



### Week 9 – Happy are those who are Persecuted because of Righteousness

**Series Passage:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Focus for the Week:** Matthew 5:1-12

#### **Discussion Guide:**

In movies, tv shows, and books, there is a modern phenomenon known as “subverting expectations.” Each entertainment medium has an established pattern, narrative flow, character moments, etc. However, this trend reverses or changes from what the audience would expect. Subversion of expectations is often divisive, as people react differently to not getting what they would expect.

**Q:** Have you ever had your expectations subverted, either in entertainment or in your own life?

Jesus, in the beatitudes, subverted the expectations of their original audience by teaching a counter-cultural way to look at happiness and blessedness, and no more so than the beatitude with which Jesus chose to end this list with.

**Read:** Matthew 5:10-12

**Q:** What is your initial reaction to hearing this beatitude?

**Q:** What would persecution look like for us today as Christians?

Jesus’ counter-cultural way of finding happiness should change all parts of how we live. Each beatitude builds upon and supports the other. You can’t pick and choose which ones you want to

apply to your life; it's an all-or-nothing list. With this understanding, take time to read through all of the beatitudes and then answer the reflection questions afterward.

**Read:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Q:** What is happiness?

**Q:** How can we live a happy life?

**Q:** Why would living a happy life in the way Jesus instructs us lead to persecution?

### **Finishing Well**

Following Jesus and through that, finding happiness is not something we can just fit into our lives where convenient. Following Jesus is a transformative experience. Everything changes. Jesus is calling us to know true happiness and joy.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus models every beatitude listed, culminating in the greatest act of love in history – Jesus dying in our place and then conquering death through his resurrection. The pursuit of happiness has a finish line. The finish line is found when we come to the foot of the cross and look up at Jesus and what he has done for us, accept the most gracious gift ever, worship and praise Him, and point others to him – that is true happiness!

### **Close in Prayer**