

The New Testament Church
Blessed are the Persecuted – Matthew 5:9-13
November 5, 2023

I Blessed are the Persecuted – the context of Matthew 5 and the Sermon on the Mount

- A. The Sermon on the Mount – no one knows which mountain Jesus taught it on
 - 1. Only full-length sermon we have recorded in the gospels
 - 2. A Contrast of Rabbinical teaching and Jesus
 - a. Jewish teaching had become externals only (behavior), neglecting heart motive
 - b. Jesus spoke from the heart as the cause of good and bad conduct
- B. The Beatitudes – the introduction to the sermon
 - 1. What it means to be “blessed”
 - a. The Greek means “*grace, obedience*” – rewarded on earth as well as in heaven
 - b. The “spirit” of the law – the heart – will correspond with the fruit “in the culture”
 - c. The “blessed” are the ones on whom the favor of God rests due to their heart condition
 - 2. There are two models presented in the Bible and they are imbedded in verses 9-13
 - a. The first model is liberty – self-government in the garden; and in verse 9 and 13
 - b. The second, but most frequent is the captivity model – a persecution plan...

II Blessed are the Persecuted – Matthew 5:10-12

- A. Persecution is on the rise in the United States and portions of the world
 - 1. Some data suggests that almost two thirds of believers live under persecution
 - 2. There is an increase in persecution in its widest variety in the United States (liberty model)
- B. Matthew 5:10 – *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake*
 - 1. We are blessed when persecuted due to righteousness (right with God and man)
 - 2. We either influence culture as salt, or we are persecuted (over-regulated) for lack of it
- C. Matthew 5:11 – *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.*
 - 1. Persecution has a wide meaning – speech (verbal or in writing), mockery, lying... even death
 - 2. Consider how this usually works (by fallacies) ...
 - a. *Equivocation* – changing of meaning in the use of words
 - b. *Sarcasm* – accusing of saying or doing something that you did not
 - c. *Lying* – knowingly exaggerating to accuse you of something
- D. Matthew 5:12 – *Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* – this does not mean we long for persecution!
 - 1. How do we *rejoice*? Or God’s *purpose* for persecution (Ten Boom, Jim Elliott, Kalithas)
 - a. 1st Peter 4:12 – *bring humility* (think it not strange as if you don’t deserve it)
 - b. Mark 13:11 – *learning to give with joy*, the Spirit speaks through you
 - c. Mt. 5:44 - We learn to *love* our enemies in His strength, “they know not what they do”
 - d. Mt. 10:16 - We learn to bless and not curse, *harmless as doves*...
 - e. Ro. 12:21 – *We do good works*, and the result is in the hands of God
 - f. 1st Timothy 2:1-4 - *We pray* for civil leaders, for righteous laws lead people to Christ
 - g. Acts 25:10-11 – If possible, with a humble attitude, *we defend our rights*
 - h. Col. 1:18 - *We affirm* that Christ is the head of the Church, not the State or Caesar
 - 3. Regardless of what may come, (we) *do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* (Matthew 10:28)
- E. Lessons from the Persecuted Church
 - 1. Captivity Model - persecution to produce humility, joy, and radical surrender to Christ
 - 2. Liberty Model – a developed Biblical worldview that manifests religious and civil liberty only maintained by self-government as a result of the Kingdom manifesting in culture (v. 9 to come)