

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** Preparing for Persecution

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Matthew 5:10

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1665

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The Beatitudes are attitudes that ought to be the character of a Christian.
- b) Matthew 5:10-12
- c) The Lord Jesus Christ may be coming back very soon.
  - i) One of the marks of the last days is the persecution of the saints of God.
  - ii) We can see it being fulfilled.
- d) There is no way to be a genuine Christian and escape persecution.
- e) 2 Timothy 3:12
- f) We need to prepare our children and our families to live in a world that is becoming increasingly hostile to Bible-believing Christians.
  - i) You can compromise with this world and go along with this world and not receive any persecution.
  - ii) The persecution comes to those who live Godly in Christ Jesus.
- g) Matthew 5:12
  - i) This verse speaks of joy and persecution.
  - ii) 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.
      - (a) 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.
      - (a) We can tell whether or not we're out and out for Jesus Christ by the persecution we receive.
      - (b) If we're not encountering any persecution, then we're doing a poor job.
- h) To suffer persecution does not necessarily mean that we will be thrown into prison or martyred, though that may happen.
  - i) The word "persecution" literally means "to pursue."
  - ii) 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.
      - (a) 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)

- a) Christians are persecuted for righteousness' sake.
  - i) We are persecuted for what we are; the life we live.
  - ii) The word "righteousness" comes from a Greek word meaning "to divide."
  - iii) Christians are persecuted because, in a very real sense, we are divisive.
    - (1) We are different.

- (a) To divide means to be different.
- (b) Christians should stand out like a diamond in a coal mine.
- (c) For example, the first seven Beatitudes are very different from the world's system of operation.
  - (i) Matthew 5:3
    - 1. The world tells us to be number one and to assert ourselves.
    - 2. Humility is laughed at today.
  - (ii) Matthew 5:4
    - 1. Who in America wants to mourn?
  - (iii) Matthew 5:5
    - 1. The world tells us to be persons of might and money, but not meek.
    - 2. The world thinks that meekness is weakness.
    - 3. The world's attitude is winner take all.
- (2) If we take the first seven Beatitudes and begin living that way, then the eighth Beatitude is guaranteed.
  - (a) We will be persecuted.
  - (b) If we're not living by the first seven, then we're not going to get number eight.
- (3) Children of God are children of light; the world are children of darkness.
  - (a) We are alive in the Spirit; they are dead in trespasses and sin.
  - (b) We live by faith; they walk by sight.
  - (c) We understand them; they do not understand us.
- iv) 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.
    - (a) Therefore, the world wants to remove that salt and put out that light.
- v) 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
    - (a) Some Christians think that they are being persecuted when they are not; they're just busybodies.
- vi) 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.
- vii) Matthew 5:11
  - (1) For it to be persecution:
    - (a) It must be false what they say about you.
    - (b) It must be for His sake.

- b) Christians are persecuted for the Lord's sake.
  - i) We are persecuted for the Lord we love.
    - (1) Matthew 5:10-11
  - ii) This world hates Jesus Christ.
    - (1) The world does not mind the baby Jesus.
      - (a) 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.
      - (a) Pride, racism, abortion, alcohol, pornography, greed, etc.
        - (i) Jesus Christ stands against these things, and the world is for these things.
    - (4) John 15:19-20
      - (a) The world hates Jesus because He is not of this world.
  - iii) Philippians 1:29
    - (1) When we receive Jesus, we receive suffering.
  - iv) A true Christian is persecuted because he is devoted to the Lord Jesus.
  - v) 2 Timothy 3:12
- 3) THE RESULT OF PERSECUTION (MATTHEW 5:11)
  - a) There will be personal insults.
    - i) Matthew 5:11
      - (1) They will revile us.
    - ii) People will laugh at us.
      - (1) We will be the object of their jokes.
  - b) There may be physical abuse.
    - i) Matthew 5:11
      - (1) The word "persecute" means that they will do you harm if they can.
    - ii) More people died for the Lord Jesus Christ in the twentieth century than in all of the other centuries combined.
  - c) There will be social stigma.
    - i) Matthew 5:11
    - ii) In entertainment and the liberal media, the Bible-believing Christian is made to look like some authoritarian bigot or cruel monster or hypocrite.
- 4) THE RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION (MATTHEW 5:10-12)
  - a) We need to respond like a king.
    - i) Reign in life.
    - ii) Matthew 5:10
      - (1) We should reign like a king.
    - iii) When persecuted, never come down to their level.
      - (1) We are part of a kingdom, and we need to live like it.

- (a) We need to walk like it and talk like it.
- iv) There are three levels of life:
  - (1) The hellish level
    - (a) This level returns evil for good.
    - (b) This is what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 5:10.
      - (i) Persecuted for righteousness' sake.
    - (c) These actions come out of Hell itself.
  - (2) The human level
    - (a) This level returns good for good and evil for evil.
    - (b) Most people live on this level.
  - (3) The heavenly level
    - (a) The level of the kingdom returns good for evil.
    - (b) This is the level we are to live on.
      - (i) When we're persecuted, learn to return good for evil.
- v) Matthew 5:43-45
  - (1) We are the King's kids, and we should act like our Father in Heaven.
- vi) Don't get even.
- b) Rejoice in the Lord.
  - i) Matthew 5:12
    - (1) The word "rejoice" literally means to leap and jump, to dance.
      - (a) You're so happy that you can't keep your feet on the ground.
  - ii) 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.
  - iii) Acts 5:41
  - iv) 2 Timothy 2:12
- c) Respond in love.
  - i) It is much easier to respond in love if we reign in life and rejoice in the Lord.
  - ii) The world needs love, not what it deserves.
    - (1) Love is not giving people what they deserve; it is giving people what they need.
  - iii) Matthew 5:44
  - iv) Acts 7:54-60
    - (1) Before he became the Apostle Paul, Saul hated Stephen.
      - (a) Stephen stood up for the Lord Jesus, and Saul hated him.
    - (2) As he's being stoned, Stephen prays for his persecutors, including Saul.
      - (a) Acts 9:4-5
        - (i) 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.

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) We are not here in this world to please other people; we're here to please Jesus.
  - i) It doesn't matter if we please the whole world if we don't please Jesus.
  - ii) If we please Jesus, it doesn't matter whom we displease.
- b) You have an opportunity today to take a stand for Jesus Christ, and receive the Lord Jesus into your life.
  - i) Yes, we will receive persecution, but we will also receive joy unspeakable and full of glory.
    - (1) 1 Peter 1:8
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) 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.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16