

Matthew 5:10-12

We must remember that the beatitudes build on each other. Those whom by the working of the Holy Spirit understand that they are poor in spirit will mourn over sin in contrite repentance. Those who mourn over sin will humble themselves before the mighty hand of God in meekness. Those who are meek will then seek after righteousness which they know they don't have in and of themselves but know that righteousness is found in the imputed righteousness of Christ via justification. Then after the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the blessed one, they then begin to hunger and thirst for righteousness in the process known as sanctification. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness know that they only have the imputed righteousness of Christ by mercy. Since they understand the mercy that was shown to them that they were undeserving of, they then are merciful to others. The one who is merciful to others is the one who has had mercy shown to them in their regeneration and salvation as they are declared pure and holy in the eyes of God. In justification the righteousness of Christ mercifully covers the blessed ones and it is this righteousness that brings us peace with God. Righteousness and peace kiss and are forever joined. We who have had peace with God by the righteousness of the Son are to be peacemakers first and foremost by spreading the gospel of peace to those who are at war with God. The blessed ones are then to be peacemakers in our relations, but this cannot be accomplished without righteousness. Only the righteous ones can be peacemakers. All those who do not have the righteousness of Christ do not have peace because they are enemies of God and are hostile to Him. Since they are at war with Him because of their lack of righteousness, they will be at war with us who are pursuing the righteousness they despise and hate. This is why those who are pursuing and proclaiming righteousness will be persecuted. However, we the Christian is to rejoice because we have the righteousness of Christ which brings us peace with God and our eternal home is heaven where righteousness will shine forth like the sun! (Matthew 13:43)

- Many people are persecuted for many different causes and reasons. However, the blessed one is persecuted for righteousness. We have no righteousness of our own, our righteousness is from Him (iustitia alienum)!
- There is war and hostility between the righteous (blessed ones) and the unrighteous (cursed ones). There is no peace without righteousness which is why Christians who pursue righteousness are persecuted by the ungodly.

Persecuted but with sinning (respond in righteousness)

- **1 Peter 2:21-25** For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ [a]and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ and He Himself [b] bore our sins in His body on the [c] cross, so that we might die to [d] sin and live to righteousness; for by His [e] wounds you were healed. ²⁵ For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and [f] Guardian of your souls.
- **1 Peter 3:8-18** To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but [g] giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For, "The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit." ¹¹ "He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. ¹² "For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." ¹³ Who is [h] there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you [i] are blessed. And do not fear their [j] intimidation, and do not be troubled, ¹⁵ but [k] sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a [l] defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and [m] reverence; ¹⁶ [n] and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better, if [o] God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. ¹⁸ For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the [p] spirit;
- **1 Peter 4:12-16** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled [q] for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a [r] troublesome meddler; ¹⁶ but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

- **Matthew 5:43-48** “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may ^[a]be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?⁴⁷ If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?⁴⁸ Therefore ^[a]you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- **Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute ^[a]you; bless and do not curse.

Persecuted for Christ sake

- **John 15:18-21** “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you.¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave 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.²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.
- **Luke 6:22** Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.
- **Philippians 1:29** For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,
- **Psalm 69:7-9** Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Dishonor has covered my face. ⁸ I have become estranged ^[a]from my brothers And an alien to my mother’s sons. ⁹ For zeal for Your house has consumed me, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. (see Romans 15:3)

All who are righteous will be persecuted for righteous

- **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
- We can look at the prophets, disciples, apostles, and many others as an example throughout church history

Rejoice, Great is your reward

- **James 1:2-4** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various ^[c]trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces ^[d]endurance. ⁴ And let ^[e]endurance have *its* perfect ^[f]result, so that you may be ^[g]perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- **Acts 5:17-42**
- **1 Peter 1:1-9**
- **1 Peter 4:12-13** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.
- **Matthew 13:43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, ^[a]let him hear.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven

- **Romans 8:29-39**
- **Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Those who are blessed are those who are covered in the imputed righteousness of Christ. The fallen world hates God and righteousness and without righteousness there is no peace. That is why those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and are being conformed to the image of God will be persecuted. This persecution is a blessing as it is what we as His children have been called to. Let us not respond to persecution with unrighteousness, but rather with righteousness. Let us not be discouraged, but rather rejoice. Those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed and theirs is the kingdom of God and every second of persecution will be more than worth it when we see Him as He is. Let us rethink what it means to be persecuted for righteousness as it means we are blessed. So what are we to do in our persecution for righteousness? Rejoice!

