**The Blessed Character of the Persecuted – Matt. 5:10 -11**

*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*

The character of the Christian

The Christian is poor in spirit

The Christian mourns over sinfulness

The Christian is gentle

The Christian has spiritual desires for righteousness

The Christian is merciful

The Christian is pure in heart

The Christian is a peacemaker

**Focal Truth: The righteously persecuted will be rewarded in heaven**

**Observations**

1. **What is persecution?**
2. Persecuted = to flee, drive away, to trouble, to harass, to run swiftly to catch a person or thing
3. Verbal insults
4. False accusations of evil
5. **Who are the persecuted?**
6. Gospel persecution is toward those who live righteously in an unrighteous world – “for the sake of righteousness “– 5:10
7. Those who live as Christians in the world – “because of Me” – 5:11

Acts 8:1 – Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles

Acts 11:19 – so then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen make their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews alone.

Acts 13:50 – but the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district

1. The righteously persecuted share in the sufferings of Christ – Rom 8:17 – if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him
2. The righteously persecuted God uses to advance the gospel – 2. Cor. 1:5 -6 for just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation or if we are comforted it is for your comfort, which is effective in patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer
3. The righteously persecuted reveal Christlikeness in their suffering – 2 Cor. 4:10 – 12 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you
4. The righteously persecuted are called to suffer like Christ – 1Pet. 2: 21 – 23 – for you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you and example for you to follow in His steps, when being reviled, He did not revile in return, while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him
5. **How do the righteously persecuted respond to persecution?**
6. The righteously persecuted rejoice with gladness in persecution – John 15:20 – 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…

1 Pet. 4:13 – to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation

1 Pet. 4:16 – if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name

1. The righteously persecuted rejoice knowing God will reward the persecuted greatly in heaven
2. The righteously persecuted share with the prophets in being persecuted
3. The righteously persecuted live in assurance of Christ’s love – Rom. 8:35 – who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?
4. The righteously persecuted grow in their knowledge of Christ in persecution –

Phil. 3:10 – that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death

1. The righteously persecuted endure persecution – 1 Cor. 4:12 – when we are persecuted, we endure
2. The righteously persecuted expect persecution – 2 Tim. 3:12 – all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

Acts 14:22 – strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God

1. The righteously persecuted are tested by God in persecution – 1 Pet. 4:12 – 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
2. The righteously persecuted trust God in persecution – 1 Pet. 4:19 – therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right

**The righteously persecuted respond to persecution like Christians**

* Poor in spirit
* Mourning for their sinfulness
* Gentle
* Spiritual desires for righteousness
* Merciful
* Pure in heart
* Peacemakers
1. **God blesses the righteously persecuted**
2. 1 Pet.4:14 – if you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you
3. 2 Cor. 1:7 – our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort
4. **Christ sufferings for us are greater than any sufferings among us**

Heb. 12:3 – 4 – for consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.