



Get Connected.....15 Minutes

Host Tip: Welcome new group members and provide a brief overview of session 4. Review last week's memory verse as well.

Opening Discussion Question:

How would you describe persecution?

Memory Verse | Week 9:

Mathew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Host Tip: Stream the lesson after the memory verse is read.



Start Lesson.....20 Minutes

Session 9: *Blessed Are The Persecuted*

I. The Meaning of Persecution.

- The primary Hebrew word for persecution, radap
- Greek words, dioko/diogmos
- Both emphasize the concept of pursue
- Their meanings can be extended to include pursuing or pressing on, to oppress, harass to bring to judgment or punishment

In the United States we won't be put to death for speaking the Gospel, but we will:

- Be pursued and ridiculed
- Harassed and called names
- Oppressed and cursed at
- In many other countries, Christians face judgment and punishment in prison.

II. The Meaning of Righteousness

(Righteousness is walking RIGHT with God.)

Jesus was basically saying that Happy are those who are pursued, oppressed, harassed, and punished for walking right with God. For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

+ *How can we be happy when persecuted? We can be happy when persecuted because persecution has a Godly Purpose.*

1. We can be happy when persecuted because Persecution BUILDS faith in others.

First Peter 4:15-16, "If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name."

Philippians 1:12-14, "Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear."

2. We can be happy when persecuted because Persecution will TEST our Faith.

James 1:2-4, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

A. God will test our faith to show us how much we have grown in our faith.

B. God will test our faith to show us how genuine our faith is.

3. We can be happy when persecuted because God will REWARD our loyalty when we appear with Him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-6, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming."

✓ sexual immorality,

✓ impurity,

✓ lust,

✓ evil desires and

✓ greed, which is idolatry.

✓ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming



Closing Discussion & Prayer.....20 Minutes

Host Tip: You don't have to do all the questions. Cherry pick the one's that you think best fit your group.

Closing Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever been ridiculed or persecuted for your faith in Jesus? How did you respond?
2. Three reasons why God allows us to be persecuted are to build our faith, test our faith and reward our faith. Discuss these three areas and how God uses these areas to help us to mature in Christ. Share examples from your own life if you can.
3. We are here to grow in our faith. Be honest with this question. Do you find it intimidating to talk about your faith out of fear of insults or persecution? You are not alone. How can we overcome these feelings?
4. There's a saying, "No good deed goes unpunished." We all grow weary in doing good for many reasons. Discuss Galatians 6:9-10 with your group. Why is showing God's love to others important to maintaining a right walk with God?
5. The Apostle Paul showed no fear in his letter to the Philippians. On the contrary, he rejoiced over his chains because the gospel was spreading without fear. Discuss things that we can do to overcome our circumstances with the same mindset that the Apostle Paul had.