



Connect Discussion Guide

8.8.21 Message | Tyler Myers | Matthew 5:11-12

Key Scriptures:

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

- Matthew 5:11-12

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 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 4:12-14

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

- Revelation 19:6-8

"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

- Revelation 22:12-13

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

- Luke 14:27

And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

- Luke 15:31-32

Message Highlights:

- "Never be content with your current grasp of the gospel. The gospel is a life-permeating, world-altering, universe-changing truth. It has more facets than a diamond. Its depths man will never exhaust." - C.J. Mahaney
- Generosity, jubilee, mercy and compassion—these are the marks of the new community.
- Freed from the grip of the right-side-up kingdoms, we salute a new King and sing a new song. We transcend earthly borders, boundaries, and passports. We pledge allegiance to a new and already-present kingdom.
- True discipleship is costly because it costs a person their life, and it is gracious because it gives them true life. True discipleship is costly because it condemns sin, and it is gracious because it justifies the sinner.

- The crisis of our era – more people leaving religion but wandering for spirituality.
- Jesus turned all of Heaven & Earth upside down to make way for people to return home.
- You have been extended an invitation, but you have to embrace the King and his ways of expanding the Kingdom of God.

Conversation Starter:

- Only when someone is fully committed to something are they willing to sacrifice and suffer for it. What are some things that you have observed people are willing to suffer for? What are some things you are willing to sacrifice and perhaps even suffer for?

Discuss the Message:

1. Read Matthew 5:11-12. The word *persecution* gets thrown around often in various debates these days. What is the difference between people merely disagreeing with Christian beliefs versus people truly persecuting Christians?
2. How do you think Christians in countries where there is severe hostility towards Christianity might describe persecution compared to the experiences referred to as persecution in an American context?
3. Read 1 Peter 4:12-14. How can trials and suffering for our faith actually serve to strengthen our faith?
4. When others around you are willing to sacrifice for worthy cause, what impact does that have on your willingness to do the same?
5. Here's a bold question for personal reflection (no need to answer out loud): If every member of our church was as committed to self-sacrificially helping others find and follow Jesus as you are, do you think our church would be stronger or weaker than we are right now?

If stronger, what can you do to help others grow in their commitment alongside you?

If weaker, what changes do you need to make so that you become more loyal to Jesus and his mission and less loyal to the kingdoms of this world?

6. How can we make sure that the love of God and all that Christ has done for us remains the central motivation for our commitment to his mission?

Pray:

Father in Heaven, we praise you and thank you for your great love! King Jesus, you did not shun self-sacrifice, but willingly lived, suffered and died in order to conquer sin and death for us. Now, resurrected and ascended, you reign over our hearts as you bring your Kingdom into this world.

Just as you have saved us and welcomed us home, we want to be a part of helping people who are wandering find their way back home to you. We ask that you would strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to live truly self-sacrificial lives in order that we might be a part of helping you make all things new. Amen.