

## MATTHEW 5 - THE BEATITUDES

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**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED  
BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,**

**FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and  
falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice  
and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the  
same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

MATTHEW 5.10-12

- ▶ Historically and in today's world, Christianity has been tolerated to the extent that it has acclimated itself to the society in which it finds itself. And even though Christians were model citizens in the Roman Empire, that was a primary reason why it was seen as a threat—it would *not* acclimate itself to the values and culture of the empire.

*I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the evil one.*

JOHN 17.14-15

*But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect . . .*

1 PETER 3.14-15

- ▶ The same principles of the loss of identity, sufficiency, purpose, and value of oneself that are found in the Beatitudes—that is, loss of self to gain Christ in fullness—are found in the words of Jesus elsewhere. The more that I hold dear in life, the more I fear to lose. The more that I surrender to the love of Jesus, the less I fear—for He becomes my all.

*“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

LUKE 14.26-27

*And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.*

1 JOHN 4.16-18

- ▶ We know that we have an adversary who despises and opposes everyone and everything that reflects the image of God and serves His purposes. Even though the believers to whom the *Letter to the Hebrews* was written were not suffering physical persecution, they were obviously intimidated and discouraged by the environment around them. The antidote: put your eyes on Jesus and keep them there. He will always be more than sufficient.

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.*

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for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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