**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | Preparing for Persecution |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 5:10 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1665 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. The Beatitudes are attitudes that ought to be the character of a Christian.
   2. Matthew 5:10-12
   3. The Lord Jesus Christ may be coming back very soon.
      1. One of the marks of the last days is the persecution of the saints of God.
      2. We can see it being fulfilled.
   4. There is no way to be a genuine Christian and escape persecution.
   5. 2 Timothy 3:12
   6. We need to prepare our children and our families to live in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to Bible-believing Christians.
      1. You can compromise with this world and go along with this world and not receive any persecution.
      2. The persecution comes to those who live Godly in Christ Jesus.
   7. Matthew 5:12
      1. This verse speaks of joy and persecution.
      2. Joy is the thermostat; persecution is the thermometer.
         1. No matter what happens, the joy of the Lord is there to regulate conditions in our lives.
            1. There is nothing that can take our joy from us.
         2. Joy controls conditions like a thermostat.
         3. Persecution is the thermometer that registers how much we love Jesus.
            1. We can tell whether or not we’re out and out for Jesus Christ by the persecution we receive.
            2. If we’re not encountering any persecution, then we’re doing a poor job.
   8. To suffer persecution does not necessarily mean that we will be thrown into prison or martyred, though that may happen.
      1. The word “persecution” literally means “to pursue.”
      2. They will follow after us in many ways.
         1. We will become the object of jokes.
         2. We will be ostracized socially.
         3. We will be passed up for promotions.
         4. We will be looked down upon as socially inappropriate if we live Godly for Jesus Christ.
            1. If we never take a stand for anything or witness for the Lord Jesus, then we won’t encounter much if any persecution.
2. the reasons for persecution (matthew 5:10-11)
   1. Christians are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.
      1. We are persecuted for what we are; the life we live.
      2. The word “righteousness” comes from a Greek word meaning “to divide.”
      3. Christians are persecuted because, in a very real sense, we are divisive.
         1. We are different.
            1. To divide means to be different.
            2. Christians should stand out like a diamond in a coal mine.
            3. For example, the first seven Beatitudes are very different from the world’s system of operation.

Matthew 5:3

The world tells us to be number one and to assert ourselves.

Humility is laughed at today.

Matthew 5:4

Who in America wants to mourn?

Matthew 5:5

The world tells us to be persons of might and money, but not meek.

The world thinks that meekness is weakness.

The world’s attitude is winner take all.

* + - 1. If we take the first seven Beatitudes and begin living that way, then the eighth Beatitude is guaranteed.
         1. We will be persecuted.
         2. If we’re not living by the first seven, then we’re not going to get number eight.
      2. Children of God are children of light; the world are children of darkness.
         1. We are alive in the Spirit; they are dead in trespasses and sin.
         2. We live by faith; they walk by sight.
         3. We understand them; they do not understand us.
    1. Matthew 5:13-14
       1. Salt irritates when it is poured into a wound, and light reveals.
       2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is an irritant to the putrefying wounds of this world, and it is revealing light to the things of darkness.
          1. Therefore, the world wants to remove that salt and put out that light.
    2. We must be careful not to confuse persecution and punishment.
       1. We are punished by good people when we do evil.
       2. We are persecuted by evil people when we do good.
       3. 1 Peter 4:14-16
          1. Some Christians think that they are being persecuted when they are not; they’re just busybodies.
    3. When Christians are filled with the Spirit, they are going to be supernaturally natural and naturally supernatural.
       1. Don’t go around claiming to be persecuted if you’re not living for the Lord Jesus.
    4. Matthew 5:11
       1. For it to be persecution:
          1. It must be false what they say about you.
          2. It must be for His sake.
  1. Christians are persecuted for the Lord’s sake.
     1. We are persecuted for the Lord we love.
        1. Matthew 5:10-11
     2. This world hates Jesus Christ.
        1. The world does not mind the baby Jesus.
           1. By and large, the world dances around the manger, and the merchants make millions.
        2. This world does not hate the Jesus that healed the sick and fed the multitudes.
        3. The world hates Jesus because He came to destroy the works of the devil.
           1. Pride, racism, abortion, alcohol, pornography, greed, etc.

Jesus Christ stands against these things, and the world is for these things.

* + - 1. John 15:19-20
         1. The world hates Jesus because He is not of this world.
    1. Philippians 1:29
       1. When we receive Jesus, we receive suffering.
    2. A true Christian is persecuted because he is devoted to the Lord Jesus.
    3. 2 Timothy 3:12

1. the result of persecution (matthew 5:11)
   1. There will be personal insults.
      1. Matthew 5:11
         1. They will revile us.
      2. People will laugh at us.
         1. We will be the object of their jokes.
   2. There may be physical abuse.
      1. Matthew 5:11
         1. The word “persecute” means that they will do you harm if they can.
      2. More people died for the Lord Jesus Christ in the twentieth century than in all of the other centuries combined.
   3. There will be social stigma.
      1. Matthew 5:11
      2. In entertainment and the liberal media, the Bible-believing Christian is made to look like some authoritarian bigot or cruel monster or hypocrite.
2. the response to persecution (matthew 5:10-12)
   1. We need to respond like a king.
      1. Reign in life.
      2. Matthew 5:10
         1. We should reign like a king.
      3. When persecuted, never come down to their level.
         1. We are part of a kingdom, and we need to live like it.
            1. We need to walk like it and talk like it.
      4. There are three levels of life:
         1. The hellish level
            1. This level returns evil for good.
            2. This is what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 5:10.

Persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

* + - * 1. These actions come out of Hell itself.
      1. The human level
         1. This level returns good for good and evil for evil.
         2. Most people live on this level.
      2. The heavenly level
         1. The level of the kingdom returns good for evil.
         2. This is the level we are to live on.

When we’re persecuted, learn to return good for evil.

* + 1. Matthew 5:43-45
       1. We are the King’s kids, and we should act like our Father in Heaven.
    2. Don’t get even.
  1. Rejoice in the Lord.
     1. Matthew 5:12
        1. The word “rejoice” literally means to leap and jump, to dance.
           1. You’re so happy that you can’t keep your feet on the ground.
     2. When we realize that someone can finally see the difference in us and have discovered that we are Christians, we should rejoice.
        1. They have identified us with the Lord.
     3. Acts 5:41
     4. 2 Timothy 2:12
  2. Respond in love.
     1. It is much easier to respond in love if we reign in life and rejoice in the Lord.
     2. The world needs love, not what it deserves.
        1. Love is not giving people what they deserve; it is giving people what they need.
     3. Matthew 5:44
     4. Acts 7:54-60
        1. Before he became the Apostle Paul, Saul hated Stephen.
           1. Stephen stood up for the Lord Jesus, and Saul hated him.
        2. As he’s being stoned, Stephen prays for his persecutors, including Saul.
           1. Acts 9:4-5

It was hard for Saul to rebel against what was happening in his heart and life because he saw the love of God released in a man who was persecuted for righteousness’ sake and returned good for evil.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. We are not here in this world to please other people; we’re here to please Jesus.
      1. It doesn’t matter if we please the whole world if we don’t please Jesus.
      2. If we please Jesus, it doesn’t matter whom we displease.
   2. You have an opportunity today to take a stand for Jesus Christ, and receive the Lord Jesus into your life.
      1. Yes, we will receive persecution, but we will also receive joy unspeakable and full of glory.
         1. 1 Peter 1:8
   3. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   4. 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