

40 Days With Jesus Jesus on “Standing for Your Faith”

Mt. 5:11-12 – “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Summary

This sermon will focus on the last beatitude: *those persecuted for righteousness*. It is during this message that we will explore our central mission as Christians and why we should expect trials, temptations, obstacles, and persecution in fulfilling this great mission. We will look at several core passages.

Four Facts about Standing for your Faith

Fact #1 – Righteousness Reflects the Savior

- **John 15:18-21** – ¹⁸ “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.
- **Central Theme of Beatitudes = Righteousness**
- **Key Point:** The key fact presented here focuses our attention upon the central theme found throughout a life that is focused on living out the beatitude lifestyle. The central theme of the beatitudes is that of righteousness.

Fact #2 – Persecution Will Come

- **2 Timothy 3:12** – In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...
- **1 Thessalonians 3:3-4** – So that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them. ⁴ In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.
- **Three types of Persecution:** Physical...Verbal Insults...False Accusations
- **Key Point:** The key fact presented here will focus our attention upon the three types of persecution that accompanies living a righteous lifestyle for Jesus Christ. Christians must understand that if we live for Christ while on this earth then we will most certainly face intense persecution.

Fact #3 – Standing for Your Faith is Costly

- **True or False: Living like the world costs you nothing?**
- **Hebrews 11:36-38** - ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins,

destitute, persecuted and mistreated—³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

- **Luke 9:26** – If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.
- **Key Point:** The key fact presented here focuses upon the question posed at the beginning of this section. The fact is that many people start out down the path of a Christian lifestyle but soon they feel the persecution that comes with standing for faith in Jesus. It is easy to simply live by the world's standards and simply blend in. Maybe you will not be persecuted for your faith but God will notice your lack of faith! There are costs associated with living a life of Godliness and righteousness.

Fact #4 – Righteous Living Leads to the Reward

- **Central Question: Why?**
- **Central Answer: The Reward**
- **Mark 10:29-30** – “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.”
- **Romans 8:16-17** – The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
- **Key Point:** The key fact presented here answers the simple question: Why? Why would anyone want to live a life in which they knew that they would be persecuted for living? The answer is the Reward.

Questions to Consider

1. Why does living a Godly and righteous lifestyle cause persecution?
2. What are modern day examples of religious persecution in our country?
3. How do you or would you deal with religious persecution?

Challenge

The challenge will be for each person to pray for and invite a non-Christian friend to the next series, **Good Question**, that will be focused on answering the hard hitting questions the people have always had about Christianity.



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