

The Sermon on the Mount

Part 4

- I. Introduction
 - a. By now, I think we have realized that Jesus' teaching is a life changing message
 - i. As Jesus distinguishes between His followers and the world, we find challenging truths which push us to strive harder to serve
 - ii. Oh, the impact this sermon must have had on those that heard it
 1. And yet, the full impact is felt by us today when the Spirit applies it to our hearts
- II. Commentary
 - a. **Verse 10**
 - i. *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake..."*
 1. In a day when popularity is vitally important to both parents and children, Jesus says those that are not popular by the world's standard are blessed
 - a. Jesus said, *"If you were of the world the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"* (**John 15:19**)
 - i. When we seek to be accepted by the world, we conform to their standard
 - ii. We must always seek to please our Heavenly Father
 2. In a society where bullying is condemned (as it should be), Jesus says that when we are *"persecuted for righteousness' sake"*, we are blessed
 - a. Peter and the other apostles rejoiced *"that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"* (**Acts 5:41**)
 - i. Are we so devoted to follow Jesus that we would rejoice in suffering for Him?
 3. A point of distinction should be made here
 - a. This is suffering *"for righteousness' sake"*
 - i. We live in a day when much venom is spewed from pulpits across America
 1. Because of this, many Christian groups are disliked by our society
 - a. This is NOT what Jesus is referring to
 - b. This is an instance of being disliked because of a bad attitude
 2. If we are not cautious, we can even speak the truth in a hateful manner

- a. This is not the teaching of the Bible
(**Ephesians 4:15**)
 - ii. If we suffer because we love God, love our neighbor and share the truth in love, this is what Jesus means
 - 1. When we are disliked, we must always examine if we have acted properly in it
 - 2. Remember, Jesus did not provoke the Jews to hate Him
 - a. They hated Him because His life condemned theirs
 - ii. *“For theirs is the kingdom of heaven”*
 - 1. We must remember that our citizenship is in Heaven (**Philippians 3:20**)
 - a. This alone should keep us encouraged
 - 2. Though the world system would love to eradicate Christians off of this earth, it’s of no eternal consequence
 - a. This life is a vapor (**James 4:14**), the next life is eternal
 - i. If we keep an eternal perspective, any amount of persecution in this life is insignificant no matter how uncomfortable it may be
- b. **Verses 11-12**
 - i. *“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake”*
 - 1. Much has been said about this in the previous point as these two beatitudes are closely related
 - 2. Notice again though, these evils that the world speaks of should be false
 - a. If the world labels us a hypocrite and we are, then this beatitude doesn’t apply
 - b. If the world labels us as being full of hate and bitterness and they are right, this beatitude doesn’t apply
 - ii. *“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”*
 - 1. Rejoice in persecution?
 - a. This is the instruction from our great Savior and Leader
 - i. He *“for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross”* (**Hebrews 12:2**)
 - 1. Christ’s joy in enduring the cross was what came afterwards
 - a. Let this be our attitude as well
 - 2. The persecution of God’s children is nothing new
 - a. But we must remember, Heaven awaits us and God’s vengeance on those that persecute His own await them (**Revelation 6:10; 18:20; 19:2**)