

FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE

MATTHEW 5:10-12

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¹⁰ Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Introduction:

When considering our righteousness we must consider God. As I often state, "It all begins with God and it all ends with God."

God is righteous. Whatever He does is right!

Psalm 116:5

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

Psalm 129:4

The Lord is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

Psalm 145:17

The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Psalm 18:30

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

Psalm 119:12

Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

Not only is God righteous, but He wants men and women to be righteous.

Psalm 7:11

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

Psalm 11:7

For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

Psalm 92:12

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Proverbs 10:30

The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

Proverbs 14:32

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

We come to the last of these attitudes that should be present in every believer.

Matthew 5:10-12

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. [12] Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

As we have noted over the last several weeks we see clearly a progression in this list of things that should be present in the life of every Christian.

1. Poor in Spirit - Seeing ourselves undone with nothing to offer in need of a Saviour.
2. Being poor in spirit leads to mourning. When one truly sees themselves as they truly are, they can't help but mourn.
3. Being poor in spirit and mourning over that, results in an individual that is meek or teachable.

4. When one becomes meek or teachable they will hunger and thirst after righteousness.

5. As one hungers and thirst after righteousness, they will learn of the mercy of God and therefore will become a merciful person.

6. Again those that are teachable and are hungering and thirsting after righteousness will also do all that they can to be pure in heart.

7. Certainly the pure in heart and those that are hungering and thirsting after righteousness will strive for peace. Once peace has been made with God we enjoy the peace of God.

The eighth beatitude is the one that we will consider today.

Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake

It is interesting that this is the eighth beatitude.

The number eight in scripture is the number of new beginning.

Certainly a new creature should be a righteous individual.

Notice:

1. RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED

Matthew 5:20

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

A. Not self righteousness

2. RIGHTEOUSNESS RECEIVED

2 Cor. 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Romans 4:11

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Romans 4:22

And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS REVILED

Matthew 5:10-11

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Notice the description of this persecution

A. Persecuted

They are persecuted, hunted, pursued, run down, as venomous beasts are, that are sought for to be destroyed; as if a Christian did bear a wolf's head, as an outlaw is said to do - any one that finds him may slay him; they are abandoned as the off scouring of all things; fined, imprisoned, banished, stripped of their estates, excluded from all places of profit and trust, scourged, racked, tortured, always delivered to death, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

We should not think it strange.

1 John 3:13

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

B. Revile

The are reviled, and have all manner of evil said against them falsely.

Nicknames, and names of reproach, are fastened upon them, upon particular persons, and upon the generation of the righteous in the gross, to render them repulsive; sometimes to make them dreadful, that they may be powerfully assailed; things are laid to their charge that they knew not.

All this is for righteousness' sake (Mat_5:10); for my sake, Mat_5:11.

If for righteousness' sake, then for Christ's sake, for he is nearly interested in the work of righteousness.

Enemies to righteousness are enemies to Christ.

Note some who have suffered for righteousness sake.

- Abel

Genesis 4:8

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Matthew 23:35

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto

the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

1 John 3:12

Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

- The Prophets by Jezebel

1 Kings 18:4

For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.

- Gideon

Judges 6:28-32

And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built. [29] And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. [30] Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it. [31] And Joash said unto all that stood against

him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. [32] Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

- Three Hebrew Children
- Daniel in the lion's den
- Joseph in prison
- John the Baptist

Matthew 14:3-12

For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. [4] For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. [5] And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. [6] But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. [7] Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. [8] And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. [9] And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. [10] And he sent, and beheaded John in

the prison. [11] And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. [12] And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

- Stephen (Acts 7)

4. RIGHTEOUSNESS REWARDED

Matthew 5:12

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

- A. Though persecuted, reviled, evil spoken of we are to rejoice.

Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

They have at present a sure title to it, and sweet foretastes of it; and shall ere long be in possession of it.

Great is your reward in Heaven: so great, as far to transcend the service.

It is in Heaven, future, and out of sight; but well secured, out of the reach of chance, fraud, and violence.

Note:

God will provide that for those who lose for him, though it be life itself, they shall not lose by Him in the end.

Heaven, at last, will be an abundant recompense for all the difficulties we meet with in our way.

This is that which has borne up the suffering saints in all ages.