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Beatitudes: Blessed Are The Persecuted

Matthew 5:3-10, AMP: Blessed [spiritually prosperous, happy, to be admired] are the poor in spirit [those devoid of spiritual arrogance, those who regard themselves as insignificant], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [both now and forever]. “Blessed [forgiven, refreshed by God’s grace] are those who mourn [over their sins and repent], for they will be comforted [when the burden of sin is lifted]. “Blessed [inwardly peaceful, spiritually secure, worthy of respect] are the gentle [the kind-hearted, the sweet-spirited, the self-controlled], for they will inherit the earth. 6 “Blessed [joyful, nourished by God’s goodness] are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [those who actively seek right standing with God], for they will be [completely] satisfied. 7 “Blessed [content, sheltered by God’s promises] are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 8 “Blessed [anticipating God’s presence, spiritually mature] are the pure in heart [those with integrity, moral courage, and godly character], for they will see God. 9 “Blessed [spiritually calm with life-joy in God’s favor] are the makers and maintainers of peace, for they will [express His character and] be called the sons of God. 10 “Blessed [comforted by inner peace and God’s love] are those who are persecuted because they live for God, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [both now and forever].

Persecution - mistreatment; inflicting of suffering/fear, harassment, exclusion, imprisonment, torture, or death.

REASONS FOR PERSECUTION “*because they live for God*”

- Because of the Lord we Love.
 - **John 15:18:** If you find the godless world is hating you, remember it got its start hating me.
- Because of the Lives we Live
 - **2 Timothy 3:12:** everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.
 - **John 15:19:** If you lived on the world's terms, the world would love you as one of its own. But since I picked you to live on God's terms and no longer on the world's terms, the world is going to hate you.

RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION

First Instinct: React Defensively

New Posture: Embrace Grace “Blessed [comforted by inner peace and God’s love] are those who are persecuted...”

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Guard against HATE

Matthew 5:43-44: You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor (fellow man) and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love [that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for] your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Guard against RESISTANCE

Guard against COMPROMISE

Matthew 5:48: In a word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.

RESULTS OF PERSECUTION *“for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs”*

Acts 4:32-33: The community of believers was one in heart and mind...The apostles continued to bear powerful witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and an abundance of grace was at work among them all...

Acts 20:24: I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me...the task of testifying to the Gospel of God’s Grace.