

A Study of the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5-7

Facing Persecution
Matthew 5:11-12

Matthew 5:11-12

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Open Doors says each month:

- 255 Christians are killed
- 104 are abducted
- 180 Christian women are raped, sexually harassed or forced into marriage
- 66 churches are attacked
- 160 Christians are detained without trial and imprisoned

The Bible says:

- **“If one part (of the church) suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).**
- **“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute” (Prov. 31:8).**
- **“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Hebrews 13:3).**

Obligation to the persecuted

- To be informed
- To pray
- To speak up on their behalf
- To use our influence to end persecution
- To hear their testimonies
- To be touched by their faith and courage

1. The Blessing of Persecution

- **“Blessed are you when others revile you” – the joy of knowing we are a problem to Satan.**
- **Persecution is only a blessing if we first fulfill the first seven beatitudes**
- **“They left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:40-42)**

Five Crowns of the Believer

- **Incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25): faithful witness**
- **Crown of rejoicing (1 Thes 2:19): rejoicing in the Lord**
- **Crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8): preaching the Word and love the appearing of Christ**
- **Crown of life (Rev. 2:10; James 1:12): faithfulness in trials and temptation, even to death**
- **Crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4): faithful service to God, by example, not by lording it over others.**

It is all by grace through faith

- **“Neither can you (bear fruit) unless you abide in Me” (John 15:4).**
- **“They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power’” (Rev. 4:10-11).**
- **The highest reward for any believer is to simply hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matt. 25:23).**

2. The Types of Persecution

- Revilings or insults (Matt. 5:11)
- Legal proceedings against (Matt. 5:11)
- Destruction of reputations (Matt. 5:11)
- Tribulation, loss of property, jobs, opportunity (Matt. 24:9)
- Death (Matt. 24:9)
- Hatred (Matt. 24:9)
- Loss of status, legal protection, and inclusion in society (John 16:2)

3. The Company of the Persecuted

- The prophets
- Christ: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first” (John 15:18).
- The persecuted: “So receive (Epaphroditus) in the Lord and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life ...” (Phil. 2:30).