

# Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: **UPSIDE DOWN** – *The Beatitudes* – Matthew 5:1-12

Message: **Part 3 – When You Are Persecuted**

November 3, 2019. Guest Speakers: Kevin & Julia Garrett.



**Connect** (20min) – share refreshments.

[If you have a larger group break into smaller groups of 3-4 people, or men/women]

**\*ICEBREAKERS:**

a. **Sun. November 3** was our [Missions Focus Sunday](#), and the [International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church](#).

\*Did you check out the *Missions Expo* in the Conference Hall or chat with any of our Missionaries and Ministry Partners? *Share your feedback.*

b. **“...Send me Lord”**

\*Have you ever served Christ in another country/culture as part of a short or long-term mission?

\*If you could go on a short-term Missions trip anywhere in the world which country/culture would you choose?

\*If you had to live & serve long-term (for years) in a foreign country which country/culture would you choose?

## Sunday Message Discussion (35-40min)

1. Invite one person read the Beatitudes in [Matthew 5:1-12](#) and open in Prayer:

> We will read *The Beatitudes* each week during this series. We challenge you to memorize this passage.

Option - Choose a different reader and English translation/paraphrase each week. (NLT, ESV, NIV, NKJV, Message, TPT...)

2. **Message Feedback:** Share your feedback on Kevin & Julia Garrett’s story & message from Sunday.

a. What impacted, encouraged or challenged you the most and why?

b. Can you recall or describe the details of the persecution they faced and how they responded to it?

3. Read [Matthew 5:10-12](#) – **God blesses those who are persecuted for Him.**

a. **NOTE:** Jesus is addressing persecution for one’s faith in Christ, which includes one’s life practice (living righteously).

b. [10 Forms of Persecution](#) - Read & discuss as a group.

[listed by the *Barnabas Fund*, an international body formed to support persecuted Christians. In ascending order of ferocity]

1. **Social discrimination**, such as pressure on a Christian woman to convert to Islam if she marries a Muslim.

2. **Institutional discrimination**, such as difficulties obtaining building permits to construct or repair Christian churches.

3. **Employment discrimination**, such as bias against Copts in the Egyptian military and public sectors.

4. **Legal discrimination:** denying Christians and other religious groups access to the courts, legal representation or action by police when they are attacked.

5. **Suppression of Christian missionary activity**, as in Iran, where missionaries are routinely arrested and deported or incarcerated.

6. **Suppression of conversion to Christianity**, usually through "blasphemy" or "apostasy" laws. Nearly half the countries in the world have laws that criminalize apostasy, blasphemy or defamation of religion.

7. **Forced conversion from Christianity**, sometimes involving "reconversion" ceremonies where Christians are made to embrace the religion they left for Christ.

8. **Suppression of corporate worship**, as when authorities in China or Saudi Arabia raid house churches.

9. **Violence against individuals**, the most common and most lethal form of the global war on Christians.

10. **Community oppression**, when entire churches or faith groups are attacked.

- c. Which of the 10 forms of persecution are you most familiar with and which one are you least familiar with?
- d. Which of the 10 forms of persecution are you most concerned about & why?

#### 4. Persecution in Canada

- a. When was last time it cost you *something significant* to follow Jesus? *Share some examples as a group.*
- b. How do you see persecution changing in Canada moving forward?

#### 5. Blessed in Persecution - Preparing & Responding to Persecution

- a. Read [Luke 6:22-23](#). What in the world does Jesus mean by being Blessed in the midst of persecution?
- b. **Word:** Share the reading of these examples of the many Scripture addressing Persecution: [Matthew 5:44](#) & [10:22](#); [John 15:20](#); [2 Timothy 3:10-13](#); [2 Corinthians 12:10](#); [1 Peter 4:12-14](#); [Romans 8:35-39](#) & [12:12-14](#); [Hebrews 10:23-25](#).
- c. How is the endurance, joy and hope of the Disciples and early Christians powerful evidence for the reality of Christ's Resurrection?
- d. Considering the examples and teachings of Jesus, the early Christians, and persecuted Christians today...
  - \*What are some ways that we can prepare and then respond to persecution? Brainstorm & share as a group.  
[e.g. Prayer, Know God's Word Better, Christian Community, Living with Integrity & Excellence, Loving our Enemies...]
  - \*Why do you think it's worth it?

### Application (10min)

\***Consider:** The last book in the Bible, [Revelation](#), is often considered a favourite book of persecuted Christians. If you've read *The Book of Revelation*, why do you think it's so encouraging to persecuted Christians?  
>> Challenge – read (or [listen](#)) through *The Book of Revelation* this coming week – which takes about 90mins.

\***Memorize [Matthew 5:10](#) this week.**

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* – Jesus.

\***Memorize The Beatitudes throughout this series -- [Matthew 5:3-10](#)**

### Prayer (20min)

\**Based on our topic and discussion let's share our requests and Pray for one another, and the persecuted Church.*

### Resources to Consider

\***Scripture:** <http://www.openbible.info/topics/persecution>. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-persecution.html>

\***The Voice of the Martyrs:** <https://www.vomcanada.com> (Canada). <https://www.persecution.com> (USA)

\***OpenDoors:** <https://www.opendoorsca.org>

\***Barnabas Fund:** <https://barnabasfund.org>.

An international Christian charity supporting persecuted Christians suffering because of their faith.

\***Books:** [The Applause of Heaven](#), by Max Lucado (based on the Beatitudes)

[Jesus Freaks: Martyrs: Stories of Those Who Stood for Jesus](#)

[The Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun](#)

[Shadow of the Almighty: The Life & Testament of Jim Elliot](#)

\***LUMO Gospel of Matthew 5** (on YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QINSbvO8WIU>

## Announcements

\*Our **NEXT LIFE GROUP MEETING**: DATE / TIME / LOCATION. **SNACK DUTY**: \_\_\_\_\_.

>> Plan a week to share **Communion** together as a Life Group each month.

### Upcoming **UPSIDEDOWN** Series Schedule:

November 10 – **Stay Hungry** (Matthew 5:6)

November 17 – **The Strength of Gentleness** (Matthew 5:5)

November 24 – **The Ministry of Mercy** (Matthew 5:7)

December 1 – **When No Ones Looking** (Matthew 5:8). *This is also our next Baptism Sunday.*

December 8– **How to Reconcile Relationships** (Matthew 5:9)

### Christmas **HOPE** Campaign 2019

The Special Offering for our annual *Christmas Hope Campaign* is coming up on **Sun. November 10<sup>th</sup>**.

We raised over \$100,000 last year and our goal is once again -- \$100,000. Stay tuned for more information.

\*Hamper Referral Forms available online: <https://mainstreetchurch.ca/christmas-hope> \*Delivery Day is Sat. December 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Main Street Men - **MAN Breakfast**

**Sat. November 16.** 8am. Main Street Conference Hall/Café. Speaker: TBA. Tickets - \$5 – available in November.

### Main Street Women's **Brunch**

**Sat. November 23.** 10am. Main Street Conference Hall/Café.

We invite you to "*A Place at the Table*", a women's brunch on November 23rd at 10am in the Conference Hall.

Our guest speaker is [Eunice Mitchell](#) from The Table Gathering. Tickets are \$5 and available in November until the 17<sup>th</sup>.

### Empower **Retreat**

**November 29-30.** Friday 5:30pm-9pm / Saturday 9am-6:30pm. At Main Street Church.

The *Empower Retreat* is a two-day (Friday-Saturday) retreat where we explore the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they can be used powerfully in our lives and the church! *\*Set Free Retreat is a pre-requisite.*

\$40 – Includes refreshments, lunch & dinner on Sat. & your Empower Booklet.

<https://mainstreetchurch.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/320115>