



## Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

The Sermon on the Mount - Part 1 • the inevitability of suffering • matthew 5:10-12 • 06/03/2018

### Main Point

The Bible not only teaches the inevitability of suffering, but also its temporary nature.

### Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**How do you typically respond when someone insults you: insult them back, cry, walk away, laugh it off, ignore? Why?**

**What about when someone says untrue things about you? How do you respond to that?**

**What are some reasons why someone might hurl insults or lies your way?**

Today's text focuses on the last of the Beatitudes Jesus taught at the start of His Sermon on the Mount. While all of them seem like oxymorons to an extent, perhaps none more so than what we read in verses 10-12. Why in the world would Jesus say we should be glad and rejoice when we don't do anything wrong and people speak negatively about us, lie about us, and even physically persecute us? And yet suffering is relative. As part of a body of believers, our persecution is inevitable because we represent the most controversial, history-changing, radical figure of the world—Jesus Christ, our Savior.

### Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| have a volunteer read matthew 5:10-12.

**What stands out to you about this passage?**

**How do blessing and persecution seem to contradict one another?**

**How important is the phrase "for righteousness" in verse 10? Explain.**

**What does it mean to be persecuted “for righteousness” and “because of” Jesus? What are some eye-opening examples of this you’ve seen in the world in recent years?**

**How do you know if your suffering is a natural result of a sin-filled world, or for actually standing for Christ? What’s the difference?**

Matthew 5:2-12 is a passage famously called the Beatitudes. “Beatitudes” originates from the Latin word for “blessings.” Each verse in the passage begins with “Blessed is...” In verses 10-12, Jesus blesses those who are persecuted for His name. “Blessed” means happy, or fortunate. It seems contradictory that Jesus would call persecuted believers “happy.” How can someone who is persecuted be truly happy?

**Have you or someone you know ever experienced persecution? To what extent is suffering relative?**

Those who are persecuted can be happy because their heart is set on the One who’s pleased with them. Persecuted believers are happy because of God’s response to their behavior. God takes pleasure in a people who are sold out to Him. Blessing not only entails God’s pleasure, but also His promise of eternity spent in heaven.

**Look at the end of verse 10, along with the beginning of verse 12. What does Jesus promise believers in both verses?**

As verse 10 promises the reality of eternity in heaven, verse 12 is an elaboration of the goodness of the heavenly kingdom. Indeed, verse 12 mentions a reward. Reward, more literally translated as “wages,” is a promise of a future recompense in eternity for persecution, rather than a treasure or reward for piety. Properly translated, the reward should be thought of as heaven itself and not some particular status in life to come. God knows those who trade their life for His name, and the recompense for such a great exchange will be more magnificent than one can imagine. Indeed, Jesus echoes this when He says in Matthew 16:25, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” This finding of life is the entrance into heaven.

**In what ways does this passage imply community among the body of believers?**

**How does it help to know that you are not the only one in this world who suffers? In what ways does community play a part in the endurance of persecution and suffering?**

Jesus offers a poignant reminder that the great men and women of Old Testament times often suffered a similar fate. The prophet Jeremiah provides the classic example. The same is true of Christian history. When we suffer, we must avoid the trap of thinking that we are the only ones who have ever experienced such problems.

It should be noted that persecution is not limited to a particular culture. We must avoid the tendencies of our 21st culture of self-centeredness, and pride which seeks personal security and survival above the good of others.

**How is it prideful to think that you're the only one who suffers? How can such pride be avoided?**

**What are some ways we can prevent ourselves from falling into self-pity when being persecuted or undergoing suffering?**

Throughout history, God's servants have faced enormous difficulty in obeying the call He placed on their lives. The early church faced great persecution, and Paul and his companions endured suffering everywhere they went. It wasn't a question of whether or not persecution would take place, but how to live in the midst of it. Even today, believers in many parts of the world face the threat of persecution daily. But Jesus never leaves us to face it alone. He promises in Matthew 5:12 great eternal reward, and Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 4:7-19 assures us that even on earth, His presence and power envelop us.

## Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How do you know if the insults or persecution you face are because of Jesus and righteousness, or a mishandling of your calling as a believer?**

**How can you begin to view suffering as a result of being part of the body of believers, rather than considering yourself a "personal victim"?**

**Do you know someone who is being persecuted? What ways can you encourage him/her in the midst of his/her suffering? List ways you can be a source of encouragement for your brother or sister in Christ.**

**How can this group be a place of solace and encouragement for those who are persecuted?  
How can we bear one another's burdens?**

## Pray

Thank God for the promise of heaven for those who follow Jesus in righteousness. Invite Him to show you what it means to be glad and rejoice when faith-induced trials come, that the life of Jesus would be revealed in your body, and that God's heavenly kingdom would be yours. Pray for believers who are suffering.

## Commentary

| matthew 5:10-12

5:10 The purest form of righteousness is pursued by disciples who know that their good deeds will demand great sacrifice and will result in pain rather than immediate reward. This is the epitome of the kingdom righteousness demanded by the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus pronounced that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who suffer for righteousness. In the Greek text, theirs is shifted from its normal position at the end of the clause to the beginning instead. This gives the pronoun a special emphasis indicating that the kingdom belongs to righteous sufferers and to them alone. Those who always endeavor to evade persecution are not true disciples and will not have a share in the kingdom because true disciples follow Jesus even at the cost of their lives (16:24-27). The kingdom of heaven is the reign of God in the person of Jesus the Messiah. Righteous sufferers are subjects of God's rule through their submission to Jesus' authority. Jesus inaugurated this kingdom during His ministry, but it will be consummated in the end times.

5:11-12 Jesus' words show that persecution is typically either verbal or violent. Verbal forms include insult and slander. The word persecute includes acts of physical violence like the slap of Mt 5:39. Jesus promised that the cost of discipleship will be offset by the enormity of the reward the disciple enjoys in heaven. Jewish leaders rejected and vehemently persecuted the OT prophets, and Jesus repeatedly denounced this persecution (21:34-36; 23:29-37). By treating Jesus' followers in the same way they had treated the prophets, Jewish persecutors unwittingly bestowed on them a prophet's honor.