completely devoted* to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Blessed are the peacemakers. (9)**
  - Those who seek to make *peace between God and men.*

- “**Blessed are those who are persecuted** for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” (Matt. 5:10-12)

# Two Observations:

- The Beatitude is longer: **three verses** instead of one.
- Jesus changes from the **third person** (they, theirs) to the **second person pronouns** (ye, you, your).

# Two Questions:

1. Why would such **godly people** be the subject of persecution?
  - They recognize and mourn over their sins; humble, gentle, desire for doing right, merciful to others, devoted to God.
2. When treated in this way, **how can anyone rejoice?**

# Jesus Never Hid From Us That His Citizens Would Be Persecuted

- Jesus (and His Apostles) often spoke of **persecution and trials**.
- **Matt. 10:22** – “And you will **be hated** by all for my name’s sake.”
- **2 Tim. 3:12** – “Indeed, **all** who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**.”

- **1 Peter 1:6-7** – “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, **ye have been put to grief in manifold trials**, 7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
- **1 Peter 4:12** – “Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial** when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.”



- **1 Pet. 2:12** – “Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that wherein **they speak against you as evil-doers**, they may by your good works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
- **1 Peter 4:16** – “**But if any man suffer as a Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.”

# Back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Question: Why Would Such Godly People Be Persecuted?

- Because we are followers of a “**hated man.**”
- **John 15:15-21**
  - V. 18 – “If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath **hated me** before it hated you.”
  - V. 19 – “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but **because ye are not of the world...** therefore the world hated you.”

**John 3:19-20** – “And this is the judgment, that **the light is come into the world,** and **men loved the darkness rather than the light;** for their works were evil. 20 For everyone that **doeth evil hateth the light,** and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov’d.”

**“Love the baby but hate the adult.”**

- They **reject** His teachings on the **way of salvation**:

- **Denominations** (Reformation doctrine of faith only; “Say the sinner’s prayer”; “Just believe in Jesus as your personal Savior.”)
- **Jesus**
  - **Mark 16:15-16** – “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”
  - **Acts 2:38** – “Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins...”
  - **Acts 22:16** – “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins...”

- They **reject** His teachings on the **church**:
  - **Denominations** (“One church is as good as another;” “All roads lead to heaven.”)
  - **Jesus in this Sermon:**
    - **7:13-14** – Narrow and Wide Gates
    - **7:15** – Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.”
    - **7:21** – “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

- **Matt. 16:18** – “Upon this rock I will build **my church...**”
- **Eph. 5:23** – “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of **the church**, being himself the savior of **the body.**”
- **Col. 1:18** – “And He is the **head of the body, the church.**”
- **Eph. 4:4-6** – “**One body...**”

- **They reject His teachings about morals.**
  - **Marriage** – one man, one woman, for life.  
(Matt. 19:3-9)
  - **Living together** outside of marriage.
    - Gal. 5:19-21 – Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, etc.
  - **Homosexuality**, lesbianism, transgender issues.
  - **Abortion.**
  - **Romans 1:18-28**
- **Remember – If they hate Him, they will hate you.**

## Forms of Persecution May Vary

1. **Reproach, hate, speaking evil, revile, lie about, insult, ridicule.**
  - “Blessed are you when people **insult** you and **persecute** you, and **falsely say** all kinds of **evil against you** because of Me.” (Matt. 5:11)
  - **1 Peter 4:4** – “speaking evil of you”
  - **1 Peter 2:11-12** – “speak against you as evil-doers”



## 2. Economic repercussions.

- **Heb. 10:32-34** – “But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were enlightened, **ye endured a great conflict of suffering**; partly, being made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly becoming partakers with them that were so used. For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and **took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions**, knowing that ye have for yourself a better possession and an abiding one.” (“public spectacle” NASB)

### 3. Physical persecution

- **Acts 4** – Apostles arrested and threatened
- **Acts 5** – Apostles arrested and beaten
- **Acts 7** – Stephen stoned to death
- **Acts 8** – Saul led a persecution against the church in Jerusalem.
- **Paul** imprisoned, stoned, beaten, etc.
- **Thessalonica** – “much affliction” (1 Th. 1:6), and became “imitators of the churches of God which are in Judaea” (1 Thess. 2:14).
- “Be thou faithful **unto death...**” (Rev 2:10)

## Q 2. How Can Anyone Rejoice?

1. Because it's an **honor to suffer for Jesus**.
  - a) **An Honor** – because I am counted with the **prophets and faithful saints**.
    - It is an **honor** to be associated with such godly and faithful people.
    - **Matt. 5:12** – “For so persecuted they the **prophets** that were before you.”
    - **Heb. 11:32-40** (“Of whom the world was not worthy” v. 38).

**b) An honor because I'm a citizen of the greatest kingdom of all.**

- **Nathan Hale – “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”**
- **Daniel 2:44 – A kingdom that will never be destroyed.**
- **Heb. 12:28-29 – “Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.”**

c) An Honor because I **suffer for “the name” of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- **1 Peter 4:16** – “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but **let him glorify God in that name.**”
- **Acts 5:41** – “Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were **counted worthy** to suffer dishonor for **the name.**”

## 2. I can rejoice in suffering, because “great is your reward in heaven.” (Matt. 5:12)

- People rejoice at **good news**.
  - Birth of baby
  - Good news about our health.
  - Promotion / Raise
- **Heaven will be worth it all!**
- 1 Pet 1:3-7 – “Wherein ye **greatly rejoice**”