**The Inside Out**, **Kingdom of God: The Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5-7**

***Upside Down***

**Matthew 5:10-12**

**Previous Beatitudes:**

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall or will be comforted
3. “Blessed are the (meek) surrendered, for they shall inherit the earth.”
4. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”
5. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”
6. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
7. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
8. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

**This Week’s Beatitude:**

1. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

**Matthew 5:10-12:**

10“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. 12Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Introduction:**

**Persecution Will Happen:**

**2 Timothy 3:12:**

12Indeed, ***all who desire to live a godly life*** in Christ Jesus ***will be persecuted* - WOW**

**Acts 14:22:**

22strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that ***through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.***

**John 15:20:**

20Remember 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.

**Matthew 10:25:**

25It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, ***how much more will they malignthose of his household***.

**Question:**

* How could Paul make such a sweeping statement? "**All** who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

**Major Point:**

* He makes it on the basis of a deep conviction about the nature of Christianity and the nature of the sinfulness of man. He is convinced that **there is such a tension between the message and way of life of Christians on the one hand and the mindset and way of life of the world on the other that conflict is inevitable.**

**Truth to Believe:**

* To one degree or another all of you who are sincerely earnest about putting God, and God’s mission for us, first in your home, school, work, and activities will bump into some form of opposition sooner or later. Scripture states that this is a certainty.

**Back to the Text: Why does Persecution Come?**

* This is important, because not all persecuted people are blessed (it’s not purely the being persecuted that makes one blessed). **But rather the text says that those who are “persecuted for righteousness sake” vs. 10.**

**Recalling, briefly, the previous Beatitudes: Regarding Righteouenss**

* The fourth beatitude tells us that satisfaction and happiness comes for those who have a hunger and thirst for righteousness.
* **Right Living** – Being eager to live as God requires.
* **Doing Justice** – Wishing to see God’s will prevail with justice.

**Righteousness explained even further in specific ways: (the next few Beatitudes)**

* Mercy (7), Purity (8), and Peacemaking (9).

**Righteousness means**—being merciful and pure and peaceable by relying on Jesus and choosing to live for his glory.

**Here is the Big Idea:**

* A person who lives this way, pursuing righteousness, will be persecuted.

**Why:** The persecution is… Vs. 10 “on account of righteouenss” “on account of Jesus”

Vs. 11: “Blessed are you *when others revile you* and *persecute you* and *utter all kinds of evil against you falsely* **on my account**.”

**Luke 16:14-15**

14The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. 15And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

**Why? According to this Luke Text:**

1. The love of something evil or untrue (in this text *lovers of money*).
2. And then the need to justify that love.

* These are the root causes of persecution.
* Jesus comes on the scene with a way of life and a message that implies that the love of money is treason against God. It is essential to know if you are going to be saved. But it goes against the Pharisee's love of money. So to justify themselves they put Jesus down. **This is standard operating procedure for self-justification. And this is the root of all persecution**.

**Bottom Line: A Life Devoted to Righteousness Will be Persecuted**

* If you cherish purity or chastity, your life will be an attack on people’s love for free sex.
* If you pursue self-control, your life will indict excess eating, drinking, or other access issues.
* If you live simply and happily, you will show the folly of luxury.
* If you walk humbly with your God, you will expose the evil of pride.
* If you are punctual and thorough in your dealings, you will lay open the inferiority of laziness and negligence.
* If you speak with compassion, you will throw callousness into sharp relief.
* If you are earnest/serious, you will make the flippant look flippant instead of clever.
* And if you are spiritually minded, you will expose the worldly-mindedness of those around you.

**John 3:20-21 – John helps us see this…**

20For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

**Two Responses to a Righteous Life:**

* Persecution
* Conversion

**How can this be: “Blessed are you” to be persecuted “Rejoice and be glad”**

* This is the Lord speaking. And he says to his disciples, most of whom will drink the cup of martyrdom, "Rejoice and be glad" when you are persecuted, when you suffer. **How can he say this?**
* He can say it because he knows beyond any shadow of a doubt that **the reward of heaven will more than compensate for any suffering we must endure in the service of Christ.** "Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven." There is a mystery here—the mystery of joy in the midst of agony; the mystery of gladness in the midst of misery and groaning. And this mystery is contained in a miracle, namely, the miracle of faith—the bedrock assurance that heaven is a hundredfold compensation for every pain. To the degree that you believe what Jesus sees in heaven, to that degree you will be able to rejoice and be glad in suffering. "Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

**Read some of the following testimonies of those who have given their all for Christ:**

The letter of **John Hooper** written three weeks before he was burned at the stake in England in 1555: "You must now turn all your [thoughts] from the peril you see, and mark the felicity that followeth the peril . . . Beware of beholding too much the felicity or misery of this world; for the consideration and too earnest love or fear of either of them draweth from God" (Ryle, *Light from Old Times*, p. 115).

Consider the famous **Dietrich Bonhoeffer.** As he left his prison room on the way to the gallows in 1945, he said to Payne Best, "This is the end—for me the beginning of life" (Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, p. 830). Ten years later the camp doctor wrote, At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God. (Bethge, pp. 830–31)

Or consider the last letter of **Vanya Moiseyev,** the 20 year old Baptist soldier in the Soviet Red army. He had been tortured for some time. July 16, 1972, they went too far, and he died. On July 15 he wrote to his brother Vladimir, Don't tell our parents everything. Just tell them, "Vanya wrote me a letter and writes that Jesus Christ is going into battle. This is a Christian battle, and he doesn't know whether he will be back." I desire that all of you, dear friend, young and old, remember this one verse. [**Revelation 2:10**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%202.10)—"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." (M. Grant, *Vanya*, pp. 175f.)

Look to the prophets! – Heb. 11:36-38

Look to the martyrs!

* Whatever you must do to get your heart in heaven and off the world, do it! Otherwise you will not be able to obey the command of our Lord, "Rejoice and be glad in persecution, for great is your reward in heaven."

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." - **Jim Elliot**, martyr