



THE BEATITUDES Series • Sermon Notes

Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

— Matthew 5:10

Bible Texts: Matthew 5:10–12ⁱ; Matthew 16:13–25; Isaiah 6:8–11ⁱⁱ; 1 John 2:15ⁱⁱⁱ; 1 Peter 1:6–9^{iv}; Philippians 3:8–11^v.

Pastor Anthony opened with the story of his friend Kevin Rideout, whose missionary service was followed by kidnapping, captivity, and—by God’s mercy—release. That story raises the question behind the final Beatitude: How do faithful Christians understand suffering while trusting the love of God? Jesus does not promise a pain-free life. He calls “blessed” those who remain faithful when righteousness brings persecution, because their deepest security is the kingdom of heaven. The Christian promise is not that life will always be easy; it is that in Christ we belong to God, His promises remain true, and suffering does not have the final word.

1. Jesus Reorients Our Expectations of the Messiah

Peter correctly confessed Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Yet when Jesus explained that He must suffer, be killed, and rise again, Peter resisted. Jesus exposed the problem: Peter was thinking according to human expectations instead of God’s purposes. The people expected visible triumph, but God’s saving plan would pass through the cross. The same correction applies to us. We do not define Jesus by what we wish He would do for us; we receive Him as Scripture reveals Him, including His call to faithfulness when obedience is costly.

Reflection: When life does not match my expectations, will I let God reshape the way I see my circumstances?

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2. Following Jesus Includes Taking Up the Cross

Jesus connected His suffering to discipleship: “deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Pastor Anthony warned against a transactional faith that treats God as a guarantee of comfort or immediate rescue. God blesses and answers prayer, but Scripture never promises believers will avoid hardship. David knew danger, Moses endured the wilderness, Isaiah obeyed despite rejection, and John the Baptist remained faithful even when release did not come. The Bible is honest about both God’s goodness and life in a broken world. Hardship is not proof that God has abandoned us or that Christ’s work has failed.

Reflection: Is my faith anchored in God Himself, or in comfortable circumstances?

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3. Our Joy Comes from God’s Presence, Not the Absence of Pain

First Peter says trials test genuine faith, yet believers can rejoice because their hope is fixed on Jesus and His salvation. The early church was marked by both persecution and joy. Paul shared that confidence, counting everything as loss compared with knowing Christ and looking beyond suffering to resurrection and eternal life. Pain is real, but it is not our identity or our future. As Pastor Anthony put it, life may be messy, but God’s promise is His presence in the mess. Christian joy comes from the presence of God, not the absence of pain.

Reflection: What burden do I need to place beneath the greater promise of Christ and His kingdom?

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Closing Thought

Jesus does not ask us to deny pain; He calls us to hold fast to Him through it. Our hope rests in Christ’s finished work and God’s eternal promise. We may not know what the other side of a trial will look like, but we know who will be with us there. He is enough, and His kingdom endures.



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i Matthew 5:10-12 - English Standard Version

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

ii Isaiah 6:8-11 - English Standard Version

Isaiah's Commission from the Lord

⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.” ⁹ And he said, “Go, and say to this people:

“Keep on hearing,^[a] but do not understand;
keep on seeing,^[b] but do not perceive.’

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people dull,^[c]

and their ears heavy,
and blind their eyes;

lest they see with their eyes,

and hear with their ears,

and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.”

¹¹ Then I said, “How long, O Lord?”

And he said:

“Until cities lie waste

without inhabitant,

and houses without people,

and the land is a desolate waste,

iii 1 John 2:15 -- English Standard Version

Do Not Love the World

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

iv 1 Peter 1:6-9 - English Standard Version

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

v 1 Peter 1:6-9 - English Standard Version

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.