

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – March 20, 2022

Theme: The Beatitudes Topic: Blessed are The Persecuted

Main Texts: 2 Timothy 3:10-15; Matthew 5:1-12

Key verse: Matthew 5:11 *“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake” (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: The last two beatitudes in Matthew 5 reveal God’s blessing on the same kind of people, the persecuted for righteousness and His name’s sake. By including elements of the first beatitude, it wraps up the entire list nicely, helping us to understand one of the basic truths of the Christian life. The word “persecuted” means to subject someone to hostility and ill treatment; to harass and annoy someone persistently. It can also be translated “harass.” According to 2 Timothy 3:12, “...all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Persecution is inevitable for righteous people living in a sinful world. But before we get discouraged by the reality of persecution for right living, our Lord Jesus Christ says, *“Blessed are you ‘when’ people insult you...”* (Matthew 5:10). In saying “When” or “whenever,” He lets us know that believers will not always be persecuted. There will be times of peace and possibly times of popularity. Even Christ was not persecuted all the time.

1. Read Matthew 24:9; 2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 5:10-12. (a) What are some of the ways believers are to expect to be persecuted? (b) How was persecution experienced in the early church? (c) How does that compare to the persecution experienced by believers today?

Faith in Christ and persecution are inseparable for it is the experience of the Church throughout the ages. Martin Luther said that there is always opposition when the gospel is preached plainly and accurately. Yet he was not the first, nor the last, to suffer for the Biblical gospel. Jesus Himself did not promise that we would have an easy existence but that we would have trouble in this world. Our cause for rejoicing is the fact that He has overcome the world and will deliver an eternal reward to His people (John 16:33, Matthew 5:12). Although the flavor and intensity of the world’s persecution may vary from generation to generation, hostility toward Christianity has been a constant throughout Church history. There’s a natural friction between our faith and the world’s system bent in opposition to God and His word. And since we hold to the authority of God’s word and adhere to the righteous example of His Son, we can expect to draw scrutiny and anger from a world that hates Him.

2. Read Peter 3:16, 4:4 (a) Why will believers be persecuted? (b) Jesus said, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.” What is the implication of this for how we receive Christ and invite others to accept Christ as Savior? (c) In what ways do you see persecution towards Christians growing in the world today? And how have you experienced some of it?

As we consider this last Beatitude, it is important to always remember that the blessing is for those who are persecuted for righteousness, and His name’s sake! *“...but when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps”* (1 Peter 2 20b-21). Our response to persecution and during such times is crucial to receiving the blessing. The appropriate response completes our obedience and makes us receive the blessing.

3. (a) Read Matthew 5:12, 44, Romans 12:14, 1 Peter 2:20, How, as believers, are we expected to respond when persecuted? (b) Another response to persecution is to rejoice and be exceedingly glad (Matthew 5:12). What are the reasons for such response according to Matthew 5:12 & Acts 5:41? How is this possible? (c) Let participants share one application they will make because of lessons from this study.

Prayer: *Father, please help us to endure persecution and rejoice as You use our temporary suffering to magnify Your eternal glory in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour Amen.*

