

## Blessings: The Blessing of Persecution

Matthew 5:10-12

### Opening Discussion:

1. Have you suffered for being a follower of Jesus? If so, how?
2. What have you heard about others who have suffered for being followers of Jesus?
3. Why do followers of Jesus suffer?
4. What should our response be when we suffer persecution as followers of Jesus?

Only the power of the gospel can turn persecution into blessing.

### The Eighth Blessing Statement

#### 1. Those who are persecuted

*“For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.” Galatians 1:13*

#### 2. For righteousness sake

- Righteousness: doing what God requires
- For righteousness sake: living righteously and calling others to righteousness

#### 3. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven

- The kingdom of heaven is “already but not yet”
- The kingdom of heaven is the key to all other blessings
- The kingdom of heaven can only be entered by the poor in spirit and those who are part of the kingdom of heaven will face persecution.

#### 4. When they persecute you

*“A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” John 15:20*

#### 5. On Jesus’ account

*“I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” Revelation 1:9*

#### 6. Rejoice and be glad

*“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.” James 1:2*

*“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. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.” 1 Peter 4:12-13*

*“When they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.” Acts 5:40-41*

## 7. Your reward is great

*“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Revelation 2:10*

## 8. They persecuted the prophets

*“Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” Hebrews 11:36-38*

Through the gospel, the rejection of persecution becomes the acceptance of God. The loss of persecution is traded for the rewards of God, and the death from persecution is transformed into life with God. The gospel also revolutionizes our response to persecution. Instead of hate and revenge we respond with love and forgiveness.

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:43-45*

## Fill in the Blank Answers

---

### Opening Statement

Only the power of the gospel can turn persecution into blessing.

### The Eighth Blessing Statement:

1. Those who are persecuted
2. For righteousness sake
3. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven
4. When they persecute you
5. On Jesus’ account
6. Rejoice and be glad
7. Your reward is great
8. They persecuted the prophets

Through the gospel, the rejection of persecution becomes the acceptance of God. The loss of persecution is traded for the rewards of God, and the death from persecution is transformed into life with God. The gospel also revolutionizes our response to persecution. Instead of hate and revenge we respond with love and forgiveness.