



Sermon on the Mount
Wk. 9 "Happy are the Persecuted"
By Pastor Jody May 10/20/2024

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]

Victimization: To quote Monty Python: "Come and see the violence inherent in the system! [HELP! HELP! I'm being repressed!](#)"

If you are a sibling or are a parent to siblings, you are a witness to the **violence in the system**, aren't you? In some way you have heard the cries for justice, the cries to be heard, the cries for fair treatment. Yes, I am no stranger to those cries, as the leader in my home there have been many moments in my life where I have tried to bring fair and equal judgments to those under my care, but as my family can attest to, very rarely does everyone get what they want.

Parents you know this, that's why in the courts of your home you always hear this cry, "**That's not FAIR!**" Meaning our people want equal outcomes not equal scales or justice. That's the way of the world isn't? And if over time if you feel like the judgements never go your way you can begin to develop the **identity of a victim**, as in no matter how it goes, you're the one always getting repressed. That can lead to the belief that even when I am told 'no' then it doesn't mean I was in the wrong, that even when I am 'punished' it didn't mean I deserved it, that even when I was 'corrected' it didn't mean I thought wrong. Christians let me just say when you bring justice to your homes in your own home courts that's why you elevate God's Word above all!

That level of biblical authority based in **Sola Scriptura**, as in Scripture is the final arbiter in all things, must be present in the Christian's home because here's a truth you will see today, **Persecution is a way of life for the believer**. Not only is it a way of life, but it is also expected. Not only is it a way of life, not only is it to be expected, but it is also something to be desired. Yep, so if we don't rightly teach our kids about justice, equality, and a right way to view oneself from the Bible, then we run the risk of raising our kids to believe they are victims in this world instead of conquerors for Jesus. Persecution in the Bible is not a sign of defeat, victimization, and/or repression but rather **persecution is a sign of victory in the Kingdom, and triumph for the believer!**



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Today we are just scratching the surface of this beatitude that teaches us that persecution 'IS' a good thing. This doctrine spans the length of 3 verses. In verse 10 we have the **Declaration** of this truth, "**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**" Then in verses 11-12 we have the **Definition** of what this looks like: being **reviled** and **slandered** for the **cause of Christ**. To start us in this discussion this morning let me first define the Truth, the biblical principle taken from v.10, we will be talking about today.

MP:

Righteous Persecution signals Kingdom Living.

This principle comes in a timely way as it will push on our belief of what this teaching of Jesus really means. There has come into the church realm, a belief that if we are truly saved then we shouldn't suffer, so if we are suffering then it falls under the category of, we are not really good Christians or not really believing in the power of the HS or we just don't have enough faith. It's the same thing Jesus was facing with the Pharisees 2,000 years ago; your earthly blessings reflect heavenly status.

The Bible is clear in what it perceives as suffering and what it perceives as a righteous cause, and it may surprise that it doesn't really agree with the majority of Westernized Christianity. Persecution is a good thing, when it comes from a righteous source, that is defined by God's Word, and you should be **happy/blessed/Makarios** when you go through it. So, here's how we are going to start our quest this morning in clearing up this doctrine. 1st we are going to **Decipher** what is persecution for Righteousness' sake, by teasing out what it isn't. Secondly, we will look at why we should **Decide** on being Ok with it, as in what makes it right. Then lastly, we will **Determine** what is to be expected for our lives as believers living out this beatitude; Deciphering, Deciding, and Determining. And by doing so, we will be able to experience more joy because we will be able to connect our suffering directly to living for the Kingdom.

1. Deciphering what is Persecution for Righteousness' Sake?



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Philippians 1:29-30 ESV

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also **suffer** for his sake,³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Do you remember the Philippians from our study in Acts. It was the veterans retirement community that Paul fell in love with, the ones that understood the weight of Christian ministry, it was here that he first got imprisoned for his work. These people are the main contributors and funders for much of Paul's travels and it seems that these military families get what 'the call' is all about.

Paul in Philippians 1 is explaining to them that his imprisonment in Rome was for the best, not because he did something bad, not because he sinned, but because **it was the will of God** so that the expansion of the Gospel may go forward. So, when we read v. 29 it is a summary of the doctrine of suffering for the Christian, Paul is stating what has happened to me is not out of the ordinary, but it is **granted**¹ (given freely, as kindness/benevolence) that a person should be allowed to suffer for Christ's sake. Paul is like this is good, it is from God, and if you are fortunate enough to get it, you are blessed by God as well.

[Problem] as a Christian we read these verses though and we can develop a tendency/pattern that every time we endure persecution, we equate that with doing something for Christ. It is the opposite of the Pharisees, so it is attractive as in at least it says to yourself, "Well at least I'm not like those hypocrites in the Bible." Perhaps for us, you may be tempted to say, "at least I am not like some of those wild Charismatics you see on media running up and down the aisle, dancing and speaking in tongues." While you may be right that doesn't mean you're more Holy than them.

I have known people, Christians, that are magnets for persecution, as in it seems they do things to get noticed, whether on purpose or not. So let me explain to you **what it isn't**, and perhaps that will be helpful.

¹ **χαρίζομαι charizomai**, khar-id'-zom-ah-ee; middle voice from [G5485](#); to grant as a favor, i.e. gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue:—deliver, (frankly) forgive, (freely) give, grant.
<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5483/kjv/tr/0-1/>



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What or Who it isn't:²

- Blessed are those who are having a hard time in their Christian life because they are being difficult.
 - persecuted for they are fanatical (and it shows in their media posts).
 - persecuted because they are overzealous (everything you have and say is about shoving your religion in their face).
- Blessed are those who are being persecuted as Christians because they are seriously lacking in wisdom and are really foolish and unwise in what they regard as being their testimony. (like how they handle their finances, or how one deals with law abiding)
- Blessed are they that are persecuted for a cause or for politics.

The most important part of this phrase you need to latch on to today is THE CAUSE for the persecution. Blessed are those that are persecuted for **RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE**. This beatitude comes at the end of the list here, it is not just the fruit of a person converted, it is the **indirect cause** of the person changed by God!

This person has been through Regeneration:

- They were made to see their spiritual poverty v.3
- They were led to mourn their sin and the sin of others v.4
- They were meekened/broken pride is shattered v.5
- They were shown their thirst for righteousness for they had none v.6

Then this person was Converted:

- They were able to begin to show mercy/forgiveness v.7
- They were able to see God's movement by having a pure heart v.8
- They were able to make peace and move into evangelism v.9

Now, because of this person being torn down and rebuilt back up and now living on behalf of God and not themselves they are reflecting **CHRIST!** Blessed are those that are persecuted for simply living out their lives that organically/naturally/desire to reflect the righteousness of Jesus, it just

² Martin Lloyd-Jones, [*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*](#)/One Volume Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1976), Pgs. 112-113.



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comes out of you! Happy is that person when it is noticed and hated by the world! Jesus is pointing out that you have come into the Kingdom of Heaven, you are living with purpose, with faith, with conviction, with love for God 1st and then neighbor 2nd and the reflection of those traits rubs on the world. It is antithetical to be like that, it displays to the world that loving self, the pursuit of happiness, is not preeminent, it causes CONVICITON.

Righteous Persecution signals to the believer that you are indeed Living in the Kingdom, that your life finally has meaning and purpose. Now if you are not there yet, if you need more proof perhaps as this is the path for you let's look at some other truths to help you decide.

2. Deciding why we should be Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake.

What makes it right:

John 15:18-21 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. ²⁰ 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.

First Jesus says look if you find yourself in this position of being hated/detested, know that I got the same treatment. Why would anyone in this world not love Jesus? The world says it loves peace, harmony, and love, then why would it hate Jesus?

1 John 2:15-17 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. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.



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Simply because Jesus' desires are not in what the world can give, but His desire is to do the will of the Father, that is Righteous, Holy, and Pure. **People don't love Jesus because He isn't in love with the world.** If the world hates you, it is because your life is displaying that you don't love the world like others do. Following up on what we talked about last week if we are a **servant/doûlos** we are not greater than our master, so we are not treated better than our master but the same way.

So, what makes it right to be persecuted as a Christian? three reasons:

- 1st Jesus was persecuted as well; He was hated,
- 2nd it shows the love of God is greater than our love for the world, and
- 3rd being a servant of Jesus means we will be treated as Jesus was.

Who it looks like:

If you want to read about some people in the Bible that took this seriously, as in it was more important to them to show a love for God instead of a love for people you don't have to go too far.

The first one was right after the fall. Abel, son of Adam, loved God and offered to him a sacrifice that pleased God. It didn't please Cain, it made his brother look bad, it put his life in danger, but Abel was more concerned about displaying his love for God than he was about placating his brother's concerns. That theme you see plays out in scripture in the life of Moses, where in His whole ministry with the Hebrews in the wilderness was a constant reminder about loving God more than the world which got him rebellious behavior on more than one occasion. It was David loving Saul through his actions for God in conquering the Philistines. David was hunted by his king for loving his God, and His name more than an earthly king. We see this played out with Elijah, who endures persecution for being a lone prophet for God, stands up to the prophets of Baal, is hunted by Jezebel, because He loved God more than King Ahab. Lastly, you can read about Daniel and under duress over his life would not bow to the government's desire to worship a statue to represent loyalty to the state. (did you see the trend there, whenever we decide to love God more than government it leads to persecution) Yet all these examples they were



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not persecuted because they were annoying or extreme, but they **were persecuted because their love for God was greater than their fear of man.**

Where it puts us:

Family here's where I want to challenge you this morning though, because all of these examples are famous figures out of the most read book in existence. Standing up for righteousness' sake, living out that conviction, **you don't wait till you get famous**, or till you can be noticed, it is exactly because of **their love for God that MADE them famous.** We stop making excuses for God now, and we live for Him now, because a Christian lives an eternal life now!

This beatitude makes something also very clear to us, so it is very imperative to our spiritual endeavors. **We need to ask ourselves if we are not willing to be persecuted then am I really a Christian?** It makes you ask that hard question for yourself. It doesn't make you doubt your faith, for real Christians are like, **"bring it on!"** It doesn't mean they are scared but real Christians know they can't run from it. Is that you? Do you love the things of God more than you love the world? If so then you will want to be treated like Jesus was treated; hated, for the love of the Father is in you.

Now if that's you, what should we expect, what exactly does that look like?

3. Determining what is to be expected to be Persecuted for Righteousness's Sake.

Who has gone before:

We can look to our past and we can gain inspiration Or we can gain intimidation, how you view the past examples says a lot about how you will respond to future trials.

Reformer **Girolamo Savonarola** (1452-1498) Whom many of us never hear about but perhaps if it was not for him Martin Luther may have not had the success he did. Savonarola was a Dominican Monk that brought a moral reformation to Florence at the end of the 15th century. He spoke out



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prophetically against Pope Alexander VI, against the corruption of the church, and the lack of leadership instilling Christian morality among the people. When he was excommunicated, he consented to the authorities in Florence to keep preaching because the wickedness of men in Florence had gotten so bad. When the Pope lost a son in a drowning accident, he wrote a letter not just of condolences but of support urging the Pope to put faith in Christ. Savonarola was tortured, hanged, and then burned with two other monks in 1498, but even then, because of his character or righteousness he was given full absolution by the pope so that he would not suffer in the afterlife. That speaks to his reputation of being persecuted for just being like Christ.³

Jack Phillips, the owner of *Masterpiece Cakeshop* in Lakewood Colorado came to our attention in 2012 when he refused to make a Wedding cake for a homosexual couple. His basis for not doing so was out of a religious conviction of marriage can only happen between men and women. He has been taken to court numerous times and has spent the last 10 years battling for the right to be able to conduct his personal business in light of his personal convictions. In 2023 the Supreme court decided on his side causing the Colorado Supreme Court on 10/09/2024 to strike down a lawsuit against him for not making a cake for a transitioning party.⁴ Jack Phillips and his family were persecuted not for being difficult but just for the reason that they looked like Jesus to the world and live God more than man.

Kicker for the Chiefs **Harrison Butker**, came to our attention last year when he spoke at a commencement address of which he got in trouble by saying:⁵

"Some of you may go on to lead successful careers in the world, but I would venture to guess that the majority of you are most excited about your marriage and the children you will bring into this world. I can tell you that my beautiful wife Isabelle would be the first to say that her life truly started when she started living her vocation as a wife and as a mother,"

³ <https://www.cprf.co.uk/articles/savonarola.htm>

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/colorado-court-dismisses-suit-baker-wouldnt-make-transgender-themed-ca-rcna174656#>

⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/harrison-butker-commencement-speech-e7d83ee53a5583f362563b17fa9e5fdc>



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He got ridiculed and slandered by the press for talking about the need for women to be women and the danger of false pride in alternative life-styles. The Chiefs tried to distance themselves from his opinions, the NFL tried to denounce him, the press deplored him and since that time Butker has become the highest paid kicker in the NFL making \$25.6 million over the next 4 years.

Inspiration or Intimidation where are you right now?

Here again is the danger. Some of you are like yes please give me option 3, you may be even ok with option 2, but no one wants option 1. YET that is exactly the option that Jesus came for, to be slandered while offering the Gospel and in the end killed by His own, and it is the option that His people while they may be scared should be prepared to do the same. Everyone is given a degree of faith to do what they are called to do, and everyone is put in their own unique situations to bring God glory publicly going against the grain of the world causing CONVICITON. Are you prepared to suffer for righteousness' sake if you are called to do so?

How can we prepare:

Some things to think about before next week, because that is more about defining for us what this looks like.

First, what are you absolutely afraid to lose, and that should be the first place that you pray for God to show you the idolatry of your heart. Your kids are not your Salvation, your home is not that important, your retirement fund is not eternal, your health can go at any time. Where is it that you are hanging your hopes on, I am not saying give them up, but I would ask you to consider what it would look like for you if you lost that tomorrow? Would your testimony change, would your love for God change, would it burn brighter than the world could stand, or would your light go out?

Secondly, perhaps think about where you are at in life, and the place where you are afraid of being seen for Christ, start preparing for the day you may have to stand and give account for your actions. Are you prepared to go against the system of the world in your workplace, in your family, are you



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ready to tell people that you live according to God's Word and that is MOST important to you?

MP:

Righteous Persecution signals Kingdom Living.

Family, not everyone will suffer like Savonarola, stop sweating that, I haven't seen a burning at the stake in quite some time. BUT from my years as living as a Christian most of us are going to have an opportunity to give an account for what we believe and that may lead to some persecution. But that's ok because **Blessed** is the person that gets to do so, blessed is the one that gets to be associated with their Lord.

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

1 Peter 4:12-14 ESV

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, that 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.

Christian your call is to obey IS to rejoice when you are persecuted for righteousness' sake for you know then the SPIRIT is with you!

[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



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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. Remember that a bruised reed he did not break, and a faintly burning wick he did not quench, but He still brought forth justice (Isaiah 42:3) and in return endured the persecution of an evil world. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. That through His life, His sacrifice of Himself was perfected through the acts of such persecution, and He was blessed to do so for the joy of His Father. Praise be to Him for His wonderful Love.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – "Christians, what do you believe?"

London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 Chapter 17.1b - Perseverance of the Saints

The Faith of Believers Will Be Preserved by God

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 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. *

*** Psalms 89:31-32; 1 Corinthians 11:32**

[OFFERING+LAST SONG] -

[BENEDICTION]



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Go in the name of the Father, that offered up His only Son to endure persecution so we could come to know the persistent love of God.

Go in the name of the Son, that endured His earthly persecution so we could experience for eternity His glory experiencing the persistent love of God.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that now helps us endure our earthly persecution so we can resemble Christ, go and live that out in front of the world.



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You cannot protect people from things they don't want to confront. – Jordan Peterson. <https://x.com/jordanbpeterson/status/1844805560342089740>





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[21m](#)

Every nation must bow the knee to Christ.



[Megan Basham](#)

[@megbasham](#)

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[Oct 10](#)

36% of the PCA voted for Joe Biden in 2020. That is....well, it's something.

Quote



Ryan Burge

[@ryanburge](#)

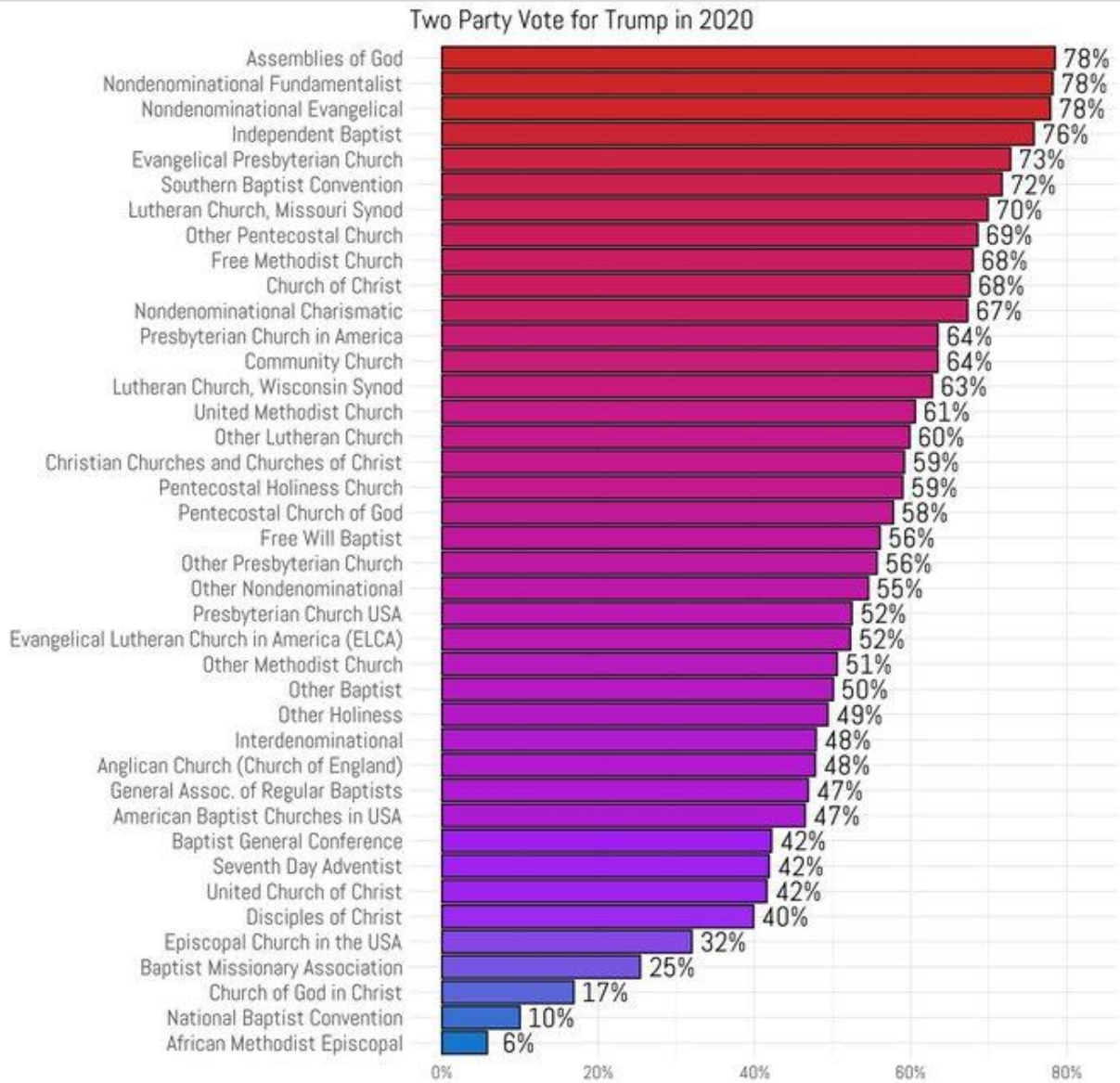
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[Oct 10](#)

Here's how the forty largest Protestant denominations voted in 2020.

Assemblies of God were the most Trump supportive. The least Republican were the African Methodist Episcopal church.



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@ryanburge
Data: Cooperative Election Study, 2020



[Megan Basham](#)



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[@megbasham](#)

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[Oct 10](#)

Essentially, I would've expected a significant number of abstainers and third-party voters in the PCA, but would not have guessed that many would actually pull the lever for Biden.



[Megan Basham](#)

[@megbasham](#)

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[12m](#)

As a few people have pointed out, should have noted the potential third-party and abstaining vote in the overall percentage, and a few also reached out to say that they think perhaps respondents were confusing PCA and PCUSA. But regardless, between the two parties, it's

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Ad

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The Future

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No hangovers or regrets

Lemon Elderflower

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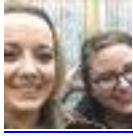
No hangovers No regrets

BREZ

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[Summer Jaeger](#)

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[14m](#)

My toddler calls moths "butterfly ghosts" and he's right.

[David Gornoski reposted](#)



[David Gornoski](#)

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[17h](#)

Replying to

[@BarackObama](#)

Trump took a bullet fighting to end wars. You took a Nobel peace price for launching endless wars.





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[**Michael Foster**](#)

[@thisisfoster](#)

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[17m](#)

The central source of corruption in BigEva is its devotion to celebrity and love of money. To destroy it, you must kill those twin sins. But they die hard. This is why BigEva is fracturing into MicroEvas—essentially the same thing, just on a smaller scale.



[**G3 Ministries**](#)

[@G3Conference](#)

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[22m](#)

"Being 'gentle' is an expression of godly wisdom alongside being 'peaceable . . . open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere' (Jas 3:17). Rather than being pugnacious, we should be gentle." — David Huffstutler



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What's happening



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.

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