

The Sermon on the Mount: The Beatitudes
(8) “Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted Because of Righteousness”

📖 *Matthew 5:10–12 (NIV) “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

📖 *2 Timothy 3:12 (NLT) “Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”*

The REASONS for persecution.

1. We will be persecuted for the life we live.

📖 *Matthew 5:10 (NIV) “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

📖 *1 Peter 4:14–16 (NIV) “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶ However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”*

2. We will be persecuted for the Lord we love.

📖 *Matthew 5:11 (NIV) “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”*

📖 *John 3:19–20 (NIV) “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”*

📖 *John 15:19–20a (NIV) “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”*

The REALITY of persecution.

📖 *Matthew 5:11 (NIV) “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.”*

- 1. We will be lashed out at.**
- 2. We will be laughed at.**
- 3. We will be lied about.**
- 4. We will be lumped in.**

📖 *1 Peter 4:12–13 (NIV) “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.”*

📖 *Matthew 5:12 (NIV) “Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

 2 Timothy 2:11–12a (NLT) “This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with Him, we will also live with Him. ¹² If we endure hardship, we will reign with Him.”

The **RESPONSE** to persecution.

1. **Rejoice** in the **Lord**

 Matthew 5:12a (NIV) “Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...”

 Philippians 4:4 (NIV) “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

2. **Respond** in **Love**

 Matthew 5:43–44 (NIV) “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...”

 Luke 6:32–36 (NLT) “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! ³³ And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! ³⁴ And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. ³⁵ “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. ³⁶ You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.”

Digging Deeper—In what ways have you experienced persecution? What is the difference between persecution and punishment? Have you ever sought God’s blessing for someone who lied about you? Have you ever prayed for those who hurt you? —If so, what happened inside of you when you did that? Are there people in your life right now who are seeking to harm you, for whom you need to pray? What keeps you from praying for your enemies? What helps you to do it?