



Connect Discussion Guide

08.01.21 Message | Chuck Sackett | Matthew 5:10

Key Scriptures:

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

- Matthew 5:10

“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”

- Matthew 5:44

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”

- 2 Timothy 3:12

“But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,”

- 1 Peter 3:14

“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

- 1 Peter 4:14

Message Highlights:

- In the inverted kingdom, it is the oppressed who are blessed.
- In the inverted kingdom, it is the persecutors who are prayed for.
- The Beatitudes help us to see blessing instead of curse, hope instead of despair, courage instead of fear.
- The Beatitudes provide proof that, in him, the rule of God from the heavens truly is available in life circumstances that are beyond all human hope.

Conversation Starter:

Throughout this sermon series, we've gained a deeper understanding of what it means to be blessed. Discuss with your group how your understanding of the concept of blessings has changed or deepened throughout this summer.

Discuss the Message:

1. Read today's Beatitude again (Matthew 5:10). How in the world is this good news? Share with your group someone you know who stands up for their faith even amidst persecution.
2. Who will be persecuted, according to 2 Timothy 3:12? Reflect on this scripture, and discuss why/how you think Paul made such a sweeping statement here.
3. Connect the idea of persecution for righteousness' sake to last week's message on peacemaking. In what ways could peacemaking efforts lead to persecution? What would you say is at the root of persecution?
4. Dallas Willard pointed out that "[the beatitudes] single out cases that provide proof that, in him, the rule of God...truly is available in life circumstances that are beyond all human hope." How would you explain this to someone who is new to the beatitudes, or new to faith in general? How do we practically find strength in this inverted kingdom?
5. How can we encourage those who are experiencing persecution without offering shallow, "band-aid" words? What is an example of counsel that could be taken as insensitive or "pat", and what is an example of counsel that could truly encourage, drawing upon the hope of Christ?

Pray:

Father, your word is living and active among our church body. You are transforming our inner selves through your purifying word, and for that we are eternally grateful. Without you, we would lack hope, joy and courage. But WITH you, we receive these gifts amidst the deepest of loves. Open our eyes to those near and far who are being persecuted for their faith. Give us the words and compassion to encourage those experiencing persecution when we are given the opportunity to do so. When we find ourselves amidst persecution, please surround us with believers who will help encourage us to remain rooted in your love. In your son's name we pray; amen.