



[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.

King James Version

It may seem strange that [Jesus](#) passes so quickly from peacemaking in the previous beatitude to persecution—from the work of reconciliation to the experience of hostility. But we come to learn from life's experiences following [conversion](#) that, however hard we try to live peacefully or to make [peace](#) through reconciliation, some refuse to live at peace with us. Indeed, as this beatitude shows, some take the initiative to oppose, revile, and slander us. We must live with and adjust to the fact that [persecution](#) is simply the clash between two *irreconcilable* value systems. [God](#) has called us, selected us, to represent Him in [patiently](#) enduring and even overcoming persecution as part of our witness and preparation for His Kingdom.

God is not without sympathy for the difficulties these challenges pose for us, but He calls us blessed, counseling us to "rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is [our] reward in heaven" for successfully overcoming persecution. We should realize we do not earn the reward because we are doing only what we are supposed to do ([Luke 17:7-10](#)). But God freely gives the reward; He promises it as His gift.

We are to face persecution remembering "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" ([Romans 8:18](#)). When it comes upon us, we should not retaliate like [the world](#), sulk like a child, lick our wounds like a dog in self-pity, or simply grin and bear it like a masochistic Stoic. Our Savior tells us to rejoice in it because it proves the authenticity of our [faith](#), puts us into a noble succession of towering figures of faith who have preceded us, and guarantees us great reward in the Kingdom. It may also put us into the company of many martyrs

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exalted in God's Word.

Above all, persecution for His sake brings us into [fellowship](#) with the sufferings of our Savior. Our [love](#) for Christ should be so great that we rejoice that it has come upon us on His account. If He suffered so much to give us this awesome future, why should we not gladly suffer a little for Him?

Persecution is a blessing in disguise designed to bring out the best of Christian character. From it we frequently become aware of weaknesses in our character. Persecution's pressures are humbling. They make us understand that our spiritual infirmities are so great that we cannot stand for a single hour unless Christ upholds us. How true are His words, "Without Me you can do nothing" ([John 15:5](#)).

Persecution can also keep us from certain sins because it makes us more vividly aware of the impossibility of friendship with the world. Seeing we cannot have both the world and the Kingdom, it can help us set our resolve to live righteously. "And not only that," the apostle Paul writes in [Romans 5:3-4](#), "but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

At first glance, persecution seems contradictory to the way and purpose of God. Though we certainly do not wish it upon anyone, and though we sincerely [hope](#) we do not have to face it, we can understand in the broad overview that, because of the enmity of [Satan](#), it is inevitable. And in reality, it is a disguised blessing, designed to complete our preparation for God's Kingdom.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Beatitudes, Part 8: Blessed Are the Persecuted](#)

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