MATTHEW 5:10-12 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED - (SERMON MP3)

(Matthew 5:10) says "Blessed are the persecuted," but are there really persecuted Christians today? Take some time to Google "Christian persecution" and see how this theme has relevance today. Perhaps jot down some of the areas of worst affliction. Maybe read a modern Christian martyr's story and be prepared to share it with the group.

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•	According to (Hebrews 13:3) what should we be doing for the persecuted church?
•	Read (Hebrews 11:36-38) and reflect on your heritage of faith and what it cost those who decided to live righteously for Christ.
	re many Christians who say, "I have been persecuted for my faith" without really understanding what it means to be uted for Christ.
•	Have you ever known an arrogant, obnoxious, rude, cross-grained Christian who labels his poor treatment from the world as "persecution." Wha are your thoughts on that?
•	For what reason should a believer be persecuted, according to (Matthew 5:10)?
•	In (1Peter 4:14), what does Peter say is a legitimate reason for being persecuted? What does verse 15 say we are not to be persecuted for?
	ficult to be indifferent to a wide-awake Christian. You can hate them or love them, but you can't ignore them. They confront with the reality of God and you can't be neutral in such cases. These people must be crowned or crucified." – Clarence Jordan
•	True believers (wide-awake Christians) have never been popular with the people of the world. Our righteousness intimidates them, our boldness annoys them, our refusal to participate in their sin infuriates them, and our love for God mystifies them. What have you done in the last month that has caused anyone to challenge your faith?
•	When have you risked speaking out in favor of righteousness? How have you defended the cause of Christ and the purity of the gospel?
•	What do you do when topics like evolution, abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, materialism, drunkenness, the divinity of Jesus, humanism, and spirituality come to the surface? Do you speak up and speak out for truth and righteousness?

When we get to heaven, no one will ever regret having lived for Jesus while we were on the earth. We'll only regret that we didn't do more. Martin Luther puts it this way, "When we shall live in that day, we shall look with wonder on one another and say, 'Shame, that we were not of better cheer, braver, stronger, and more joyful, to trust Christ, and to endure all tribulations and crosses and persecutions, since this glory is so great."			
Reflect and respond to Luther's quote – what thoughts first come to mind after reading it?			
Read (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) and summarize Paul's view of persecution and suffering. Do you often share that perspective? If not, how do Paul's words challenge or convict you?			
Discuss why some Christians are accepted in society today. How is it that a person can avoid being persecuted by the world?			
What might be true if you are popular with everyone? How do (John 7:7; 15:18-20) inform your answer?			
How do we sometimes justify ourselves when we are afraid to be Christlike?			
Persecution is the Christian's birthmark and badge of courage. It identifies you with the family of God, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It places you in the company of the prophets of old.			
How did Paul describe the "badge of courage" associated with persecution in (Galatians 6:17)? What was his aspiration according to (Philippians 3:10)? Is that yours?			
 According to the following verses, how were the prophets of old treated (Matthew 23:30; 1King 	gs 18:13; 19:10;	Nehemiah 9:26; Jeremiah 26:23).	
The final beatitude forms a cycle of sorts. As you are righteous, the world persecutes you. As a result, God blesses you, which causes you to rejoice. That joy encourages you to continue to live righteously, which in turn prompts the world's persecution and so on	Name	Prayer Need	
Persecution acts as the trigger that causes God to pour out his blessings on your life. If that's true, what should our response be?			
Why does Christ offer no pity toward those who are persecuted for righteousness sake? Look up (Matthew 19:27-29; 2Corinthians 4:16-18) for help. Actually (Philippians 1:29) seems to view suffering as a and according to (1Peter 4:19) Christian suffering is an expression of God's			
What do you think of this quote by Charles Hodge? "Afflictions are the cause of eternal glory. Not the meritorious cause, but still the procuring cause. God has seen fit to reveal his purpose not only to reward with exceeding joy the afflictions of his people, but to make those afflictions the means of working out that joy."			