

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

Text: Matthew 5:10-12

Our series: "The Golden Chain" (John Chrysostom)

- Each begins with "Blessed"
 - When we please God through our surrender and obedience to Him, then we ourselves are pleased by His provision...we are blessed
- Week 1: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Realize we bring nothing to our relationship with God.
- Week 2: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
 - When we look at our sin and see it as God does, we should be grieved.
- Week 3: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth
 - Knowing our own spiritual poverty and sinfulness, we submit our life and will to the Lord's control
- Week 4: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
 - Understanding your spiritual bankruptcy, realizing that you've been forgiven for your sin, grasping that only God controlling your life will bring true joy, you seek to have as much of His righteousness in your life as you can
- Week 5: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
 - God expects us to model the same mercy He's given us, through compassion to those who are hurting, forgiveness when we're wronged, and showing kindness and favor because of our love for others.
- Week 6: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God
 - The true follower of Christ has inner moral purity, as opposed to just giving that impression
 - They seek to have total-life consistency and a single-minded devotion for serving God
- Week 7: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
 - True peace can only come through Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace
 - We're called to bring peace to others through leading them Christ, through praying for and serving our enemies, and leading others to reconciliation
 - Our mercy, our desire for purity, and our willingness to be peacemakers should be an outgrowth of our realization of how God saved us in spite of our spiritual bankruptcy.
- The reality is when you surrender to the Lord's will and actually put these into practice in your life, you're going to be very different than 99.9% of the people out there...and in most churches.
- The natural outcome of your difference is our last Beatitude
- Text today includes the Beatitude proper, and Jesus' commentary on that Beatitude

The Persecuted Church

- Persecution = martyr (*martus*: witness)

- Acts 1:8: But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
- Martyr definition (Random House): a person who is put to death or endures great suffering on behalf of any belief, principle, or cause
- Bible puts a sharper point on this...
 - Persecution for righteousness’ sake (v. 10)
 - Sake = “for the cause of” or “on account of”
 - Persecution for Jesus’ sake (v. 11)
 - Jesus promised this in **John 15:18-21**
- What is this persecution?
 - Reviling – being insulted or spoken to abusively...being called names
 - Persecution – to run or flee, as in being chased
 - Many believers around the world are experiencing violence and hardship
 - False accusations
 - Nero blamed the Christians for burning Rome
 - Jesus was falsely accused of having a demon in John 8:48 and 10:20
 - He said in Matthew 11:19, “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”
 - We’re accused of being hatemongers, backwards, hypocrites, and judgmental
- This is to be expected...
 - John MacArthur: “Suffering persecution is part of the normal Christian life. And if we never experience ridicule, criticism, or rejection because of our faith, we have reason to examine the genuineness of it.”
 - John Stott: “Persecution is simply the clash between two irreconcilable value systems.”
 - **1 Peter 3:13-17**
 - Be ready, and have a life that’s so different others take notice
 - When they ask, have something to say

An Unnatural Response

- We’re blessed
- We’re promised the kingdom of heaven
 - The kingdom of heaven is both here and now and also in the future
 - Jesus in Luke 11:20, answering His critics said, “But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.
 - Paul says in Acts 14:22, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”
 - Jesus in Matthew 26:29, during the Last Supper says, “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”
 - The two are connected through the work of the Holy Spirit and the fact that Jesus has left you and me here to bring others to His kingdom

- He tells the disciples in Matthew 16:20, “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
- So there’s both a here and now to the kingdom of heaven, as well as a future promise
- Verse 12...we’re to rejoice and be exceedingly glad
 - Rejoice = full of joy...an attitude, not an emotion
 - Joy = spiritual fruit
 - Driven by our position, not our situation
 - “exceedingly glad” = “with much leaping”
 - **1 Peter 4:12-16**
- We’re looking at a great reward for persecution experienced in the name of Jesus
 - Not for just suffering...it must be for the cause of Christ
 - Weber: “Kingdom honor is not granted as compensation for the unfairness of life, but as a blessing to those who have actively pursued true kingdom righteousness and have been persecuted for it.”
 - Heaven is certainly a great reward
 - Crown of Life
 - James 1:12: Blessed is the man who endures temptation (trials, proving); for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
 - Revelation 2:10: Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
- Not only do we identify with Christ’s sufferings, we also identify with the Old Testament prophets
 - Steven in **Acts 7:51-53**
 - James 5:10: My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

Invitation

- Passage from John Stott
- When you stand up for Christ, when you live for Him and present yourself as not a part of this world, you can expect persecution, even if it’s just name-calling
- When you fit in with this world and present yourself as nothing more than a “quiet witness”, you can expect everybody to leave you alone
- What do you expect?

Let’s pray.