

Mathew 5:10 10 **“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Actions motivated out of love for those around us, are not always well-_____. And it is this very action of peacemaking between God and man which is the _____ most likely to result in people coming against you. Rather than describing a further characteristic of a Citizen of Heaven, it describes the _____ of this life, in terms of the world’s reaction to it.

They who are Persecuted

The Beatitudes put a _____ up to us as we live our lives in Christ to let us see how we are doing. That’s why people try to _____ them away and minimize them as a simple guide to moral living, or a list of things to do as a Christian, or even pictures of what the Christian life is supposed to look like. It’s a lot _____ to set them up as an ideal, than to realize that Jesus expects us to live them out.

For Righteousness Sake

This is the _____ phrase in this scripture. Sometimes, we as Christians call persecution down on our own heads by either our _____ flaws, or our _____ actions, and this is not persecution for righteousness’ sake.

When we are offensive, the _____ lies in us, and we must pray that God changes our heart to be better servants of His. When the offense is _____ of the Gospel, we must pray that God changes their hearts and makes them _____ to receive. Either way, the answer is the same—_____ that God changes hearts to look more like Jesus’.

When Peter is encouraging us in times of persecution, he is also very quick to warn us in 1 Peter 4:15 to **Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;** In other words, make sure that you don’t do things _____ of judgement.

True persecution for Righteousness’ sake

Being righteous, the righteousness that comes from the inside out is being like Jesus. And so, being persecuted for righteousness’ sake is being persecuted for His sake, for being _____ Him, _____ with Him.

You can do all the good _____ you want, and the World will _____ you for it. But do that same good work and give God the _____, and you will find that those same people who were so willing to glorify you for your good works, will refuse to glorify God.

When we are persecuted for our identity with Jesus, our claiming Him and _____ to be like Him, then we are in Good Company. Remember Jesus’ words in John 15:18-20 **18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.**

The identification with _____ is the issue. Have you ever noticed that people don’t seem to get all that upset when you mention God, or even thank Him, but when you mention Jesus, they suddenly start taking _____?

Because we are His, and are living for Him, and not the world’s system, we are hated. We are chosen _____ of the world.

Since Jesus points to Himself as the ultimate example of persecution for righteousness' sake, and our _____, it's important to understand just why was Jesus crucified. Jesus was killed for two primary reasons. The first, and most important was that He chose to _____ God's plan for His life completely, and this plan included His _____ on the cross for our sins. And the second reason had to do with the motivation to murderous _____ on the part of the religious authorities. They were _____ and envious with a spiritual jealousy that motivated them. Even Pilate knew that the motives of the religious leaders for handing Jesus over to be crucified were rotten. Mathew 27:18 says **18 For he knew that it was because of envy that they had handed Him over.**

Now the reason why it was the Jews who kept rising up against the Christians, is that the Jews knew _____ what Jesus was claiming, and they did not want to _____ to God, but rather wanted to keep their traditions which kept them in power. Those amongst the _____ who tended to rise up were often those committed to the worship of false Gods, and so had their own _____ of spiritual jealousy to deal with.

Persecution is expected

God does not want us to be _____ when these kind of things happen, because when we're surprise, we're caught off-guard, and can become downcast, and start _____ God.

We are to keep on _____. Persecutions are part of the Christian life.

Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Promise to those who have recognized that they are poor in Spirit and come to Jesus on His terms, is _____ to those who endure persecution—Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. The promises in the beatitudes start and end with being Citizens of Heaven.

Keep your eyes on the prize—Jesus

Being continually in the presence of Jesus will be the _____ prize.

Keep your eyes on the prize—Heaven

Our inheritance, in terms of our reward in eternity is closely linked to our willingness to _____ ourselves closely with Jesus in this life, and indeed to how much we _____ for Him in this life. Keep the _____ in persecution.