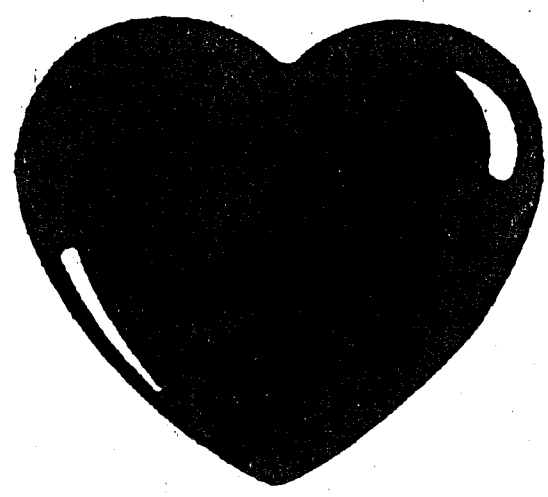


THE PERSECUTED

Matthew 5:10-12



- ◆ Reasons Of Persecution
- ◆ Responses Of Persecution
- ◆ Rewards Of Persecution

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (V. 10)

Bill Kirk

“MATTERS OF THE HEART”

Message #8

Text: Matthew 5:10-12

Subject: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Introduction

(Review the first 7 “Cause and effect” choices in the sermon on the mount”

Question: What does it mean to be “Blessed”?

Answer: The Greek word for “Blessed” is (MAKARIOS) which means; To possess an inward spiritual joy that endures regardless of outward conditions (a substance from God that is deep and abiding).

Question: Who are blessed in Matthew 5:10-12?

Answer: Those who are on the receiving end of 3 things. (What are the 3?)

#1. **Reviled and insulted:**

◆ ...which is verbal abuse to bring damage to you.

#2. **Slandered with false reports:**

◆ ...which is an evil report about you in your absence when you cannot contradict it.

#3. **A persecuting hand**

◆ ...which is being hurt and injured by someone through hostility of some kind.

(Today)

“How your enemies are really your friends in disguise”!

(3 Questions Need Answering)

#1. What are the **reasons** for persecution?

#2. What is your **response** to persecution?

#3. What is your **reward** of persecution?

(In Plain Vanilla)

- ◆ Why do believers go through cross-bearing times?
- ◆ How can your cross work for you instead of against you?
- ◆ Why are your enemies really your friends yet they don't even know it?
- ◆ What makes it possible to rejoice when your flesh is being crucified?
- ◆ What is the reward of responding the biblical way to those who intend to injure you in any way?

I. **The “Reasons” For Persecution:**

Question: Why do believers sometimes receive insults, slander and personal injury?

Answer: Jesus gives us the 3 hints in Matthew 5:10,11 & 12

- ◆ In verse 10, “For righteousness sake”
- ◆ In verse 11, “For My sake”
- ◆ In verse 12, “For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you”. **(In Other Words)**
- ◆ When you live for the righteous ways of Jesus, you will be reacted against!
- ◆ When you chose to live for Christ, you will be reviled and whispered about!
- ◆ When you take a stand for eternal things, you will receive injury.
- ◆ When you do the will of God from the heart, you will be made fun of, lied about and spoken evil of.

- ◆ When you obey the Lord, Jesus for-warns you, you cannot avoid the reaction of unbelievers (and more painful – believers).

Question: Why do believers receive persecution?

#1. Because you've been called out of the world (John 15:19)

“If you were of the world, the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you”.

(Why do believers suffer persecution?)

#2. Because you chose to live a godly, pure life (II Timothy 3:12)

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”

(Why do believers suffer persecution?)

#3. Because you know Jesus, but the world doesn't know Him (John 15:21)

“But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me”

(Why do believers suffer persecution?)

#4. Because you are an offence to the deceiver of the deceived (John 16: 1 & 2)

“These thing have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended...yea, the time will come that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service”

(Why do believers suffer insult and injury?)

#5. Because even Christians can be carnal and in the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are wrath, envy and strife” (And all of these cause injury and sever relationships)

II. The “Response” To Persecution:

Question: Pastor, how am I to respond (and not react) to persecution of any kind?

Question: Pastor, what do I do when someone insults me to my face (or slanders me behind my back)?

Question: Pastor, why is it the devil's trap to get me to attack, defend, retaliate or just get bitter?

Question: Pastor, how do I deal with my ex-wife, or ex-husband, or student in school, or jealous employee, or a carnal Christian who is angry at me?

(Matthew 5:10-12)

◆ Verse 10 “Blessed”

◆ Verse 11 – “Blessed”

◆ Verse 12 – “Rejoice and be exceeding glad”

Question: Pastor, how am I blessed and joyful when I'm on the receiving end of insult and injury?

Answer: Because your enemies are really your friends in disguise. **(In Other Words)**

◆ What someone does to have a negative affect on you, God will use to have a positive affect on you. (Repeat)

Question: How can this be?

Answer: I Peter 4:1 & 2 “Forasmuch as Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin”

“That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the desires of men, but for the will of God”

Question: Pastor, how does suffering insult or injury have a positive affect on me?

Answer: I Peter 4:1 “He or she who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin” (Which means:)

- ◆ You will come to a more complete spiritual maturity.
- ◆ You will be freer and freer from besetting sins.
- ◆ You will become more like Jesus.
- ◆ You will increase your usefulness for God. **(In Other Words)**

Your enemies are your friends in disguise because God uses them to accelerate your spiritual growth (in exposing and extracting sin).

- ◆ Those who persecute you are the catalysts for more fruit.
- ◆ Those who insult or injure you grow your spirit of forgiveness.
- ◆ Those who tempt you to retaliate give you opportunity to obey God and receive greater blessings than before:

Romans 12:19 “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord”

(What A Revelation Here)

#1. It is righteous for God to avenge you, (but) #2. It is unbiblical for you to avenge yourself.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ It is better to keep quiet, wait on God and let God repay.
- ◆ It is worse to take matters into your own hands and lower yourself to work in the flesh.

Question: How can you be blessed when injured or insulted?

Answer: “By arming yourselves with the same mind of Christ” (I Peter 4:1)

Question: What is this mind of Christ?

Answer: I Peter 2:23:

“... When He (Jesus) was reviled, did not revile in return...but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously”.

Question: What did Jesus do when reviled?

- #1. He refused to attack or defend.
- #2. He stayed under His Father’s judgment and protection.
- #3. He didn’t fall prey to answering his accusers. (Why not?)

- ◆ So that He could let correction, vindication and judgment come from God (not man).

Question: Pastor, how is this response possible?

Answer: One word in I Peter 2:23, the word “**Committed**”.

“Jesus committed himself to His Father”

- ◆ The Greek word for “**Committed**” is a banking term.
- ◆ It means; “To deposit for safe keeping”.

- ◆ It means that you can commit, or deposit, or leave your life, reputation and name in the hands of Father (for safe keeping) and sleep well at night.

(And Guess What?)

- ◆ Father will defend what is worth defending.
- ◆ Father will care for your reputation.
- ◆ Father will keep His hand upon you.
- ◆ Father will complete His will in you.
- ◆ Father will reward you for waiting upon Him.

Question: Pastor, how can I overcome satan's trap to get me to hate my enemies?

Answer: By understanding Isaiah 53:10 (which says:)
 "It pleased the Father to bruise the Son" (which means:)

- #1. It was God's idea to crucify Jesus.
- #2. It was God's idea to allow unfair treatment.
- #3. It was God's idea to bring glory out of suffering.

Question: Have you been crucified by someone?

Question: Has God allowed someone to give you underserved treatment?

Question: Has the Father trusted you with a cross to perfect you?

(Remember This)

- ◆ If you properly embrace your crucifixion it will make you better than you were before.
- ◆ If you improperly embrace your crucifixion, it will leave you worse than what you were before.
- ◆ If your enemies, persecutors or insulters win, it will only be because you saw them (**instead of Father**) touching your life.

(Remember)

- ◆ Our crosses will either destroy us or grow us beyond our previous boundaries!!!
- ◆ We'll either be better off (or worse off)!

Illustration

"Healthy Christians are those who build with the bricks that others throw at them"

III. The "Reward" Of Persecution

Question: Is there really a reward for insult, injury and persecution?

Answer: Matthew 5:12 says:

"For great is your reward" (What is persecution's reward?)

- #1. Persecution reveals our inward spirituality (especially when crucified by another Christian)
- #2. Persecution allows us to follow in Jesus steps.
- #3. Persecution brings greater grace upon us all.
- #4. Persecution provokes us to trust God for justice.
- #5. Persecution deepens our ministry to more people.
- #6. Persecution develops greater maturity of character.
- #7. Persecution increases our future reward.

(Never Forget This:)

- ◆ Jesus was crucified to free us from **sin** (not to free us from the **cross**)

Question: Pastor, is it really true, “Blessed are the persecuted for theirs is the kingdom of heaven? (So much so that...)”

Answer: Psalm 76:10 says: “Surely the wrath of man shall praise God’s name”.

Fact: Joseph’s brothers got angry at Joseph, their anger was reversed to promote Joseph.

Fact: Haman was angry at Mordecai, God reversed Haman’s anger to promote Mordecai.

Fact: Saul was angry at David, God reversed Saul’s anger to prepare David.

Fact: Pharaoh was angry at Moses, God reversed Pharaoh’s anger and drowned the Egyptians.

Fact: Potiphar’s wife was angry (and lied about Joseph) God reversed it to save people in prison and later during 7 years of famine.

Fact: Ahab was angry at Elijah, but God reversed the anger to perform a miracle through Elijah.

Fact: Romans were angry at Jesus, but God used their anger to praise His Name. (Resurrection)

Got Any Adversaries?

Matthew 5:25 says, “Agree with your adversary quickly” (which means:)

- #1. Refuse to defend yourself or attack your adversaries.
- #2. Agree with God to allow Him to judge your offender.
- #3. Never allow pride to justify self and blame other people for your insides.
- #4. Learn to wrestle with God in secret and you’ll never have to lower yourself to wrestle with men in public.

Altar Call

- ◆ Have you been injured or insulted?
- ◆ Have you been tempted to retaliate?
- ◆ Are you willing to “Commit yourself to Father for safe keeping”?
- ◆ Need faith to trust God with your reputation, name, security, future?

AMEN!
Bill Kirk, Pastor