



Silverdale Baptist Church

BLESSED ~ BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STAND FOR GOD ~ 11/26-27/2022 ~

Matthew 5:9-12

Big Idea

Whenever two opposing kingdoms or cultural systems come into contact, there is a conflict or "rub."

Getting Started

As you have seen, Jesus used the word *"blessed"* nine times in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). *Blessed* can be translated as happiness. In the first 3 Beatitudes, Jesus said that we are *blessed* when we are helpless, broken, and meek. In the next 3 Beatitudes, Jesus said that we are *blessed* when we hunger for righteousness, are merciful, and are pure in heart.

Today we will look at what blessed means when the kingdom of God conflicts with the kingdom of this world.

In what ways do you see this world at odds with the kingdom of God?

"They (Hollywood) pretty much cut out most of the spiritual things. We say them, but they don't run them on the show. Hollywood has run up against the Kingdom of God. And there is a rub."
(Phil Robertson, Duck Dynasty).

How sharp is the conflict between this world and God's kingdom? First, let's study Matthew 5:9-12.

Learn

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 5:9-12.

It may sound odd, but *who* is blessed in these verses?

1. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Pastor Tony asked if peacemakers are blessed, and everyone wants peace, then why is there no peace?

- Jesus makes peace between God and us.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 1:21-22.

What do you learn about Jesus in these verses?

- Jesus makes peace between humans.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 2:11-16.

Who has Jesus made peace between? How?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19-20.

Jesus is the peacemaker. What is our responsibility as Christ's followers?

2. Blessed are the persecuted.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER RE-READ MATTHEW 5:11-12 and 2 TIMOTHY 3:12.

Why are we surprised when there is "a rub" between the kingdoms, and we are persecuted?

*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,
for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt. 5:12)*

Apply

Jesus is the peacemaker between God and us. But, as Jesus' followers, how should that truth manifest in our lives?

Who will you represent Christ to this week?

In what ways is your heart divided when you read that we are blessed when we are persecuted?

When we stand for God, what will happen? How should we respond?

What is Jesus saying to you now?

Pray

Father, I confess that I want peace, but I always want it on my terms. I am quick to say, "Peace!" but slow to put down my weapons. Create in us the heart of a peacemaker and an ambassador of reconciliation to a world at war with You.

Amen.

Dig Deeper

MATTHEW 5:9-12

9. The word *peacemakers* is found only here in the New Testament. It is quite general and is not qualified in any way, so that we are left wondering whether the primary reference is to the large scale (dealing with wars and the like) or the small scale (quarrels). That it is left general probably means that both are in mind. There is a quality of peaceableness, a disinclination to engage in disputes, that is admirable, but Jesus is talking about more than that. He refers not to *peace-keepers* but to *peace-makers*, people who end hostilities and bring the quarrelsome together. Argyle points out that these are "not appeasers, but those who actively overcome evil with good." A person may be known as one who ends hostilities throughout his whole sphere of life, whether that sphere be great or small.

It is people like this who will be called *God's sons*. There is something godlike in bringing peace to people and people to peace. There is, of course, a sense in which all believers are members of the family of God, whether they are distinguished as makers of peace or not. But those who make peace are fulfilling what membership in the family really means, and this is something to which all the members of the family must aspire. The verb "to call" may be used in a variety of ways, but here the point is that the call signifies that the person called really is what the name indicates.

10. We come now to a most unexpected beatitude, one for the persecuted. Matthew's first readers, who probably had some experience of persecution, would no doubt have been surprised at this statement, for it is never pleasant to experience suffering (cf. Heb. 12:11). Matthew uses

his verb “persecute” four times in this chapter and twice elsewhere. It can denote putting to flight, driving away (10:23), or even following without hostile intent (Luke 17:23). It may even be used of pursuing virtues like love (1 Cor. 14:1) or generally what is good (1 Thess. 5:15). But in the New Testament it is mostly used of inflicting suffering on people who hold beliefs that the establishment frowns on, and it is this kind of persecution of which Jesus speaks here. He does not speak of persecution as such, but of persecution *for the sake of righteousness*. People may suffer for doing evil, but such suffering is punishment, not persecution, and in any case believers are not to suffer that way (cf. 1 Pet. 4:15). Jesus is speaking of those committed to God’s cause, and *righteousness* is the kind of conduct appropriate for those who have been given right standing before God. Salvation is all of grace, but there is a kind of conduct that is expected of those who have received God’s good gift and it is that kind of conduct on which Jesus pronounces a blessing. Those who undergo persecution for God’s cause and not for any fault of their own receive a blessing like that for “the poor in spirit” (v. 3), and it is given in exactly the same words: *the kingdom of heaven is theirs*. There is the same underlying attitude and the same ultimate reward.

11. Many of the benedictions have been surprising, but none more than this; it is an intensification of the statement in verse 10. Persecution is universally regarded as evil (except by the persecutors). To have it pronounced as a blessing is surprising indeed. But God’s people have always been rejected by the worldly: persecution puts us in good company. There is a change from the third person in the beatitudes up to this point to direct address in this one. *When* is a general term; we could understand it as “whenever.” *Upbraid* refers to verbal abuse, reproaching, insulting, and the like, but *persecute* refers to actions as well as words. *With falsely say all kinds of evil* we are back at words, but we are to bear in mind the qualification *falsely*. Believers are not to engage in the kind of conduct that enables people to accuse them genuinely; their lives are to be above reproach. *All kinds* is comprehensive; believers must expect a great variety of evil comments. *For my sake* links the whole saying with the Christian profession. Jesus is not pronouncing a blessing on those in general who receive criticism, but on those who are upbraided for following him. For them reproach, persecution, and slander are occasions of blessing.

12. Far from being despondent and depressed, saddened or enraged, Christians who find themselves in this situation are bidden, *Rejoice* (cf. Acts 5:41). This call for joy is reinforced with *be very glad*. There is a twofold reason for this joy. *Because* introduces the first. The word for *reward* properly signifies a “wage” (20:8), but it is also used in the sense “reward,” and this is in order in the present passage, though we should bear in mind that the word often has something of equivalence in its meaning. This does not mean that the pious have merited a heavenly reward, for “the reward is so far beyond anything which men could possibly attain by their own goodness that the very word ‘reward’ has something of irony about it” (AB); it is rather that God’s goodness overflows toward the persecuted. *Great* shows that the reward in question is far from meager, and *in heaven* locates it. Jesus is not talking about a reward in the here and now. Whatever compensations they receive in this world, the full reward of the persecuted is reserved for the next.

The second reason for joy is that this is the way *the prophets* were treated. Persecuted believers are in good company. The plural brings all the prophets together as one godly company. The persecutions they received no doubt varied greatly, but the point is that persecution is the

lot of the people of God while they walk this earth. In three consecutive verses Matthew has used the verb “persecute,” which puts emphasis on the concept. Here even the prophets, whom everyone now accepts as the servants of God par excellence, were treated badly in their own day. It is a privilege for the servants of God in later days to share in some measure in the lot of these great men of God.¹

¹ Leon Morris, [*The Gospel according to Matthew*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 100–103.