

Matthew 5:10-12

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[0:00] With me to Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5. So, as you're turning there, you probably can already hear it a little bit in my voice, I'm fairly pollinated.

So, continue praying for me this morning. I appreciate all the prayers I know that you have been lifting up to our Lord. Thank you for that and continue in that.

So, we've reached verses 10 through 12. I just want to start off by reading those, and then we will jump right into it. So, verses 10 through 12, picking up in verse 10 of Matthew chapter 5.

It says, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

11 and 12 are really just an expansion and a clarification of verse 10. Most believe that Jesus talked about this beatitude a bit more, just to stress its weight, its importance, and its surety.

[1:11] It's certainly not a foreign concept at all to other New Testament writers. So much of the New Testament does focus on the realities of persecution and what the Christian's response should be to it.

Even in that last song, we're just saying, set your mind, your mind, your mind on things above. So much of the New Testament devotes itself to that. I think I'm getting picked up through the sound system now.

You got you. Okay. The one of the mic was still on. Got you. Okay, cool. So, because this is a big topic in the New Testament in general, there are a lot of different ways I could go with this sermon. But so that you are just in knowing how I'm thinking about this, I want to preach it from this text. I want to stay true to what this text here talks about it.

And I'll also be talking about it a good bit within our context. So, that's kind of where we're going with it today. A lot more could be said. I wish we could say a lot more. But we'll hone it in a little bit for today.

[2:15] So, how I'm going to structure it is in four main ways. So, here they are. So, just a bunch of different things of how the New Testament talks about persecution.

First one I have is the reason for persecution. The reason for persecution. The next is the reality of persecution.

The reality of persecution. Next is the response to persecution. The response to persecution. And lastly, we'll have the results.

Of persecution. The results of persecution. So, first off, let's just go ahead and get right into it and start off with the reason for persecution. So, I'd like to bring back to mind of how Nathan broke down the different sections of the Beatitudes a few weeks ago.

He said that the first three are really just focused on a great awareness of our sin. And the world's lack of righteousness and their need for it. So, looking at verse 3. It says, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[3:21] So, the poor in spirit being those who realize that they are dead. They are stuck in their sins. They can't do anything about it. Can never get rid of them or become righteous on their own.

Verse 4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

So, those mourning over the wickedness of the world as they see its brokenness and its just lack of concern. A deep sadness, really, for the state of everything around us.

Verse 5. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. The meek being those who do not make much of themselves, but make much of God. Those that acknowledge that everything is the Lord's and not theirs.

They'll have a great inheritance in the new earth. So, those first three being about the reality of our need for righteousness and our inability to produce it on our own. And then there's great blessings declared on them.

So, in the next one, we see that great need being met. And then in verses, or the 5th, 6th, and 7th Beatitudes, we see outflows of that righteousness. So, in verse 7.

[4 : 25] Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. So, we see that those that have been given Christ's righteousness, they'll begin in their new nature. They have that whole person righteousness. They are restored image bearers of God.

And they're going to begin to show the mercifulness of God. He's shown so much to us. And so, we're beginning to express that to others. In verse 8, it says, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

So, again, those regenerated believers are now pure in heart. They are not just seeking to do the right things. But the Lord has given them a whole new nature. That not only is able to do those right things, but longs to do those right things.

They're beginning to have that whole person righteousness. They're not just doing the right things they want to. And they're not, on the other end, just thinking the right things in their heart. They're actually living them out. They're living those out as that outflow of that new nature. Verse 9, from last week. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

[5 : 27] So, yet another way that the new regenerated believers are becoming like our Lord. He was the ultimate and perfect peacemaker. And so, we're following him in making peace.

And so, all of those, be added to that section, were the outflows of us being granted that righteousness and that new nature from the Lord. But we get to verses 10 and 12.

It's something new. It's all about persecution. Not something that is coming from us. And not something that we're realizing our need in.

But instead, that people are persecuting us. So, something coming from outside of us, not from inside at all. Not a longing. Not an outflow.

It's something that we can't really foster or would ever want to foster. But, the Lord declares those that experience persecution for righteousness' sake, blessed or flourishing or happy.

[6 : 31] So, what causes this persecution? What is the reason for it? Why do people hate Christians? Well, it's an outflow of all these other beatitudes.

Let's think about those again for a minute. Is the world poor in spirit? Is the world mourning over their sin? Are unbelievers meek and unselfish?

Absolutely not. We can attest to that. We have been there. Before we were given our new nature without Christ, we boast in ourselves. We don't care much about our sin at all.

We don't see it as that big of a deal. If we do start to see the horrors of what sin is, we don't seek to do the correct things to fix it. We try to cover our own sin up.

But, we are in fact incapable of longing for righteousness. No one is righteous. No one seeks for God.

[7 : 27] We were dead in our sins. We certainly, before the Lord opened our eyes, did not hunger and thirst after righteousness. We didn't show mercy. Even if we had seemed to have some sort of good outward action, some inward motive proved our hearts to be impure.

We didn't have whole person righteousness at all. We certainly were not striving after peace with others or peace with God. None of this. All these things are brought after the Lord gives us our new nature and begins the work of these things, of sanctifying us.

Right? So, all those are given to you not because of a great longing in us to do better, to be better, to come to God.

But all those come to us when the Lord knocks us down. When he makes us see the reality of our sin. And gives us that new nature when we trust in him as our only hope for salvation.

So, why am I going on this really big, long spill about all this? Because this is exactly why unbelievers persecute believers.

[8 : 40] It's exactly why. Because we are so, so, so different from them. There's something about a believer that condemns them. That makes them see that their so-called righteousness is nothing.

It looks like filthy rags. Right? They start to see that a bit and they hate that. They hate that. And so, who do they take it out on? They take it out on the people that made them realize that.

The believers that have a new nature. They see that they're completely different. So, there's our reason for persecution.

Let's think about it in a little bit different of a light. What does being righteous really mean? What does being persecuted for righteousness sake really mean? What means being like Jesus?

There's a very simplified way to think about it. That's the truth, right? To see that a little bit more, turn moving to John 15. John 15. John 15.

[9 : 39] We're going to read verses 18 through 20 here.

It's another confirmation from the Lord about this. Verse 18 starts saying, If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 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 also keep yours. So we see here the Lord telling us, yeah, if you're different than the world, they're going to be able to tell.

And they're not going to like that. They're not going to like that at all. If you were of the world, then yeah, you'd be all right. They'd like you okay. But no, if you are different and different in the way of being like me, they're going to hate you because they'll be convicted.

[10 : 55] They'll see that otherness. They'll notice that they're not just differing in degree. We're not just trying a little bit harder to be good people. We're an entirely different kind of creature. The Lord has given us that new nature.

Jesus even goes so far to say that we should be concerned if the world does not hate us. Luke 6.26. So just after Luke's account of the Beatitudes, he lists a long list of woe unto you.

And one of them says just that. It says, woe to you when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. Think about that.

Jesus, the vast majority of the time, was not well spoken of. Sure, many people did follow him. But so, so, so many did not. But think about just how you picture a good Christian in your head.

I know that, like, when I think about that, for me, I tend to see someone that is always there for everyone in the community. Someone well respected by all.

[12 : 03] But I very rarely think of someone who is willing to take a stand for the truth and therefore people hate him. He's kicked out of society, put in exile, told to stay away from everyone so that he can't pollute everyone with his thoughts.

I rarely think of that. Or even the men that are, and women that are killed for taking a stand for the truth. But our Lord Jesus says to be careful.

He says, woe unto us when society thinks well of us. To be concerned when the world is right there with us. When our lives don't bring some pushback, we should be alarmed.

Now, I want to clarify a bit right here. I don't think it's generally the tendency in America or in our church culture to seek persecution or to root for it or to ag it on.

But in order just to be sure that we know what type of persecution Jesus is declaring this blessing on, we should talk about the type it is, which I think we've hit some, and the type it is not.

[13 : 14] He says that it is when we are persecuted for righteousness sake. Or, in other words, persecuted for being like Jesus. Right? Living out these outflows, given that new nature.

Here are some things it does not say. It does not say, blessed are they who are persecuted for being careless with their words. It does not say, blessed are they who are persecuted for their political views, that they get confused with their faith.

It does not say that we are blessed when we are persecuted for a cause.

It says that we are blessed when we are persecuted for righteousness sake. Now, think about those things as that it's not. We certainly should not be careless with our words and should represent Christ both in grace and in truth when speaking into hard situations.

But these others that I mentioned, there's nothing wrong with them. There's nothing wrong with having strong political views or having a really strong allegiance to some cause that you believe in.

[14 : 21] And for sure, these certainly can and they should be informed by our faith. But the blessing here is declared specifically when we are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Not slanders coming from someone who disagrees with your political views or your cause or that they think you said something that you shouldn't have. We should not be going around trying to pick

fight.

But we're simply trying to speak the truth and live the truth out in love. When we come across a passage like this, I think it's important to remember the whole of Scripture on how we should live. And there's so many exhortations in the New Testament that are about living quiet lives and to live as peaceably as we can with others. Here's an example that comes to my mind.

Romans 12 verse 18 says, If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. So, we're not going around picking fights.

[15 : 26] But we do teach, we warn, we encourage, we exhort everyone with the truth. So, in summary of that first point, when we are persecuted for righteousness sake, it is an outflow of us demonstrating the characteristics of a true believer in our Lord.

It's the outflow of that new nature that He has given us. And when we do demonstrate those, people are not going to like it. So, that leads to the second point.

The reality of persecution. The reality of persecution. So, already with what we've seen with the flow of this beatitude, Jesus saying, Woe unto us when men speak highly of us.

And Jesus saying that because the world hated Him, it's also going to hate us as we follow Him. I think we can see a pretty good case already that persecution is or should just be a reality for us.

In some form or fashion for all Christians. To make that argument a little bit stronger, turn with me to 2 Timothy 3. 2 Timothy 3.

[16 : 40] So, this is a verse that I think is probably the most commonly quoted on this topic. It comes in the middle of just a passage of Paul. He's encouraging Timothy about persecution and about the authority of Scripture.

And in 2 Timothy 3 verse 12, he says this. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Read that again.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. It makes no excuses. It makes no ifs. It makes no exceptions.

It says all. All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Everyone. Everyone who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus.

Now, is that every believer? Yes, that's absolutely every believer. Because every believer has been given that new nature, and that new nature's desire is to live a godly life.

[17 : 46] So, that's absolutely every believer. So, we can say, yeah, if we are followers of Christ, if we love what He loves, if we have been given the promised Spirit, if we keep His commands and His commands are not grievous, all of us, all of us who have put our full hope in Christ will be persecuted.

Let that challenge us. Let us examine our lives a bit in light of that. Are we truly following Christ? Are we actually living our lives in light of the truth of the gospel? Are we blending in with the world? Are men speaking highly of us?

Or are we being hated just as our Lord and Savior was hated? Now, if someone was preaching this to me, I would have three questions, I think, at least at this point.

So, a few different things that people might come up with. First one is saying, I have never been persecuted. What is wrong? Am I an unfaithful Christian?

[18 : 54] Maybe, maybe not. Secondly, am I being disobedient? Maybe, maybe not. And third, are we really all going to experience persecution?

And we can confidently say absolutely yes on that one. Now, join me back in Matthew 5. So, flip back over there for a minute. Let's notice the three different types of persecution that verses 10 to 12 mentions.

First off, we have physical persecution. The word used in verses 10, 11, and 12 that is translated as persecuted, its basic meaning is chasing, driving away, or pursuing.

So, over time, that word developed connotations of physical persecution, harassment, abuse, or unjust treatment. So, really, really intense persecution.

Secondly, in verse 12, we see reviling. In other translations, the word revile is translated as insult or cast insult. And it means exactly that, to cast a very strong insult at someone.

[20 : 05] The third type we see is false accusation. As people around us may utter, as it says, all kinds of evil against you falsely.

Now, for those of us that are born and raised here, maybe especially here in the South, where almost everyone seems to be a cultural Christian, may find that we have never been chased, we've

never been driven away, or we've never been physically beaten for the faith.

I would wager to say that very, very few of us in this room have experienced this intense amount of persecution that many of the early church did experience, which is recorded for us, and so many around the world still experience today.

But that does not necessarily mean that we have not experienced persecution. Now, I want to be very, very, very careful here. I'm not at all trying to put the pushback or the slander or the false accusation or the insults that we may experience here on the same level as our brothers and sisters being persecuted around the world.

But, our faithfulness to our Lord, our desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, our living out of that new nature, is going to create some pushback.

[21 : 27] It absolutely is going to create some pushback. It's going to make some conflict with those who are utterly unlike us. We're new creatures. We're different than the world. It says, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Now, this might look like a lot of different things. A family member telling you that there are two things that you were raised not to talk about, and those were politics and religion as they're sitting frustrated with you speaking truth at a holiday dinner.

It may look like a roommate beginning to blame everything that is wrong in the world on you because they are beginning to be convicted of their own sin as they see your godly living.

It may look like a lost friendship of a friend who just doesn't want to associate with you at all anymore because you spoke the gospel to them.

They were convicted of their sin, and you hated to see someone that you're so close to deny the Lord of everything and to suffer eternally. It may be a grandparent saying, Your religion is great for you, but I don't want to talk to you about it, and if that's what you're going to talk about, I don't want to see you.

[22 : 49] Could be being unwelcomed at the lunch table at work because you aren't willing to tolerate the gossip that usually happens. Brothers and sisters, these are all so, so sad.

There are situations that we would all regret. There are situations that show the depravity of the natural human heart before it's regenerated. It does not want to hear truth, and as it sees it and sees its guilt, it wants no part of it, no part of it at all.

John MacArthur said of this text that Ty will preach next week, and I think it explains why persecution happens so well. It just speaks to the reality of that it's going to happen.

He said this, when we become Christ's salt and Christ's light, our salt will sting the world's open wounds of sin, and our light will irritate its eyes that are so used to darkness.

Indeed, all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But church, there is an outflow of this persecution, and that brings us to our third point.

[24 : 07] The result of persecution. The result of persecution. So back in Matthew 5 again, I want to read the whole thing again. So blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. So Jesus says that when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, when others revile us and persecute us and utter all kinds of false accusations against us, then we are blessed.

We are flourishing. We are happy. Now we just said that all of these things are awful and that we should never want persecution.

Ever. We would never want to foster that. We would never want that for ourselves. And it's true that all of these things are really awful.

[25 : 14] even in our context. These false accusations, these insults, they're awful. They really are. And so much more so are brothers and sisters worldwide that are suffering physically for the faith.

That's so awful. It really, really is. But the Lord says we are blessed. Now why is that? What reason does He give? Why are we blessed when all of these awful things happen to us?

Look at verse 10. Verse 10 says, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And down in verse 12, it says, For your reward is great in heaven.

Okay? So with those, that should tell us that we really are blessed because this life ultimately doesn't have that much weight. James 4.14 says, For what is your life?

It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanisheth away. Our life here is so, so fleeting. So, so fleeting.

[26 : 16] And so with that, the promise that we're given is His kingdom. That we will reign with Him. That our reward is great in heaven.

An eternal thing. Not a fleeting vapor. And so we are blessed. And another thing to think about with this is if we are persecuted for righteousness sake, it should give us such great assurance.

Such great assurance. Verse 12 says that they persecuted the prophets who were before us. Just like this. On multiple occasions throughout the book of Acts, you'll see as the apostles are like after a beating or they've been run out of a city.

What were they doing? They were rejoicing that they were count worthy to suffer for the Lord. So if we were persecuted for righteousness sake, we are counted among that long list of God's people that have suffered for Him.

Flip over to 1 Peter 4. I'm going to read a few verses here.

[27 : 29] I'll jump around a little bit. Pick it up in verse 12 to begin with.

It says, Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed.

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Jumping to 16. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Jumping to 19. Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. So we can see here very clearly that if we share in Christ's sufferings, then we can be confident that the Spirit of God rests upon us.

Therefore, let us glorify God that we are part of His kingdom, part of His family. What sweet assurance to be part of that group, to know we have the promised Spirit, and to be part of those that have suffered for the Lord.

[28 : 43] What blessings to be co-heirs with Christ and to be part of His kingdom. What rejoicing to be part of God's people and for all eternity, not just a short vapor to rejoice with Him.

So that leads to our next and our final point. That is the response to persecution. The response to persecution. I know I'm having you flip back and forth from Matthew so much.

Turn back to Matthew 5. Sorry. So look down at verse 12 here.

It gives us the command to rejoice and to be glad or in KJV to rejoice and be exceeding glad for our reward is great in heaven. For believers, these are not the greatest days of our lives.

This is not all we have. This is short. This is fleeting. It is but a vapor. And so this persecution, this pushback, this tension, these lies, this wickedness of this world, these insults, it's fleeting.

[29 : 52] It's passing away. 2 Corinthians 4, 17 and 18 says, For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal. This life can't even be compared at all with the next.

And so this is not what we should be focusing on so much of the time but instead focus on that eternal weight of glory. Focus on the kingdom of heaven. Focus on the treasures that the Lord has stored up for us there.

And the greatest treasure is one that we even have now. Knowing our Lord. Knowing our Savior who gave everything for us. Focusing on those not whatever may come at us in this world.

Now so many will try to make a counter argument here that says that anything that is fueled by a motive of reward can't be proper.

[30 : 56] Can't be a good motivation. That a person that's having that can't have a true love for Christ. But they're simply just seeking a reward.

Now this seems great to do everything out of love for where you're at now and to enjoy this life for where it's at. But that's simply not scriptural.

And any argument that contradicts scripture is not great no matter how great it sounds. Here we are told to rejoice for our reward is great in heaven. That is the reason it says that we are blessed, we are flourishing, and we are happy that our reward is great in heaven.

In Hebrews, I think it was quoted this morning in the Lord's Supper service, it says that our Lord endured the cross for the joy set before him. He was looking to an eternal reward. All throughout scripture, we are told so much about eternity and our life to come, and that is what we are to long for.

To use a bit of MacArthur language that I heard in a sermon of his a long time ago, to get through the nasty now and now, we have to set our minds on the sweet by and by. Right? We're longing for a future, future grace.

[32 : 08] As believers, we should not consent ourselves to dwell in the temporal, the fleeting, the here and now, the imperfect, but to dwell in the eternal, the everlasting, and the perfect.

And that's what gets us through this suffering, this persecution, this pushback, and that's the command we're given here. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. Grab your bulletin.

John Calvin said, that's the quote on your bulletin, surely the gospel does not confine men's hearts to delight in the present life, death, but lifts them to the hope of immortality.

It does not fasten them to earthly pleasures, but by announcing a hope that rests in heaven, it, so to speak, transports them thither. We have so little here.

Our brothers and sisters around the world suffering the physical persecution have so little here. Whatever insults, pushback, or false accusations we may suffer, and so much more so, whatever beatings or tortures or even murders that our fellow brothers and sisters suffer, these are so awful, but we have such a great hope in heaven.

[33 : 24] We have so much to look forward to. I think so many of our hymns just capture that so, so, so well. I'm going to take a couple more minutes here and really help us start living out some of that rejoicing command, rejoicing in our future hope.

I just want to read, I'll read four hymns here and then we'll close. So the first two I'm going to share are our longing songs, songs that are excited about that future reality but aren't there yet.

So the first one, there's going to be a great rejoicing. There's going to be a great rejoicing. The troubles of this world will wither up and die.

That river of tears made by the lonely someday will be dry. There's going to be a great rejoicing. There is going to be a great joy river.

There is going to be a great joy river. Questions of this world someday will be known. Who's robbing you of peace and who is the giver? There's going to be a great joy river.

[34 : 35] Some day you will find me guarded in his fortress, open heart and wings that never touch the ground. Some day we will gather in a grand reunion.

The depths of this old world are nowhere to be found. There's going to be a great rejoicing. This next one, kingdom of heaven that Alex and Christopher led.

Where death shall be no more. no mourning, no crying, no pain. Every tear he'll wipe away in the kingdom of heaven.

Where nothing is accursed, a city with a crystal river, the throne of God and of the land in the kingdom of heaven. Set your mind, your mind, your mind on things above.

Set your eyes, your eyes, your eyes on the risen sun. Where there shall be no night, nor need for sun to shine. The Lord himself will be our light in the kingdom of heaven.

[35 : 38] Set your mind, your mind, your mind on things above. Set your eyes, your eyes, your eyes on the risen sun. Behold, the home of God is with man.

Set your mind, your mind, your mind on things above. Set your eyes, your eyes, your eyes on the risen sun. Oh, let the thirsty come. Oh, let the one who wants drink freely of the water of the kingdom of heaven.

So these next two are more in the perspective of looking at scenes in eternity. So this is the last verse of How Deep the Father's Love.

Behold the king upon the throne, the sons all brought to glory. Cry hallelujah to the lamb and sing redemption story. And all creation joins as one.

The wretch is now God's treasure. By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, forever. Last one. This is the last part of All Glory Be to Christ.

[36 : 43] When on the day the great I am, the faithful and the true, the lamb who was for sinners slain is making all things new. Behold, our God shall live with us and be our steadfast light and we shall air his people be.

All Glory Be to Christ. All Glory Be to Christ our King. All Glory Be to Christ. His rule and his reign
we will ever sing. All Glory Be to Christ.
Let's pray.