



World Christian Fellowship

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Beatitude 09- Blessed are Peacemakers.

Matthew 5:3-12, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

The Beatitude’s Structure

To answer this, it helps to see the structure of the Beatitudes.

There are eight Beatitudes.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit.
2. Blessed are they that mourn.
3. Blessed are the meek
4. Blessed are hunger and thirst after righteousness.
5. Blessed are the merciful
6. Blessed are the pure in heart.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers.
8. Blessed are persecuted for righteousness.

The first four Beatitudes describe the broken, grieving, quiet person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

The second four Beatitudes describe the merciful, pure peacemaker who gets persecuted for his righteousness.

Overflowing from what they have received from the Lord.

One after the other, the Beatitudes tell us that the blessings of eternity will be given only to those who have become new creatures.

After studying the Beatitudes these promises of true and deep and lasting happiness realizing that they are the characteristic qualities of the man or woman in God's kingdom, it is easy to feel a little inadequate.

This kind of person who is poor in spirit, mourning over sin, meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker, and persecuted seems almost too good to be normal.

It will be like we are looking at someone in a stained-glass window or a stone statue or plaster saint rather than somebody involved in the reality of day-to-day living. But God does not deal with plaster saints, and He does not deal with unrealities.

Jesus here is presenting the portrait of a believer.

Consequently, we suffer persecution from a God-hating, Christ-rejecting, Satan-controlled society. This is not some far-off identity to be attained by a select few, this is simply a genuine description of those who are God's children.

Ultimately, because we are transformed, because we are this kind of person, we are at odds with the world around us, and that leads to suffering, that leads to pain, problems.

First, the poverty of spirit, which ends rebellion and produces submission to the King, that poverty of spirit which realizes personal bankruptcy and bows down before the King to plead for Him to be gracious, that mourning that causes us to look at our sin, that meekness that therefore follows as we rightly

assess ourselves, that passion that flames into a hunger and thirst for righteousness, then that service that is merciful toward others, that purity of heart that enables us to truly understand and know our God, that peace that fills our hearts and makes us peacemakers, all of that granted to us by God in the matter of salvation in one proportion or another produces a character which not only is content and blessed and happy but is contradictory to everything around it.

Peacemakers will be persecuted. That is what happens to peacemakers. We come to preach the gospel of peace, we come to live out that gospel of peace, and we are persecuted for it to one extent or another.

Persecution:

V 10, Happiness belongs to those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

V 11, personalizes it. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you. We are not talking about somebody else, talking about you and when they persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of me.

V 12, Further explained.

It is one Beatitude because it has only one result. The one result at the end of verse 10, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

It is to say that those who are persecuted for Christ, those who are insulted for Christ, those against whom all kinds of evil are spoken falsely on account of Christ therefore give evidence that they belong to the kingdom of heaven.

Those who are kingdom citizens are at odds with Satan’s system.

- 1. Who,**
- 2. How,**
- 3. Why, and**
- 4. When.**

1. Who?

Who is involved here in this Beatitude?

V 10, *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

It refers immediately to all those being described in verses from 3 to 9.

Blessed are those poor in spirit, mourners, meek, hungry and thirsting after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers. In other words, the believers, those who are God's, those who belong to Him.

All who will live godly in this present age will suffer persecution,

2 Timothy 3:12, *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

So blessed are all of you Beatitude people who have, because of your transformed lives lived in the midst of an ungodly world, experienced (to one degree or another) persecution.

We, to some extent, share the reproach of Christ. We are persecuted, as it were, for His sake. We share the fellowship of His sufferings if we live godly in this world.

You cannot expect to live in direct opposition to Satan and his worldly system without antagonizing him and that system.

Now, if you are not experiencing persecution, if you are not experiencing, to some degree, hostility or rejection, animosity, false accusation, insults, it is possible that you are not a Christian.

Or it is also possible that you are a disobedient Christian, somehow hiding the reality not only of your own Christianity but of the truth of God, which you are not to compromise in the way you live and the things you speak.

If you are like Christ and if you boldly live as He lived and if you speak the truth of God, you will produce the same reaction, to some degree, that was produced when Christ was here on earth.

They may not crucify you, but there will be hostility and animosity.

Revelation 6:9-11,

Revelation 13:4-8,

In the end times tremendous hostility against those who were true to the gospel and who exalted Christ and proclaimed the truth.

The righteous have always suffered. They will always suffer. They will suffer on into the future for their virtue, for their godliness.

You can go all the way back from Genesis to Revelation, and it all began with Abel.

Abel was righteous, Abel did what God told him to do, and Abel was killed by Cain. By the way, Cain was a religious man who also brought an offering to God, an unacceptable one, but he hated the true worshiper, his own brother, and murdered him.

Moses in Egypt chose to suffer affliction with the people of God.

Hebrews 11:24-26, *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

That is the way it has always been.

In many ways, persecution is a token of true discipleship.

Philippians 1:29-30, *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, ³⁰having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.*

It is to be expected that there will be some measure of suffering if you are faithful to Christ.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-4, *that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. ⁴For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.*

It is to be expected.

All the New Testament apostles would agree that even in the most tolerant country, time, the cross would never cease to be a symbol of hostility, hatred and false accusation and persecution.

The apostles would have urged that the absence of persecution was cause for alarm enough to drive the believer to his knees to do a spiritual inventory.

Always, those who are obedient to the Lord of the kingdom and who live out His Word in obedience will prove to be toxic to the satanic system around them and produce some forms of hostility.

- We have tried to strip that out of our Christianity at this age.
- We have tried to make the gospel inoffensive.
- We have tried to understand what people who are unconverted like and do not like and remove the part

they do not like out and make the gospel tolerable to them.

- We have stripped it of its impact.

We have stripped the truth to the point where it is no longer the saving truth.

If you want to escape persecution, you can do it. Just approve what the world does. Instead of disapproving it, just affirm it or ignore it. Accept the world's morals, the world's ethics, live as they live. Do not tell people they are sinners.

Do not confront them with the fact that they are lost and without Christ, doomed to eternal judgment at the hands of Almighty God. Do not talk about hell.

Do not preach and teach that Jesus Christ is the only way, and only by faith in Him and not through some religious exercise, some ceremony, some self-righteousness can salvation be gained, but only by faith in Him.

Do not separate yourself from the world system around you, go along with it, laugh at its jokes, enjoy its entertainment, smile when it mocks God, let them take His name in vain.

Be ashamed to take a stand for Christ, and you will escape some persecution. This is a very dangerous perspective.

Luke 9:26, *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.*

If you are ashamed not only of Christ but of the words which Christ taught the truth of God given to us on the pages of holy Scripture, it may well be that you are one of whom the Lord Himself will be ashamed.

The Lord may not even claim you. You are either not saved or you are certainly a far-gone disobedient child.

On the other hand, look for a moment at

1 Peter 1:3-5, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

So, we have salvation. We are protected in order that we might enter that full salvation that is set in heaven for us.

1 Peter 1:6-7, *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been ⁶grieved by various trials, ⁷that the genuineness of your faith, being much more*

precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

The trials that come into our lives, including persecution, trouble, and difficulty, are part of God's testing to prove the validity of our faith.

If you live out your life and the fire will prove either you are genuine or not.

If you are nothing but weedy ground in which the seed of the truth went down a little way, but the weeds choked it out or if you are that stony ground where the plant went down a little way and hit the rock bed and you died and perished without any fruit, that will show up under confrontation, persecution. Jesus was saying you will wither and die.

Our faith is tested and proven in trials. There were lots of people in Peter's time, as there are now willing to be identified with Christ as long as it did not cost them anything.

That was true in Jesus' day, and He would have none of it and neither will Peter. What Peter was saying is what Jesus was saying, your faith will be tested.

Following Christ is not going to be easy in this world. Following Christ could affect your work.

Suppose a man in biblical times was a stone mason and his business was to fulfil a contract to build a pagan temple. Suppose he was a tailor and was asked to make robes for the priests of false gods. Suppose he worked for someone who was dishonest.

Same today!

There can hardly be any secular job in which some conflicts like these do not arise between business interests and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Tertullian, the early church father, he had this very great dilemma about this because he wanted to live out his Christianity and he thought it almost impossible.

Someone asked him, what can I do? I must live.

The wise Tertullian replied, “Must you?”

What a strange answer.

What he was saying is if you die of starvation, it is better than if you compromise. The only choice is loyalty to Christ, even if it means you die let alone be deprived of some material thing.

Their loyalty to Christ could be very difficult in the workplace. It could be very difficult and disruptive in their social life, as it can today.

In the ancient world, if somebody were really sold out to the Lord Jesus Christ, they would be in very great difficulty trying to sort through the social life that they were a part of up until their conversion.

Immediately they would be thrown out of the synagogue, unsynagogued, which was equivalent to excommunication. They would be thrown out of their own families.

But even in the Gentile world, there was a severe consequence socially for coming to faith in Christ. In the ancient world, most of the festivals, most of the celebrations were held in the temple of some false god. Those were the public meeting places. Those were where the parties and the celebrations and the festivals went on.

In false religions to just singe the forehead of the sacrificial animal so that you could save all the rest to eat. Part of the meat went to the priests and part to the worshipers, and they would make a feast for their friends. So, when you went to offer something to your deity, you singed it a little bit, gave some of the meat to the priests, and then had a huge party for everybody.

Could a Christian go to such a party?

Even an ordinary meal began with a cup of wine poured out in honour of the gods. Where did a Christian stand in that?

You had to be prepared to be lonely in the crowd when you followed Christ. It could also disrupt your home life.

When a member of a family received Christ, the door was shut to him. Jesus said He came to bring a sword and separate family relations.

Often people had to choose between the ones they held dearest and Jesus Christ. When they chose Christ, they were basically alienated from their families. The penalties further which a Christian had to suffer were terrible beyond description.

Read the history about Christians who were flung to the lions or burned at the stakes, but those were, in some ways, kindly deaths.

Nero wrapped Christians in pitch and set them afire and used them as living torches to light his gardens for parties. He sewed them in the skins of wild animals and sent his hunting dogs upon them to tear them to death.

They were scraped, molten lead was poured on them. Hot brass plates were affixed to the tenderest parts of their bodies. Eyes were torn out.

Parts of their bodies were cut off and roasted before their eyes. Their hands and feet were burned while cold water was poured over them to lengthen the agony.

For many people even today in some parts of the world, coming to Jesus Christ and taking your stand for Him meant severe persecution. The Romans, of course, trumped up false charges against Christians. They slandered them as cannibals, slandered them for immorality. They accused them of having love feasts, which were orgies of lust.

They were even accused of burning down Rome.

They accused them of destroying families.

They accused them of political and religious rebellion.

The Roman Emperor was a god in the minds of the people, and he demanded divine honours to be paid to him. Temples were built to his divinity. It started slowly but eventually developed into a full-blown emperor-worshiping cult.

That became the one unifying religious component in the Roman Empire. It became compulsory, and once each year everyone had to go and burn incense to the godhead of Caesar and say, "Caesar is Lord."

When a man burned his incense and said, “Caesar is Lord,” he received a certificate called a *libellus*. He could carry it around and prove that he had done it.

The Christians refused to do. They chose Christ. They refused compromise.

They became dissidents, a group of rebels, pockets of disloyalty, threats to the Empire’s solidarity, threats to Caesar.

They faced torture.

Jesus then tells us in this Beatitude that this should not surprise us. There will be persecution for those in His kingdom.

2. How.

How is this animosity going to be expressed?

They are going to be persecuted, from *diōkō*, it means to pursue. It means to drive or chase away, finally to persecute, to harass, to treat evilly.

From **100 to 300 A.D.**, Christians were pursued from place to place, hunted like wild beasts, and put to death by diabolical, inhuman means which we have referred to. The Lord is simply

saying you must count the costs! If you are going to become a Christian, you need to know this.

There is an attitude being conveyed here. Blessed are those who have been persecuted really kind of helps us to see more than just some kind of an act. This is a passive participle, and it indicates a permissiveness. Blessed are those who have allowed themselves to be persecuted is the indication of the language. The idea is that they have willingly endured it. They do not run from it, they accept it.

Blessed are those who have willingly allowed themselves to suffer continual hostility.

Willingness is the issue.

We could say that blessed are the willing. Persecution is not always going to be intense. It is not always going to be there to the same degree, but these are those who are willing. If it comes, it comes. If we suffer, we suffer. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

This persecution takes various forms.

V 11, *“Blessed are you when men cast insults at you.”*

It literally means to get face-to-face with someone and abuse them to the face.

To be face-to-face abused with unkind words that are vile and vicious.

Not only did they do that, but they also say all kinds of evil against you falsely.

Not only do they say things to your face that are unkind and malicious and abusive and vicious, but they say things behind your back, accusations, slander, and lies.

We who are Christians should expect a measure of that as God metes it out to each of us.

1 Corinthians 4:9-13, *For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonoured! ¹¹To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. ¹²And we labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; ¹³being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.*

We might be like the 144,000 and God would put a seal on us and protect us, but that is not how it is. We are at the bottom of the list. We are men condemned to death. We have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

You would have thought the Apostles would be exalted! Rather, the world has hated them so that they have become as scum.

Who would have thought that a man could be persecuted and reviled and have all manner of evil said against him because he was righteous?

But such a life reproves the ungodliness of men and provokes, therefore, their resentment. It is more of the enmity of the serpent against the holy seed of Genesis 3:15.

Who is going to be persecuted?

Those who are kingdom citizens.

How are they going to be persecuted?

With face-to-face confrontation and slander behind the scenes, all kinds of forms of persecution.

3. Why.

Why does it come on us?

We have already hinted at it but turn to John 15.

John 15:18-19, *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world*

would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

They hate you because you are not part of their system. You confront it by your godliness and your righteousness. You rebuke it, you cause the world to face its sin.

John 15:20-21, *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 keep yours also. ²¹But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.*

They do not know God, they do not know Christ, and they do not like you because you rebuke them verbally, you rebuke them with your commitment to righteousness.

John 15:22-24, *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.*

Jesus is saying is that the things that I said exposed their sin. They had to face it. As a result, instead of dealing with their sin, they hated me for it.

If you are righteousness living in the midst of unrighteousness, if you rebuke sin by your holy living, your uncompromising living, and if you rebuke it openly and lovingly but confront it and rebuke it, either someone is going to acknowledge their sin and repent or they are going to hate you for that.

John 15:25, *But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'*

They had a reason, but it was not a just cause.

John 16:1-4, *"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. ²They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. ³And these things they will do ^{to} you because they have not known the Father nor Me. ⁴But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. "And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.*

It happened.

Andrew, persisting in his preaching, was ordered to be crucified. History tells us he was fastened with cords that

death might be slow and remained in that condition until he finally died.

Peter, tradition tells us, after nine months in prison was crucified head down.

Paul, most likely beheaded in Rome by Nero.

James, Matthew, Matthias, Bartholomew, Thomas suffered martyrdom. Probably all but John.

Later came a Christian by the name of **Aristides the Just**, he was banished from Athens. When one of the citizens was asked why he had voted for banishment for Aristides, he said, "Because I am tired of hearing him always called 'the just.' It irritates me that people identified him as righteous."

V 11, "for my sake"

During the time of Jesus some of the Galilean Zealots, who were Jews who wanted to overthrow Rome, had been persecuted, reviled, hated, and killed when they revolted against Herod or Rome. That is not the kind of persecution we are talking about here.

This is qualified by the kind of persecution that comes to those who are Christians who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness of God, for my sake, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Persecution of other people is not right.

Cruelty and persecution on any other account though undeserved, however, is not in view here.

We are not talking about just any kind of persecution. That is another matter here.

1 Peter 4:14-16, *If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

Great Promise:

When you are being persecuted, God's Spirit rests on you.

We are not talking about persecution for any and every reason. Even as Christians, we are not talking about persecution for being just plain offensive. We are not talking about persecution that maybe you earned because of your arrogance.

We are talking about persecution for righteousness' sake because of who we are in Christ because we name the name of Christ, and because we believe in the true and living God.

Because of what we are in Christ, because we bear His righteousness, because we proclaim His righteous standard and that all men who violate it are sinners and judged in the throes of judgment and desperately in need of salvation, we become obnoxious.

Matthew 5:44-45, *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Do not be under the illusion that people who do not know Christ are indifferent toward Him. Those who reject the gospel hate the Christ of the gospel and want nothing whatsoever to do with Him.

So, if I live a life that manifests the righteousness of Christ, if I live a life that manifests that Christ is in me, and if He is demonstrably, by the way I live and the way I speak, my Lord and Saviour, if I preach the clear message of the gospel, if I confront sin and call for repentance and offer the good news of forgiveness, there will be hostility.

Who are going to be persecuted?

Those who are in the kingdom.

How are they going to be persecuted?

They are going to be slandered and they are going to be treated with insults face-to-face.

Why?

Because they have a message that people do not want to hear, it is a message about sin and judgment and righteousness and salvation.

4. When?

When?

Whenever.

Hotan, it means whenever.

Whenever men cast insults at you, whenever it happens, anytime it takes place. It is not going to be incessant, as I said, and it is not going to be endless. It is going to happen. But anytime it happens, we are called to accept it and find in it the path to blessing.

How is it that we are to enjoy this?

How is it that we are to find ourselves in verse 12, rejoice and be glad?

How is it? How can we get to that point in the midst of all of this?

The more powerfully you proclaim Christ, the more clearly you live Christ, the more evident it is that you are Christ's. The more your life and your words, the loving, they are direct - confront this world - the more hostility you will receive on earth and the more reward you will receive in heaven.

William Carey, missionary who was called by someone "You are a shoemaker."

He replied, "No, I'm not even a shoemaker, I am a cobbler. I can't make them; I just fix them." He was humble.

No formal education went to India as the first missionary of the British Missionary Society and translated the Bible into eleven languages.

Taught himself Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and to be a linguist all by himself while he was a cobbler. His wife did not even learn to read until after she was married, and they had children.

Very humble origins.

He went over to India, and he is feverishly working in, of all horrible places, Calcutta. Calcutta in the 1700's would be unimaginable. He was working on all these eleven translations.

In England, where he was getting support to carry on his work, just a minimal amount of support, because he lived on very meagre gifts. He needed money to make these translations to get them copied and get them in the hands of people.

There were people back in England who were accusing him of inventing languages and falsifying translation work to get rich. Whereas he was in Calcutta, giving up his life for the gospel.

V12, *“Rejoice and be glad when you are persecuted, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

Two reasons to rejoice.

Your reward in heaven is great.

It is a reward born out of an identification with Jesus Christ that says I will serve Jesus Christ for His honour and His glory and the sake of His gospel, no matter what comes. You will have a great reward in heaven.

V12, *“Rejoice and be glad when you are persecuted, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

If you are persecuted for the cause of Christ, you are in some pretty good company.

What comes to your mind?

Hebrews 11.

Moses was willing to suffer the reproach of Christ, right?

You stand in line with Moses.

You stand with every Old and New Testament saints!