**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | How to Prepare for Persecution |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 5:10-14 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1998 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. One of the signs of the last days is the persecution of the church.
   2. There is no way that a person can be a genuine Christian and be exempt from persecution.
      1. 2 Timothy 3:12
      2. The Bible-believing Christian may be the most hated and persecuted person on this Earth.
      3. Bible Christians endure everything from the limitations of their freedoms and their civil rights, scorn and ridicule in the media, prison, and death.
   3. Matthew 5:10-14
   4. There is a way to escape persecution:
      1. Just fail to be salt and light.
      2. If we compromise and conform to the world, then we will not be persecuted.
   5. In the Christian life, joy is the thermostat.
      1. We can decide that we are going to live with joy because joy is internal.
         1. It does not depend upon circumstances.
   6. If joy is the thermostat, then persecution is the thermometer.
      1. Persecution shows how we are living for the Lord Jesus Christ.
   7. In today’s message, we will look at three main things concerning persecution that will help us and our children prepare to live in these last days as we get closer to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. we should expect persecution
   1. We are persecuted because of the lifestyle we show.
      1. We are different.
      2. Matthew 5:10
         1. We are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.
         2. The word “righteousness” comes from a Greek word which means “to divide,” “to be different.”
      3. We live in a world that breeds on conformity and inclusivity.
      4. The world does not like people being different, but we are different.
         1. We are children of light; they are children of darkness.
         2. We are alive in the Spirit; they are dead in the Spirit.
         3. We live by faith; they live by sight.
         4. We understand them, but they do not understand us.
         5. We are salt, and salt flavors.
            1. If salt is rubbed in a wound, then it irritates and stings.
         6. We are light, and the Bible says that men hate the light because their deeds are evil.
            1. John 3:19
         7. We are twice-born people in a world of once-born people.
         8. What we have starts at a different source, it follows a different course, and it arrives at a different conclusion.
         9. If we are righteous, then the world will try to dumb us down.
            1. They will try to reach out and claim us.
      5. There is a difference between persecution and punishment.
         1. Some of us are getting what we deserve.
            1. It is just simply punishment.
         2. Punishment comes from good people when we do bad.
         3. Persecution comes from bad people when we do good.
      6. Jesus said that we are to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake and for His name’s sake.
         1. Matthew 5:10
      7. 1 Peter 4:14-15
         1. The reason some people are being persecuted is because they have simply earned it.
            1. They are full of ego, a messiah complex, arrogance, laziness, etc.
            2. Some of us try to witness like a prosecuting attorney.

Jesus did not say that we will be His lawyers.

Jesus said that we will be His witnesses.

Acts 1:8

* + 1. If we are being persecuted, then it must be two things:
       1. It has to be false.
       2. It has to be for His name’s sake.
    2. The word “persecute” literally means “to pursue.”
       1. It doesn’t necessarily mean that they will put us in jail or pour boiling oil on us.
       2. They are going to pursue us.
       3. The idea is of pursuit to find something that we have done wrong.
          1. Luke 6:1-5

The Pharisees were following and watching the Lord Jesus, trying to find something that they could blame on Him.

* 1. We will be persecuted because of the lies that we will suffer.
     1. Matthew 5:11
     2. Lies will be told about us.
     3. The Lord Jesus was crucified because of false witnesses.
     4. The first persecution of the Christians in Rome started when Nero lied and blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians.
     5. We should not believe everything we hear about any Christian.
  2. We will be persecuted because of the Lord that we serve.
     1. This is the main reason why we will suffer persecution.
     2. The devil did not primarily engineer persecution against us.
        1. He is just trying to get at Jesus by getting at us because we are Jesus’ representatives.
     3. Matthew 5:11
     4. If we love Jesus, then we are going to be persecuted.
     5. The name of Jesus is always a point of offense.
     6. The world hates Jesus.
        1. The world does not hate the baby Jesus in the manger.
        2. The world does not hate the Jesus who fed the multitudes, who opened the eyes of the blind, or who healed the sick.
        3. The world hates Jesus for why He came.
           1. He came to destroy the works of the devil.
           2. Jesus and His Kingdom are against liquor, abortion, pornography, pride, racism, hatred, and selfishness.
  3. John 15:19-21
  4. One of the gifts of a Christian is the ability to suffer for Jesus.
     1. Philippians 1:29
     2. If we love Jesus, then we should not complain when persecution comes because of Him.
     3. We should expect persecution.

1. we must endure persecution
   1. There is really no way that we are going to get around it.
   2. How will persecution come?
      1. It may be by personal insult.
         1. Matthew 5:11
            1. They will love to revile us.
         2. We may be made the butt of jokes.
         3. We are going to be ridiculed.
      2. There will be physical intimidation.
         1. Matthew 5:11
         2. The word “persecute” means “to follow,” but sometimes it means “to follow in order to imprison.”
            1. People have been in prison for standing up for the unborn.
         3. There are Christians who have been martyred or killed for Jesus.
            1. Don’t get the idea that the martyrs only lived in yesteryear.
         4. In different parts of the world, Christians have faced prison, torture, and even death.
      3. There will be social injustice.
         1. Matthew 5:11
         2. Mark 13:9-13
            1. In this passage, Jesus is speaking to us today, as well as to those who heard Him say this for the first time.
      4. Persecution will come from the religious world.
         1. Mark 13:9
         2. Don’t get the idea that the religious world honors the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible.
      5. Persecution will come from the governmental world.
         1. Mark 13:9
         2. The governmental system is against what we believe.
      6. Persecution will come from the home.
         1. Mark 13:12
         2. The devil has leveled all of the artillery of Hell against the home.
   3. 1 Peter 4:12
      1. We will have persecution if we live for the Lord Jesus.
2. we can enlist persecution
   1. We can use persecution for the glory of God.
   2. Matthew 5:12
   3. How do we enlist persecution and take what the devil meant for evil and turn it into good?
      1. Reign in life.
         1. Matthew 5:10
            1. If we are saved, then we are in the Kingdom.
         2. There are three levels of life:
            1. The hellish level.

This is when good people are persecuted by bad people for doing good.

This is returning evil for good.

* + - * 1. The human level.

This is returning good for good and returning evil for evil.

* + - * 1. The heavenly level.

Those who are children of the King return good for evil.

* + - 1. Matthew 5:43-45
         1. Verse 43 speaks of the human level of life.
         2. When people persecute us, don’t get even with them.

We are reigning with the Lord.

We are in the Kingdom.

Those who persecute us are either on the human level or the hellish level.

May we not stoop down to their level.

* + 1. Rejoice in the Lord.
       1. Matthew 5:12
       2. Why do we rejoice in the Lord?
          1. We have to earn persecution.
          2. We are not going to be persecuted if we do not live for Jesus.
          3. If we are being persecuted, we can thank God that others can see Jesus in us.
       3. Acts 5:41
          1. The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.
    2. Release love.
       1. We are to keep loving.
          1. This is not sympathy; this is love.
       2. If we do this, then we will be like the prophets.
          1. Matthew 5:12
       3. The word “martyr” and the word “witness” are the same word in the Greek language.
       4. When Stephen was being stoned, love came out of his mouth.
          1. Acts 7:54-60
          2. He began to pray for those who were persecuting and stoning him.
          3. His face shown like an angel, and He saw Jesus standing in Heaven.
          4. Stephen was not ashamed of the Lord Jesus.
          5. There was a man watching all of this, and his name was Saul.

Saul was holding the clothes for those who were stoning Stephen.

Saul hated Christians, but he never got that sight of Stephen out of his mind.

On the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to Saul.

Acts 9:5

There was something “goading” Saul.

It was “a face like an angel.”

Acts 6:15

It was a man who showed supernatural love.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. We are going to be persecuted.
      1. If you are saved, then not only should you expect it and endure it, but you should also enlist it for Jesus.
   2. Stand up for Jesus as soldiers of the cross.
   3. May you never be ashamed of the one who died for you.
      1. Have you met this one who died for your sins?
   4. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   5. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16