

05222022 Be revolutionary because Jesus was revolutionary then and he is now...the words he speaks...go against the grain of culture... but Jesus' words are radically different they speak of establishing a culture like no other... in Jesus day the religious and ethnic culture he was a part of were waiting for a messiah...one sent from heaven to free them from the oppression of the Roman occupying army and to loose them from the influence and immorality of the Greek culture..... to reestablish a Kingdom where the religious and national Jews would reign ...the people move from being the weak and oppressed to strong and powerful... We often have similar aspirations...we simply hope to do it our selves or have the government provide...justice and liberty for all!!!

Jesus has just chosen the primary message bearers of his good news about the Kingdom of God....now he goes on to teach them the laws of his Kingdom.... The beatitudes.. how it works...

The word used in the New Testament is not the common Greek word for happiness. It refers to the attainment of an ideal and a goal. Jesus is talking about highest human ideals will be in the future reached in his Kingdom and their fulfillment become normal !

He starts with the entry point qualification

NLT Luke 6: 20 Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.

From Jesus perspective all humans are poverty stricken

- **We are all in a slow but continual state of decaying! We all age until death... And in a spiritual sense everyone is poverty stricken by sin dead spiritually ...suffering its penalty eternal separation from God... death..**
- **When we see ourselves correctly, we become kingdom-fit.**

The Second blessing... we see a broken world and become concerned to do something about it....

NLT LK 6: 21 God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied.

NLT MT 5:6 God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

- **You are hungry now in the present for something that will reach it fulfilment in the future! Justice**
- **When you see your poverty ...you are now able to see the worlds poverty ...of righteousness and Justice ...you begin to long for it... this is what happens to a follower of Christ..**
- **To hunger for righteousness takes one to the next level...to get involved with alleviating injustice...to be moved by injustice...is a God thing... We disciples hunger and thirst for it and we work and pray for it, but we do not see it, not in its fullness, not now. No.**

Which takes us to the *Second part of Luke 6:21..today the third and fourth blessing..*

the Third Blessing... *NLT Luke 6:21God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh.*

Matthew an eye witness says it this way in a little different order:

MT 5: 4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

- **'mourning' is the strongest in the Greek language.**
- **It signifies the devastating grief of the death of our dearly beloved – the experience of deep, profound, heartbreaking, painful, sorrow.**
- **To mourn means to go where it hurts, to enter into the place of pain to understand brokenness, fear confusion, loss and suffering.**
- **Those who mourn are blessed, for "they will be comforted." They will comfort others again!...**
- **Those who mourn are blessed for they recognize what is good. Without loss and mourning we overlook the good we have ...**

One of the outstanding qualities of Jesus is his plain honesty! These disciples are witnessing the massive crowds coming to hear Jesus and be healed of all kinds of infirmities...and the Kingdom he is explain to his disciples is amazing as all are welcome ...they must be thinking man are

we going to be powerful and popular...and Jesus shatters that with his next statements

NLT Luke 6:22 What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. ²³ When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors **treated the ancient prophets that same way.**

Matthew says it this way...

NLT Matt 5:10 God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. ¹¹ "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, **the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.**

The Greek word translated "persecuted" in these verses comes from dioko, which means: "to pursue" or "chase away." "treat in an evil manner." Like Luke says to hate, mock, curse you as evil... it is used of "inflicting suffering on people who hold beliefs that the establishment frowns on, and it is this kind of persecution of which Jesus speaks here.

Jesus' words could be translated, "Blessed are they who have been willing and continue to be willing to allow themselves to be persecuted. For their reward will be commensurate with this perseverance..."

*****What is the Christian being persecuted for? The answer has two parts: 1) Luke says for following Jesus and 2) Matthew says for doing that which is right!." both have the same reward in heaven....it will be great!! When God calls something great...it must be Awesome!!**

And both Luke and Matthew say to remember this fact... the ancients and all his people suffer this way...

I think it is very important for us to be clear about what Jesus is *not* saying, before we consider what Jesus *is* saying.

- **Jesus does not say, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because they bring suffering upon themselves, attack people verbally, or because they are difficult people to get along with, because they are angry and bitter .**
- **That kind of behavior justly brings the ridicule of the world and that is not being persecuted because of doing the right thing**
- **Listen to Peter**

*NLT1 Peter 3: ¹⁵ Instead, **you must worship Christ as Lord of your life.** And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. ¹⁷ Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong*

What Jesus shatters is “The Myth of Popularity in the world and God’s kids have been known to shoot their own over many different things ...”.... The myth of popularity, is the belief that popularity gives me value or shows I am on the right track, or popularity equates to God’s blessing and approval....

In our society human beings are taught that one of the most important things in life is that one needs to be liked...eg. school... **The downfall of popularity causes me to depend upon others for my approval for my own self approval... it does not have to even be group approval , it can be just one person whose approval I need desperately...or I am not ok....all of us have compromised our moral compass to get approval ...**

Jesus tells them if you follow me...you will pay a price...

LK 6:22 Luke 6:22 What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man

- **Hate, exclude, mock or insult and curse you... the reality of the Christian life is that popularity is not what demonstrates value before God. He has already told them...the poverty stricken..**
- **God command to them is follow him!**
- **What happens when you're different? Every kid knows this. When you're different you get picked on!**
- **And if you follow Jesus you will get picked on...your life will challenge the precepts of society...and persecution follows...**
- **The Bible says in many different places, that true disciples of Jesus Christ will be persecuted. It's inevitable. It's just an expected consequence of following Jesus**
- **Being a disciple is not something that will always be pleasing. Jesus says to all of us, "follow me". He doesn't say, "admire me from afar."**
- **However Jesus says in following him we will also receive Payment so they should not be discouraged by that, in fact rejoice**

Luke 6:23 When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

- **Secondly Matthew says**

Matt 5:10 God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

"God Blesses you for the persecution you receive for doing Right! This means Blessed are they who are persecuted because, they are determined to live as Jesus lived doing good."

- **You will find as you go through the Scriptures, and as you study the history of the church, that persecution is not done just by the world.**

- **Many converts to the Christian faith say they get much more opposition from fellow believers than from unbelievers.**
- **Some of the worst persecution has been done by the church itself. Consider our Lord. His persecutors were the Pharisees and scribes and other religious leaders of Israel.**
- **The first Christians, too, were persecuted most bitterly of all by the Jews then the Romans. The reformation and on and on**
- **Jesus was preparing his disciples that they could expect pretty much the same thing. But that they should not be discouraged by that, in fact be Happy**

Matt 5:11..... for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven.

- They possess the Kingdom as their own!!! They are fully vested Mature citizens of the Kingdom “The crown wearers”...

NLT Revelation 2:10 But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life.

*Matt 5:12..... And remember, **the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.***

- **And Remember this is part and parcel for all God’s followers...the prophets continued being prophets no matter the persecution...do the same reap the same rewards**

NLT 1 Peter 2:21 For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.

- **We are not called to persecution, but to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. And the call to follow Jesus, , is a call for us to suffer for ‘righteousness’ in the same way as Jesus did.**

What does following Jesus and doing good look like?

1. Christ suffered in doing good for us...we do good for others and suffer also
2. When We demonstrate our loyalty to Jesus no matter what...we make it easier for others to do the same...
3. We demonstrate our loyalty to Jesus it is a testimony to the unbeliever...

Example..Peter and John on the way to temple...heal a lame man

NLT Acts 4:5 The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. ⁷ They brought in the two disciples and demanded, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people, ⁹ are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? ¹⁰ Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,^{[12} There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

¹³ The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.

¹⁶ "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. ¹⁷ But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in

Jesus' name again.” ¹⁸ So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? ²⁰ We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.”

²¹ The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God ²² for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.

²³ As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. ²⁴ When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: “O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—

²⁹ And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Once you have tasted the fruit of walking with Jesus and being obedient to him...nothing else taste as good...and good fruit comes from our lives...

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had.

- **They became stronger and more united! That is how you overcome evil... To be persecuted for righteousness is evil. When people do evil to us, the temptation is to return evil for evil. But that only serves to strengthen the stranglehold of evil in the world. Continue to do good!! **We are Jesus Revolutionaries****
- **end**

end

That's OK. In fact, congratulations! That's part of being a citizen in the Kingdom and a blessing to this world .

Jesus says, "follow me and do what I do"

This beatitude says that if you are mistreated because you did the right thing, then you are to be congratulated. Your mistreatment is evidence of your citizenship in God's kingdom.

NLT2 Timothy 3: ¹² Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life (do right) in Christ Jesus (following Christ) will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived. ¹⁴ But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught....

- **When We demonstrate our loyalty to Jesus no matter what....we make it easier for others to do the same...**
- following him leads to persecution.
- It leads to misunderstanding.
- It leads to being labeled.
- It leads to losing family and friends sometimes. Some of us know this better than others.
- But in the end it leads to a kind of salvation the world has never seen.

- If we remember that God’s preferential option is with the poor;
- If we remember that God wants the broken healed, the hungry fed... and calls into question the systems we have in place that keep the evil in power;
- If we remember that God wants those who weep now over the plight of the world and to be moved by that pain... and then to laugh again;

Then we will see that we are called to worry more about that than we are to worry about how much people like us.

If you do the right thing, sometimes you will suffer for it. That’s OK. In fact, congratulations! That’s part of being a citizen in the Kingdom and a blessing to this world .

Matt 10:32 “Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

NLT **Revelation 2:10** But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the **crown of life**.

NLT **Galatians 6:9** So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. **At** just the right time we will **reap a harvest** of blessing if we don’t give up.

You will be great in Heaven!! Who cares about what some thought of you on earth!!

end

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²⁵ you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying,

‘Why were the nations so angry?
Why did they waste their time with futile plans?

²⁶ The kings of the earth prepared for battle;
the rulers gathered together
against the LORD
and against his Messiah.’

Matt 10:28 “Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ^[j] ²⁹ What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin^[k]? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

³² “Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

They were a persecuted people for being Jews and Israelites...under the oppression of the roman government, they were persecuted by their own religious people as Jesus said ...

It is what Jesus despised about the Pharisees and teachers of the Law...they appeared Holy, they appeared to know God and care for people but in reality it was play actingand Jesus called them on it... he knew hearts were evil but there acting was righteous...

*MT 23:1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees **sit** in Moses' seat. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Then he goes on to tell his new Apostles and disciples...*

- Before he came, people could get away with hypocrisy, lying, dishonesty, selfishness, greed and all the rest. And they could always point to someone else and say, "well, I'm not as bad as that guy over there."

Followers of Christ will be persecuted. That's the message of the Bible.

*****Point three...** It is surprising to find out who it is that does the persecuting. You will find as you go through the Scriptures, and as you study the history of the church, that persecution is not done just by the world.

Many converts to the Christian faith say they get much more opposition from fellow believers than from unbelievers.

Some of the worst persecution has been done by the church itself. Consider our Lord. His persecutors were the Pharisees and scribes and other religious leaders of Israel.

The first Christians, too, were persecuted most bitterly of all by the Jews. In the Middle Ages and at the time of the Reformation the Roman Catholic Church horribly persecuted those who tried to teach and live the truth of God's Word.

The Anabaptists of the 16th century were persecuted not only by the Roman Catholics but by the Protestants and Lutherans as well. The Puritan Fathers were similarly mistreated by the religious leaders of their day.

So many times, I'm afraid, persecution comes not from the outside but from within. Formal Organized Christianity is often the greatest enemy of pure devotion to Jesus.

*****Point Four** Jesus was preparing his disciples that they could expect pretty much the same thing. But that they should not be discouraged by that.

But rather realize that when they find themselves in that position, they are to be considered blessed. In fact, we find this explicitly in the fourth beatitude, "*Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you, and reject your name as evil.*"

Not because it is a good and noble thing for people to reject you for just any reason. It goes on to tell the reason for that rejection: "because of the Son of Man." The Son of Man being Jesus, himself.

*****Point five** We often think about persecution being for our faith, but in the first instance we'll **often be persecuted simply because we are trying to do the right thing. All because we can't help but speak the truth, even to those in power.**

Being a disciple is not something that will always be pleasing. Jesus says to all of us, "follow me". He doesn't say, "admire me from afar."

He doesn't say "etch me into stained glass."

He doesn't say, "just sing songs about me ...Jesus says, "follow me.and do what I do"

- And following him leads to persecution.
- It leads to misunderstanding.
- It leads to being labeled.
- It leads to losing family and friends sometimes. Some of us know this better than others.
- But in the end it leads to a kind of salvation the world has never seen.
- If we remember that God's preferential option is with the poor;
- If we remember that God wants the broken healed, the hungry fed... and calls into question the systems we have in place that keep the evil in power;
- If we remember that God wants those who weep now over the plight of the world and to be moved by that pain... and then to laugh again;

Then we will see that we are called to worry more about that than we are to worry about how much people like us.

Think about the things that are blessings in your life. What blesses you? Community, jobs friendships, opportunities for service and witness...

Think about the woes: economic hardship, relationships in crisis, war, fractured families, the multiple isms of the world.

- Now think about them from the point of view of the discipleship that Jesus was suggesting.
- You see, he was not just saying some people are blessed and some people are cursed in an abstract way, he was saying that he knew some people who thought they were blessed were actually cursed and those who never ever saw themselves as worthy had God's favor, God's second chance get it.

John 15:20-23:

"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.

There are three things that we can achieve by our willingness to suffer persecution for righteousness.

1. We can overcome evil; by being salt and light
2. we can accomplish good;
3. and we can witness powerfully to the way of Christ.

Firstly, we can overcome evil. To be persecuted for righteousness is evil. When people do evil to us, the temptation is to return evil for evil. But that only serves to strengthen the stranglehold of evil in the world. So, we are explicitly instructed not to return evil for evil under any circumstances. (Rom.12.17) *Instead of reacting to evil, we are expected to absorb evil,*

without reacting, and thus destroy its power. ‘ Do not resist evil. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.’ (Matt.5.39)

As Gale Webbe says, ‘There are many ways to deal with evil. All of them are facets of the truth that the only ultimate way to conquer evil is to let it be smothered within a willing, living, human being. When it is absorbed there, like a spear into one’s heart, it loses its power and goes no further.’ Those who ‘turn the other cheek’ when they are persecuted for righteousness, as Christ said, are blessed because when they absorb the insult and the injury, ‘like a spear into one’s heart,’ the evil ‘goes no further’. ²

Secondly, we can accomplish good. In an evil world, we are ever free to do the good, if we are prepared to suffer persecution for righteousness.

Viktor Frankl, says what he observed as a Jewish psychiatrist in a German concentration camp was, that if we compromise our values in the hope of staying alive at any cost, we lose our souls and become ‘zombies’; but if we have a steadfast bottom line of righteousness we will not compromise - even if it means being killed - we are blessed because we can be true to ourselves and preserve our humanity. ³

Thirdly, we can witness powerfully to the way of Christ. A movement, which is worth dying for, may lay claim to be worth living for. *Our suffering can reflect the way of Christ, that is the only beacon of hope for compassion in the dark corners of our society and world*

Christ says those of us who are ‘persecuted because of righteousness’ are blessed, because though we may not be honored for our quest for justice now, we will be honoured in the world which is to come.

Is Jesus Christ seen in your character?

So my challenge for you this morning is to ask: "have you ever put the principles of Christ's righteousness into action: in your home, your job, your neighborhood or wherever? How can you do that in your different settings?

Why not ask God to search your heart and reveal to you how you might become more obedient in this way.

pray

- *because you follow Jesus.*

- **pursue righteousness.**

There are three unavoidable results of pursuing popularity.

First, it promotes envy. When I pursue popularity I am always, consciously or subconsciously, comparing myself to others and seeing the areas where I feel I fall short.

Second, it take my time and energy to maintain it. Popularity wanes when I am silent, so I must act to maintain it....popularity must include self promotion...

The downfall of paopularity causes me to depend upon others for my approval. There are celebrities who are always reading their own publicity, trying to keep up with how the press regards them. The popularity of a celebrity depends entirely on the approval of others.

A man named Tim Burke, a pitcher for the Montreal Expos and the New York Mets. Tim and his wife had chosen to adopt several troubled children and he came to a point in his life where he realized that his career was keeping him from his family. If he was going to prioritize what was truly most important in his life, he was going to need to retire from the game. So while his career could have lasted for many more years, and he could have earned a lot more money, Burke retired.

His popularity immediately declined so that few people remember him. He has done nothing to maintain his popularity. But surely his pursuit of more noble goals has paid dividends. **Burke got to a point where he realized that Major League Baseball would be able to get along just fine without him, but his family could not, and that made his decision simple.**

It is easy for us to believe that our value is tied directly to our popularity. But from Jesus' teaching we know that this is not the case.

Those who have the most value are those who chase harder after righteousness. Those who pursue righteousness are counted as most blessed.

let us value what God values. Let's give honor to those who pursue righteousness and not confuse value with popularity. Let us not be, hostage to what others think of us, for other people's opinions change like the weather.

Instead, let us heed the words of the apostle who says:

RO 12: 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt.5.10)

****Point one** I think it is very important for us to be clear about what Jesus is *not* saying, before we consider what Jesus *is* saying.

- Jesus does not say, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because they create offense, because they are difficult people to get along with, because they lack in wisdom and are really foolish and even dumb in what they do."
- There is no need to elaborate on this because we all know Christians who bring suffering upon themselves.
- Jesus does not say, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because they are fanatics." Fanaticism can so easily lead to persecution.
- God spare us from all fanatics, whether they be Muslim, Hindu, New Age, or Christian. Fanatics damage any cause and in the church they bring shame upon the name of Christ.
- **What this means is that there is not a promise of happiness for those who are persecuted for just being annoying or a general nuisance.**
- Sometimes we suffer because we bring it on ourselves. It makes me cringe when I hear a born again leader in government or a publicly known church leader open their mouths and say backward, stupid, gullible, nave, prudish, judgmental, insensitive and cruel things about other people. That kind of behavior justly brings the ridicule of the world and that is not being persecuted because of doing the right thing or because of having a relationship with Jesus. Again, Peter says,

1 Peter 3:15-16 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with

gentleness and respect, [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

- **Example...** Standing around our old church...pushing tracts on people...shouting at people..
- A preaching instructor in seminary used to listen to students' sermons on audio recordings from his students, He tells of the time that he was talking with a student pastor who was bragging about the loss of members in his church since he arrived as the church's pastor. He told the professor that the reason the people were upset and leaving was because he was a "Tell the Truth" preacher. The professor quickly responded to this student preacher by saying, "no, based on what I heard on your messages, it's because you're full of spiritual pride."
- Remember what Jesus said?

MT 10: 16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

- And Jesus does not say, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because they do wrong." You should remember the wise words of Peter:

1PE 4:15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler

****Point two**

.Now, at no point in the Beatitudes is it more important to attempt to carefully understand what is meant by Christ's words, than in Luke 6: 22 and Matthew 5:10.

In fact, there is probably no beatitude which has been more often misunderstood and misapplied than this one.

What is the Christian being persecuted for? The answer to that strikes at the heart of His teaching.

The answer rests in the phrase: "for righteousness' sake" or "for righteousness" And for following him."

So, the Scripture is **not** saying: "Blessed are they that are persecuted," as if Jesus was blessing any persecution that might ever occur at any time.