



KICK OFF

Think of a recent example when you were faced with taking a stand? What happened?



KEY VERSE

Matthew 5:10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”



BIG IDEA

A Christian is able to rejoice in the midst of persecution for the sake of righteousness.



INVESTIGATE

### FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE

#### Read Matthew 5:10-12

1. what does the phrase ‘for righteousness sake’ mean?
2. Jesus gives the specific reason as to why Christians should be persecuted as ‘for righteousness sake.’ What are some not so good reasons for being persecuted?
3. Does this mean that there is a difference between being persecuted for our political prejudices and our spiritual principles?
4. Then, what does it mean to be ‘persecuted for righteousness sake.’  
John 15: 18—20

2 Timothy 3:12

Can you think of other examples in the Bible?  
In the Old Testament—passages?

In the New Testament—passages?

The supreme example is Jesus Christ himself.—passages?

Can you think of Christians down through the history of the church who have been persecuted ‘for righteousness sake.’

5. By whom are the righteous persecuted?
6. Does this Beatitude test your ideas as to what a Christian is?  
Luke 6:22-26  
Philippians 1:29



DIG DEEPER

D.A. Carson says ‘this final beatitude does not say, ‘blessed are those who are persecuted because they are objectionable, or because they rave like wild-eyed fanatics, or because they pursue some religio-political cause.’ The blessing is restricted to those who suffer persecution because of righteousness. (see 1 Peter 3:13f; 4:12-16). The believers described in this passage are those determined to live as Jesus lived. Persecution can take many forms, it need not be limited to the rigorous variety experienced by our fellow-believers in certain repressive countries. A Christian in the West who practices righteousness may be ridiculed by his family, ostracized by his relatives, and work colleagues. But even the Christian who comes from a secure understanding home will face flak somewhere. The reward for being persecuted because of righteousness is the kingdom of heaven. This final beatitude becomes one of the most searching of all of them, and binds up the rest, for if the disciple of Jesus never experiences any persecution at all, it may fairly be asked, where righteousness is being displayed in his life.

This beatitude is expanded in verses 11-12 and gives three insights.

First, persecution is explicitly broadened to include insults and spoken malice.

Second, the phrase ‘for righteousness sake’ Jesus (cont’d)

## REJOICE IN TRIBULATION

7. Jesus says that we are to rejoice when this persecution for righteousness comes.  
What two reasons does he give in vs11- 12?



### THINK AND APPLY

8. Do we know what it is to be persecuted for righteousness sake?
9. Think of some examples when you were faced with taking a stand for righteousness sake. How did you react? What happened?

THINK &  
APPLY

Where you live?

With your neighbours?

Where you work/study?

With your family?

With friends socialising



PRAYER

Praise God for the challenges raised by God's Word through this study.

Praying for others in your group:



COMING UP



FAMILY  
DISCUSSION

How does this passage apply to our daily life?

now parallels with 'because of me'(5:11). This confirms that the righteousness that is in view is an imitation of Jesus. Simultaneously, it so identifies the disciple of Jesus with the practice of Jesus' righteousness that there is no place for professed allegiance to Jesus that is not full of righteousness.

Third, there is a command to rejoice and be glad under persecution of this type.

In other passages in the New Testament different reasons are given for suffering. But in this passage, only one reason is given to prompt Jesus' disciple to rejoice under persecution; their reward is great in heaven. Carson p31-2

**PRAISE GOD** that we have a saviour who understands what suffering for the sake of righteousness involves.

**CONFESS** those times when we have not stood for righteousness' sake.

**ASK GOD** for wisdom so that we will suffer for the sake of righteousness rather than our own folly.

**PRAY ALSO** for the suffering church.



READ AHEAD

See you next Semester—July 15.