



[Matthew 5:10-12](#)

(10) Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. (12) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

[1 Peter 4:12-16](#)

(12) Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: (13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (14) If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. (16) Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

King James Version

Jesus' phrase in the beatitude, "for righteousness' sake," calls upon us to [examine ourselves](#) honestly before [God](#) both before and after we are opposed. In [1 Peter 4:12-16](#), Peter, like Jesus, perceives persecution as inevitable and therefore a Christian should expect it. Since a disciple is not above His Master, a follower can hardly expect to escape some form of what the Master received.

Human nature dislikes and is suspicious of anyone who is different. True Christianity brings on its own form of unpopularity. It has never been easy, in part because, regardless of where they live, Christians are different. A Christian presents the standard of [Jesus Christ](#) to [the world](#). Worldly witnesses to this do not understand exactly why, but it at least irritates them, pricks their conscience, and separates them from the

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Christian. In some it leads to open anger, even rage. For instance, while calling it a virtue, worldly people think [goodness](#) is a handicap because they fear it will keep them from achieving their goals. At the same time, a truly good person will irritate them. Before long, their conscience disturbs them, and they react by persecuting the good person. The human heart is so deceitful that Jesus remarks in [John 16:2](#), "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service."

Peter also perceives persecution as a trial to overcome. A person's devotion to principle can be measured by his willingness to suffer for it. Therefore, since he writes of true Christians and not those merely in name, persecution will be a test. Compromising with God's standards will not elicit persecution because that leads to agreement with the world. Jesus says, "If you were of the world, the world would [love](#) its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" ([John 15:19](#)). Compromise will certainly ease the pressure, but God intends persecution to test the Christian's trust, loyalty, sincerity, courage, and patience.

Suffering for righteousness' sake is an honor leading to glory. In fact, Peter says that when one suffers persecution, the glory of God rests upon them. When Stephen was put on trial, his accusers "saw his face as the face of an angel" ([Acts 6:15](#))! In such an instance, a [persecuted](#) Christian falls into the same category as Jesus Christ because all He suffered was for righteousness' sake. We therefore share in the same and should be unashamed.

However, we must be exceedingly careful we do not suffer because of our own misconduct. A Christian's life should be his best argument that he does not deserve what is happening to him. Jesus says in [Matthew 5:11](#), "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you *falsely* for My sake." We [hope](#) that we suffer for our sins only rarely, but when we do, we are getting what we deserve. There is no glory in that. But even in this, all is not lost because it may lead to [repentance](#), change, and growth.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[**The Beatitudes, Part 8: Blessed Are the Persecuted**](#)

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