



Sermon on the Mount
Wk. 10 Pt. 2 "Happy are the Persecuted"
By Pastor Jody May 10/27/2024

Matthew 5:1-11 ESV

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

The Beatitudes

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

[READ THE TEXT]

Pastor – "People of God, this is the Word of God."

People – "Thanks be to God."

[PRAY]



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[INTRO]

You know one of the hardest things to do growing up is learning the lessons of how our words can hurt other people. It seems that many of us can point to a time in our formative years where we said something to someone in passing only to have that blabbed all over to creation. From that event that person found out and the relationship was never the same. Unfortunately, in Highschool I endured more than my share of that, it seems I had more drama in my life than the *Outer Banks*. Here's some things I learned the hard way in my youth.

First, you always end up trusting the friends that promise they will never tell anyone else, only to determine they lie.

Secondly, popularity adds to the degree of insult and ridicule while increases the speed of the spread of misinformation.

Thirdly, the lure of gossip is too great even for the closest of friends.

Finally, when you see that played out enough in your formative years you hopefully learn to keep your mouth shut and keep your opinions to yourself.

This brings us to this point in our beatitudes today, Jesus informs us that primal fear of having your words arrayed against you or discovering that someone is spreading rumors against you is not something you can run away from. As a matter of fact, perhaps we need to count it as a grace that we went through that in our youth because it can be used to prepare us for the life of a Christian as we seek to minister in our world. Here's what you will come to see today.

MP:

**The more we love Christ, the greater the persecution,
and greater the reward!**

This type of persecution that we started to look at this week is defined for us in vs. 11-12 so here's what we are going to do, we are going to portray the



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inevitable persecution that is coming, we will plan for how to deal with it, and praise God for what it will do through us.

1. Portraying the inevitable Persecution.

What are these things that make up the believer's persecution?

Now last week we talked about a burning at the stake, and I still believe that will not be a common practice for us again while we are living so, please put your mind at ease. But the text this morning is speaking to a specific type of persecution, that comes not from physical threats but comes from THE most dangerous weapon, the tongue.

James 3:5-6a ESV

⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.

And just in case you don't think it's that big of a deal, like you were a firm believer of "*sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me*", and you are quick to use sarcasm or get into arguments where you break into teasing, ridicule, or name calling, here's what our Lord believed about the power of words.

Matthew 12:34-35 ESV

³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the **abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**. ³⁵The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

So Christian, please be careful how you argue with the public, because I AM NOT SAYING don't have a voice in the public square, BUT if you can't refrain from name calling, then you are better off being quiet, because you are offering up evidence to condemn yourself by your behavior and you are portraying a tarnished picture of the of Christ and the church. As momma



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also taught us another great saying, "*If you aint got nothing nice to say, don't say nothing at all.*" **Call out evil but do it with a civil tongue.**

The tongue is the greatest weapon ever used by man and causes more damage than atomic bombs, and yet we know the freedom of speech is paramount for a free society. That's a problem, isn't it? That's a good indication for us that we are probably going to have to get use to this type of persecution for speech must be allowed! (Back to our text)

¹¹"Blessed are you when others **revile** you and **persecute** you and **utter all kinds of evil** against you falsely on my account.

To revile someone **ὀνειδίζω oneidizō**, on-i-did'-zo; from [G3681](#); **to defame**, i.e. rail at, chide, taunt.¹ To cast onto people by word of mouth why you should not trust someone. What's more, to be persecuted this way is not just someone saying something bad, or something from someone's past, **it covers also made-up claims about you.** That's what it means to "*Utter all kinds of evil*" to lie and impute one's character, intentions, motives, and personhood. In modern terms we now can include "gaslighting" or the intentional lying to gain the emotional reaction of others. Obviously in our election cycle you have seen more than you want of this.

Just think for a moment, because God has set this up for a learning experience, how do you think it feels to be in public and have someone do this to you? Have you ever thought about a career in politics because this is what you are going to get. Gone are the days of arguing over policies, hopefully we will get some of that next election cycle, but I would be losing my mind if every time I turned around someone was using words to impede my reputation yet again!

What is the intent of this type of persecution?

Well, I can speak of this a little personally, as a matter of fact every elder here at Highlands can attest to this. Being ridiculed or reviled as a pastor is part of

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3679/kjv/tr/0-1/>



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the game, you have to have some thick skin to do it. This type of persecution, this reviling, can come from without the church, and it can come from within. Whether it comes from within or from without, the intent is always the same, **it is to diminish or demean one's credibility in ministry**. This was constantly happening to Jesus, He was spoken of as a heretic and even as a servant of Satan, and it was all done to take away from His testimony, to lure people away, from who Jesus was pointing towards.

What makes this hard to cope with sometimes is that you just can't ignore it, I mean you must be good at not letting it affect you, but you **also have to challenge it**, because it may mean people are led away into a false doctrine. It means one must defend their name, while admitting their faults, always pointing to Christ, acting above reproach, while upholding the peace which means to PUSH into conflict.

Listen, you have the same thing staring at you in your families, workplace, and among your friends. For you see if you are speaking for Jesus, you WILL be reviled, because remember from last week, that brings conviction to the world. How are you doing at handling someone defaming your ministry efforts, have you ever had anyone critique your life based on your Christian proclamations, are you pushing into slander, or do you run away from the opportunities to stand up for the faith? **Let me remind us of this truth we learned last week.**

John 15:18-19 ESV

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ 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.

Now, if you need help with preparing for these times then you are gonna want to listen up here to this next section.

2. Planning on how to face Persecution.

First, review why is this all happening or why we must plan!



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The Christian is not like everyone else.

That's a small way of putting it, let me say how it really is, the true Christian is unlike 95% of the population on this earth. Because of this wide gap when we believe and live out our convictions, they can cause quite a stir.

Matthew 10:34 ESV

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

The Christian is not like everyone else because their very presence in the world causes problems, BECAUSE as we said a few weeks ago, they come to bring Peace. That means they walk into conflict, not avoid it. A Christian also doesn't just walk into conflicts with no weapons, but they come armed with the only thing that can tame a tongue.

Hebrews 4:12 ESV

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The Christian is a person that when they speak, they use the Words of God to defend and protect His people, plans, and positions. The Christian is not only a little different but is MAJORILY DIFFERENT from the rest of the world to the point the world must take notice, it is forced to respond in kind to those that cause conviction of the heart, it will attack.

So, first step in planning is realizing persecution will come for you are not like everyone else.

The Christian life is dominated by Christ.

The Christian, as we have learned over the last 10 weeks since starting the sermon on the mount, is dominated by his/her loyalty to Christ. That means they have a concern to do everything for Christ's sake, **blessed is the man that**



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is persecuted for Righteousness' sake (v.10), happy is the man that is under the domination of the HS in their lives to make much of Jesus at all costs!

Galatians 2:20 ESV

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but **Christ who lives in me**. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The Christian cannot but help that the way in which he/she chooses to live their life gets them in trouble automatically with the world. Why? Because Christ lives in you, so you will do as your master does, plain and simple. So part of planning is realizing your different than the rest of the world, you are dominated by Christ and now...

The Christian is controlled by the world to come.

The Christian is no longer tied into the things of the world, as we said last week.

1 John 2:15-16 ESV

Do not love the world or the things in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

The Christian as His master was, is not controlled by earthly things. AND on top of that, we are looking towards a future where we receive our full inheritance that is not equated with this world.

Colossians 3:23-24 ESV

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord **you will receive the inheritance** as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

And this inheritance to be received will come from Jesus, and it is based on how I lived for Him. Part of the inheritance comes now in the many things we



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get on this side of eternity, but part of the inheritance is still to come. Christians are not only motivated with the rewards of living for Christ now but have set in their minds the glory that is to come.

Matthew 16:27 ESV

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will **repay each person according to what he has done.**

The Christian is not like the world for he resembles His master, he is dominated by the will of Christ to glorify God, and he is motivated by other worldly things set in a time, that is in the future. Because of that evidence put forth by these beatitudes one must plan accordingly FOR persecution will surely come.

So, as a part of that preparation we need to briefly mention **what we CANNOT do.**

We don't plan on retaliation.

To retaliate, which doesn't mean don't be prepared to give an answer for your beliefs ([1 Peter 3:15](#)) but **don't answer back revile for revile, slander for slander, lie for lie.** That is not of God's kingdom but that is of this worldly kingdom.

Romans 12:17 & 19 ESV

¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

We don't retaliate for earthly persecution, but we will leave vengeance to God who will fully pay in a fulfilled future. Christian God forbid we repay someone for a slight only to see that person come to Christ later. We win over our enemies with love ([Rom 12:20](#))

We don't plan on resentment.



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Now I know in saying that it is very difficult to live that one out. We have to go from a stance from not just controlling our replies to slander and revile but we must control our hearts, for God is concerned most for that.

Ephesians 4:31 ESV

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

When we choose to resent it builds up walls of unforgiveness, it builds up walls of for no compassion to be had, and it will destroy your ability to be evangelistic. When you live for Christ, you surrender the right to be offended by others, for He/Jesus was offended for you by this world. You see the world's slights against you are actually against Christ and He may choose to forgive, or He may choose justice, but it best for you not to interfere with your emotions and response to offense. We cannot resent that which has no more power over us, if you resent you are showing that your love is still for the things of the world. We must push on this one, choose to let it go, or else it will hamper your ability to be a witness for Christ while you live, don't let the devil win that one, press on family!

We don't plan on being depressed.

Friends you may be good at not retaliating, and you may be getting better at not resenting, but if you go through that enough you will finally start to build up a lasting feeling of negativity about living in this world, a type of depression. This type of spiritual depression keeps you thinking it will never get better, and you know what, that may be right! If you are going to keep living for Jesus, for righteousness' sake, you may always have those folks that just can't stand you. When that becomes the case let me tell you how to come against this:

We DO plan on Counting it all joy!

James 1:2-4 ESV



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² **Count it all joy**, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Family, here's a truth I learned early on in life, and it took a little while to let it sink in, but the fact is "**I can do nothing at all about what people may think about me.**" And when I am in the right, even when I am slandered, I must choose joy for this too means something about me.

We count it all joy family, because persecution tells me that my life, the way in which God is using it, **IS making a difference**. When we retaliate, when we resent, when we are depressed, we are telling ourselves that we CARE TOO MUCH about what this world thinks, and we don't care enough about what God thinks! So, let's look now at specifics and let's look at how we combat these negative feelings over our persecution.

3. Praising God over our Persecution.

¹² **Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

So, I have three things to focus your joy on as you endure your earthly persecution of revile and slander.

Persecution: means you're an invader into the Kingdom of Darkness!

Matthew 16:18 ESV

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

That is not a verse about Peter, or the office of the Pope, it is about the church! Jesus is saying from [verse 16](#), that Jesus as the Christ IS the rock, and on it the church is built AND the gates of Hell cannot stand against her. It is the picture of an offensive approach into hostile territory that is trying to keep an assaulting force at bay. Family when you go through persecution, revilement, and slander, count it all joy, for that is how the enemy fights, by words, not fists. It is the sign you are scaling walls, you are getting shot at by



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arrows, because the enemy is afraid of your entrance! We rejoice as Peter, James and John did that day when they were reviled and beat for Christ's sake in the temple in Jerusalem, for it meant they were on the right side!

How do you fight depression? Remind yourself and be around other people that will remind you the good cause you fight for, that remind you of the people that need rescuing from the kingdom of darkness and remind you of a worthy Lord that is charging ahead before us!

Persecution: means you're going to have an awesome pay day coming!

2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one **may receive what is due** for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Some Christians would you believe don't like the ideas of rewards in heaven for yes all come into heaven by Grace. That though does not mean there is not a reward awaiting us for how we lived and persevered here while we lived on earth.

Matthew 16:27 ESV

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will **repay each person according to what he has done.**

Persecution reminds me I am about doing Kingdom work, that I am living for the right cause, that we are speaking on behalf of Christ. Scripture is very clear that the person that endures receives an eternal, unfading, in glory reward. Now what is that specifically? That's the part that is unclear in scripture, but just like a lot of things about eternity it's just not there, most likely because to think of something so valuable and desirable falls short when our understanding is now so limited to finite understanding and still tainted by sin. **What God has in store for us will be eternal and will be exactly the thing we want never diminishing in its' glory only gaining in its' attractiveness.**



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The only thing I can think of like that, is getting more of and being in service more to Jesus! Can you think about your heart's desire which is to do more for Jesus, without a fallen creation, without a tainted spirit, to be totally focused on the desires of Jesus, to me it starts there, knowing that my desires will be the same as His desires! Family whatever that is I want that, and going through a little reviling down here cannot compare with the promise of future rewards.

Persecution: means you're included in great company!

Lastly, there is that phrase that Jesus says our persecution puts us in the company of the prophets, the people that spoke for God before us. There is another place in scripture which talks about a group of people that spoke for Jesus keeping their mind on the future rewards.

Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV

Therefore, **since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

This group of people also suffered like the prophets of old, but their view of an eternal home gave them strength to endure.

Hebrews 11:13-15 ESV

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Enduring our persecution now means we are included into this eternal city, we are included into the names already written in the book of life, we are included into the address book in the home that God has prepared for us. The



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path has been laid out for us here, do you look at this life as merely a land that you are passing through, are you desiring a better home and are you becoming unsettled while you live here?

Persecution does come to all Christians, and persecution comes from the most unlikely of foes even those we even call loved ones, with the harshest of all things to bear, the reviling of our character and hearts. But count it all joy Highlands for that persecution tells you that you are opposing the gates of hell itself, that persecution is earning you rewards beyond what you can even understand now, and that persecution is putting you into an eternal home amongst some great company, and that brings us to this point one more time:

MP:

**The more we love Christ, the greater the persecution,
and greater the reward!**

I pray we all experience this truth together in the years to come, and that we all get a chance to celebrate this one day in our eternal home together, amongst those that have gone before us, serving our God and King for eternity!

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 **Consider him** who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.



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HCC consider Him and regain your strength today!

[COMMUNION]

Matthew 26:26-29 ESV

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus. Consider the perfect life of obedience He lived in spite of the ridicule, consider His acts of Mercy in spite of the revile, Consider His acts of Grace in spite of snide remarks and taunts, all done because we could not nor would not do this. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. Consider today the eternal home purchased by the gift of His life, consider the future family we will be brought into, and consider the gates of Hell that will always yield to His power, by His blood we are redeemed. Praise be to Him for His wonderful Love.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"

Elder Reads:

Although many storms and floods might arise and beat against them, these storms and floods will never be able to remove them from the foundation and rock they are anchored upon by faith. At the same time, through unbelief and



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the temptations of Satan, their experience of the sight of the light and love of God might be clouded and obscured from them for some time. 2

Congregations Recites Together:

However, God remains the same, and it is certain that they will be preserved by the power of God for salvation, where they will enjoy being the purchased possession of God, who engraved them upon the palm of his hands and wrote their names in the book of life from all eternity. 3

2. Psalms 89:31-32; 1 Corinthians 11:32

3. Malachi 3:6

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has endured the slander of His Son so that we may receive the inheritance eternal.

Go in the name of the Son, who for joy that was set before. Him endured the cross despising the shame and earned an eternal seat at the Father's right hand.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that fills us with the joy of getting to suffer our revile for Christ's sake, now go and tell the world about the one you live for.



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