

Blessed are the Persecuted Matthew 5:10-12





- “Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”
- "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
- "The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.
- "Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude."
- "When I took up the cross, I recognized its meaning. The cross is something that you bear, and ultimately, that you die on."
- **"The early Christians rejoiced when they were deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the Church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society."**

Overcome Evil with Good

◆ **Romans 12:17-21** - Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it^[i] to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Christian Life

◆ **John 15:18-20** – “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

Blessed are the Persecuted

- **Matthew 5:10-12** - “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Battle – How Will You Respond

- **Hebrews 12:2** - looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**
- **1 Corinthians 1:18** - For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- **Romans 1:16** - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The Example of Paul

- **Matthew 5:10** - “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- **2 Timothy 3:10-12** - You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹ **my persecutions and sufferings** that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² **Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

Ananias and Saul

◆ **Acts 9:13-16** - But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.** ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

Paul's Persecution and Suffering

- ◆ **2 Corinthians 11:23-28** - Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

The Example of the Apostles

◆ **Matthew 5:11-12** - “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Before the Sanhedrin

◆ **Acts 4:17-20** - But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Rejoicing to Suffer for Jesus

- Acts 5:40-42 - and 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. ⁴¹ **Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.** ⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.



Victory – Overcoming Persecution

- **2 Corinthians 4:8-9** – We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed
- **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** – So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
- **1 Corinthians 15:58** - Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Persecution and Suffering Mold Your Christian Character

- **Psalm 119:71** - It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.
- **1 Peter 1:6-7** - In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.