

**A Greater Joy
Matthew 5:10-12**

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 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.

**Dr. Aaron D. Burgner, Senior Pastor
September 29, 2021**

1. What is Christian Persecution?

- 1 Peter 3:14—*But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled*
- 1 Peter 4:12-14—*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*
- 2 Timothy 3:12—*Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*
- *“Because of righteousness”*
 - Not because you’re a Jerk, nuisance, obstinate, difficult, insulting.
 - Joseph Bayly “the Gospel Blimp”
- For Christ Sake!
 - Persecuted for being like him.
 - Not the world with a Christian badge.
- We don’t see persecution here much, because while our country may be slightly more tolerant, it is mostly because we are far more tolerant of the world.
-

2. Do I look like Christ?

- Poverty of Spirit runs counter to the pride of the unbelieving heart.
- The mourning, repentant heart that sorrows over its own sin and the sins of the world, are not appreciated by the lost.
- The gentle and meek person, the one who has strength not to take up a personal offense, is regarded as weak to the lost world.
- Hungering and thirsting for Christ is repulsive to a world that lusts for personal pleasure.

- A merciful person who shows compassion and forgiveness is counter-cultural to a grudge-bearing age.
- The pure, single-minded heart focused on God provides a contrast to a double-minded world.
- The peacemaker who finds peace in Christ bothers a world looking for cheap peace in other persons.
- John 15:18-20—*If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*

3. A greater joy than the world offers is waiting for the church.

- Evidence I am united with Jesus Christ.
 - John 15:19—*If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*
- Evidence that the Holy Spirit is making me new.
 - 1 Peter 1:6-8—*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,*
 - 1 Peter 5:10-11—*And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*
- Reminds me a greater reward awaits.
 - Hebrews 11:26—*He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.*
 - Hebrews 12:2—*looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God*
 - Ex. John D. Rockefeller “he left it all”

- Reminds me that Jesus is near!
 - o Daniel 3