

Sermon: The Privilege of Persecution

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[0 : 00] All right, if you've got your Bible, go to Matthew chapter 5.

Matthew chapter 5, are you ready for the final beatitude? I hope that the music tonight has served you well to now some of you. I don't know whether to call you jerks for Jesus or what, but some are anticipating the fact that I'm about to make you stand.

But I hope that you are well. Go ahead and just stand, all right? Here we go. I hope you have been well served in the music tonight as we prepare for God's Word and thinking about the mighty fortress that is our God.

You know, some of the songs like that were written out of some of the most scary moments in people's lives, and they had to just acknowledge the battle is his. It's not mine. My life is his, and so whatever he does with it is well.

And so let's have that mindset as we come tonight to this final beatitude here in Matthew chapter 5. We'll do as we've been doing each week and read the whole passage, but focus primarily on verses 10 through 12.

[1 : 28] And we're going to wrap up the beatitudes tonight, and then since we're just a few weeks from Easter, have an Easter focus, and then pick up the Sermon on the Mount again after Easter.

So let's look tonight, Matthew 5, verse 1. It says, Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. He opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

And blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you, persecute you, utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account, rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

[2 : 45] For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Pray with me. Let's ask God to teach us tonight and have a word for his church. God, thank you for the privilege now to look to your word, to learn from it.

And we know that we, in our darkness, cannot receive the light unless the Spirit opens our eyes to see it. And so, Spirit of God, we would ask you tonight to please do that.

Help us see the good life, the blessed life, because it's not how we tend to think about it. And may we not only see it, may we embrace it by faith, rejoice in it, and God, see it as what you've called us to each and every day.

So we give you thanks in advance for what you're going to do in our lives and in our hearts as a result of being in your word tonight. And we pray it in Jesus' name. And God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. Well, they're probably the most famous family to ever come out of Louisiana. I'm talking about the Robertson family.

[3 : 50] You remember these bearded dudes from the TV show Duck Dynasty. It was a TV show that back in its fourth season set a record for the most watched non-fiction series with 12 million viewers.

It was more than a million and a half viewers than the top network shows at that time. And if you ever watched one of the episodes, you probably wondered, why is this so popular?

Why are people tuning into this? All they do is hunt and fish and act goofy and make fun of Uncle Si. That's pretty much the show. And one writer from the National Review had an idea as to why

this show was so popular in American culture.

He wrote, quote, They are fun-loving, dedicated to the notion of family. And each show ends around the dinner table with three generations side by side with the family patriarch leading in prayer.

That is what made Duck Dynasty different than anything else on TV, close quote. I mean, as you know, many of you know this by now, that Robertsons are a family of faith.

[5 : 04] They're very outspoken about their Christian belief, which made them the center of controversy with the producers of the show. For example, Phil Robertson, the dad of the whole group, he was interviewed by the Christian Chronicle.

And he talked about how when they were filming the episodes for the show, the producers would always cut out anything related to the Christian faith.

Like, for instance, in Jesus' name, in the closing prayer of the show. Here's what Phil said. Notice this quote on the screen. Phil said this, quote, They pretty much cut out most of the spiritual things. We say them, but they don't run them on the show. And look at this last line. Hollywood has run upon the kingdom of God, and there's a rub.

Hollywood has run upon the kingdom of God, and there's a rub. Faith family, you and I all know this to be true. We know that when two things of different values come into contact with one another, there's always a rub.

[6 : 17] Always. I mean, for instance, try being the only Viking fan at Lambeau Field. There's a rub. Watch the State of the Union address.

Notice how half the room will stand and applaud and half the room will remain seated. There's a rub. There's a rub. Do premarital counseling for people that were raised on very different values. There's a rub. Or be a person of integrity in a cutthroat industry. There will be a rub. Everybody in this place and watching online, you know this.

When two opposing values come into contact with one another, there is always, to one degree or another, a rub. That rub, that tension, that friction is exactly what Jesus is teaching us here in this final beatitude.

Look at it here in chapter 5, verse 10. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[7 : 24] Now, as we have seen with so many of the other beatitudes, most of them on the surface don't make sense. Most of them leave you wondering, like, what are you talking about, Jesus?

Blessed, the good life are the oppressed, the harassed, the verbally and physically abused, the misunderstood and mistreated. Nobody thinks this way.

People will write songs, as we noticed last week. Give peace a chance. Have you ever heard a song that said, give persecution a chance?

Nobody writes that song. You will see bumper stickers that say, blessed are the peacemakers.

Have you ever seen a bumper sticker that says, blessed are the persecuted? Probably not.

Because this is not how we typically think. Jesus, once again, as he's been doing every week in the Sermon on the Mount, he's teaching us a different way to think about the good life.

[8 : 21] Did you hear that, faith family? He's teaching us a different way of thinking about the good life, the blessed life. It's not what you think. You tend to have certain ideas about what the good life is, but that good life isn't the kingdom life.

The kingdom life, the good life, goes in contrary to the way the world thinks. Blessedness is found. So let's look first here at the certainty of persecution.

Let's unpack this final beatitude. What does Jesus mean by persecution? Blessed are those who are persecuted. What does he mean? Let's look at verse 11.

Chapter 5, verse 11 says, blessed are you when others revile you. There's one. Persecute you. There's two. Utter all kinds of evil against you falsely.

On my account, there's three. The word reviled means scolded or complained against. The word persecuted means slander.

[9 : 22] Utter. The phrase utter evil falsely is to lie about or falsely accuse. So while certainly, and historically it's been the case, Christians have been physically persecuted, Jesus here is really primarily talking about verbal opposition, verbal persecution.

Of course, physical persecution is a part of it, but that's not really the primary way Christians are persecuted or the most normal way. And of course, it's not a bold statement to say that Christians are persecuted, right?

We know this. I could give you stats on martyrs who have died for the faith. But the bold statement isn't Christians are persecuted. Here's the bold statement.

You might want to listen to this. You're not a Christian if you're not persecuted. Now I have your attention. The bold statement isn't Christians are persecuted.

The bold statement is if you do not, if you've never been persecuted for your faith, you're probably not a Christian. Jesus here, hang with me.

[10:31] I feel the tension and I love it. Jesus is not saying you're blessed if you just so happen to face persecution in life. No, no, no. Jesus is teaching that a true disciple will face persecution.

I'm not suggesting that you're saved by faith plus persecution. I'm not a faith plus works guy. Amen? We're a faith alone people. But what I'm saying is if you have faith and that faith works itself out, guess what's coming?

Persecution. They go together. Now let me prove this to you from the text because I don't want to make such a bold statement and not be able to back it up. Here's the first reason why I would give you that Jesus is saying not just that Christians are persecuted, but that you're not a Christian if you don't experience persecution.

And the first would be the structure of the Beatitudes. Remember that the Beatitudes is a unit. Anybody remember the technical name? It's an inclusio. That's right. A plus.

On your sermon notes, right. A plus. Good job. It's an inclusio. All that means is that the Beatitudes go together. In fact, the first one ends with theirs is the kingdom of heaven in verse 3.

[11:47] And then ours tonight in verse 10. The last one ends with for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The structure is these aren't eight different people. It's one kind of person, namely a follower of Jesus.

They all go together. You don't get to just pick and choose. I want the mercy one. I don't want the meekness one. I want the peace. I don't really want the persecution.

You can't do that. The text doesn't allow you to do that. So the structure would be one reason why I say Jesus is saying you must face persecution if you are a Christian. And secondly is the flow.

Remember we've shown you every single week how one builds on the next, which builds on the next, which builds on the next. So notice how these beautifully go together. It's by God's grace that you see your spiritual bankruptcy.

You realize you don't have a penny to your name spiritually. You cannot save yourself. There is nothing whatsoever that you can do to make yourself right with God. And because of that reality, you mourn.

[12:46] You are broken. You go to the funeral of self. Because you realize you can't save yourself. And you're in a position of humility and meekness before others and before God.

Because you realize this poverty. And you're starving for acceptance. And you're starving for a righteousness that you know you don't have. So you have to look outside yourself to the righteousness of Christ.

And it's there that you experience mercy. Big buckets of mercy that God pours on your head. And you know that because you're merciful to others.

And your life has now become fully devoted to God alone. Sure, you wrestle with other gods and idols in your life. But the one you want most is God. He's the love of your heart.

So much so that you can't help but tell other people about him. You're a peacemaker. You want other people to have the peace that you have. And so you do the work of evangelism.

[13:44] And the result of peacemaking is going to be to some degree persecution. If you get out there in between people who are in hostility to God, you will take it on the chin in some way.

Because when two different values come together, there's always a rub. There's always a tension. There's always some level of persecution.

Faith family, as you live for Jesus, in a culture that doesn't believe in Jesus, there is going to be a rub. So the structure proves my argument.

The flow of the passage proves the argument. And then here's the third, and maybe it's the most convincing. The rest of the New Testament attaches persecution to our living out our faith.

It's not an if, it's a when. Jesus said to the disciples, in this life you will have tribulation. Hang with me, put your seatbelt on, here we go. Listen to what Peter says in 1 Peter 4.

[14:51] What does that sound like?

Matthew 5, doesn't it? Rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rest upon you.

Paul says this to the church at Philippi, Philippians 1, 29, For it has been granted to you for the sake of Christ that you should not only believe, but suffer for his sake.

To the church in Thessalonica, Paul writes 2 Thessalonians 1, verse 4, We boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring.

To the church at Antioch in Acts 14, verse 22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

[16:03] Are you tracking with me? Why not one more? To young Timothy, Paul says this in 2 Timothy 1, 12, All who desire to live a godly life in Christ, say it with me, will be persecuted.

It's not if, it's when. Or you're not a Christian. If you never experience a rub, tension, friction, because you are devoted to God, it's likely you're not devoted to God.

Talk about a powerful ending to the Beatitudes. Of course, Jesus is preparing His disciples for what's to come, because expectations matter.

This is the normal part of the Christian life. And here's the thing, Faith Family, are you with me tonight? This is the good life! And you're like, not how I define the good life.

I don't care how you define the good life. This is how Jesus defines the good life. And He defines life. Amen? And He is saying, blessed are those who are persecuted.

[17:17] He's setting our expectations up for what life will be like. And you do this all the time. You check with the weatherman to get the forecast before you go out. Look at those beautiful temperatures. Clearly, that's not Minnesota.

Or you ask an employer to give you a job description, so you know what the expectations are for the job. Or a doctor will outline the procedure. We're going to do this, and here's how long the recovery will take.

Or a coach will share the other team's patterns. This is what they do to start the game. Why? Because expectations are crucial. And so Jesus is teaching the disciples here, and He's teaching us here to say, listen, as you go out as peacekeepers in the world, you will be persecuted.

You're going to take it on the chin. But guess what? That's the good life. Blessed are you. Let's keep going. Notice verse 10 again.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And so now we would see in this beatitude the cause of persecution, why this persecution is happening.

[18:24] The phrase here, for righteousness, is such an important phrase. Because you can be persecuted for a lot of things that have nothing to do with Jesus. Amen? You can take it on the chin for a lot in life.

That doesn't necessarily mean it's for good reason. You may just be a jerk. You may just be, you know? You may just be one of those people that like to stand before you're ready to stand and reach.

I'm just kidding, all right? No. You may just be, I love y'all. You know I love y'all. But seriously, this is an important point. Sometimes we're persecuted for self-righteousness' sake, not righteousness' sake.

And this is a very important distinguishing point here in the text. So what is this for righteousness? Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness. Look at verse 10 again.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And then add verse 11. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter evil against you falsely on my account, on my account.

[19:29] So meaning on the account of Jesus. Okay, so I've got to question Jesus. Which is it? Am I being persecuted for righteousness' sake or for Jesus' sake?

The answer is yes. They're both the same. Because you remember, hello, back earlier in the Beatitudes, what's the righteousness that we were starving for?

What's the righteousness that we do not have? It's the righteousness of Christ. We look outside ourselves and are hungering and starving for righteousness and we're fulfilled in the bread of life,

Jesus.

So on his account, his life is the same righteousness we're starving for earlier in the Beatitudes. So what we're being persecuted for is that as we grow in grace and grow in Christ and Christ-likeness begins to surface in our life, it begins to be lived out, on that basis we take it on the chin.

Are you with me? It's the righteousness of Christ that's coming out in me. I'm doing things clearly not perfectly and not all the time, but there are times in which Christ's life is coming out.

[20 : 48] And when that happens, that, on the basis of that, gets persecuted. That's the reason why I'm persecuted, which might raise this question. Are you tracking with me mentally? Are you thinking like, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute.

You're telling me if I lived like Jesus, I would be hated? I mean, I thought Jesus was the God of love. Right? Doesn't Jesus, I mean, don't you want to ask, wait a minute, if I live like Jesus, won't I attract more people rather than be persecuted by more people?

Isn't my life supposed to shine forth light, verse 16, in the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven? Don't you see? Aren't we just supposed to be these beaming lights where everybody's just like, oh, you're amazing, and Jesus is amazing, and life's amazing, and I just want to spend amazing time with, isn't that how people would, no, not at all.

Think about it. If you take an honest look at the Gospels, Jesus attracted people, and he repelled people, didn't he? There were people that hated him, and there were people that followed him wherever he went.

[22 : 09] The same was true with the early Christians, the apostles. The text in Acts says they had favor with men, Acts chapter 2, and they were persecuted, Acts chapter 5.

Here's the point, faith family. When you live like Jesus, when his righteousness is expressed in your life, you will attract some people, and you'll be persecuted by others.

Notice this on the screen, okay? If you are all attraction, you're probably a coward. And if you're all repelling, you're probably a jerk.

I mean, if you're going to be like Jesus, his righteousness on his account, because Jesus didn't repel everybody, amen, but he also didn't attract everybody.

He attracted some and repelled others, which would then raise the question, well, who did Jesus attract, and who did he repel? Well, let me give you the two categories of people that were most persecuting of Jesus.

[23 : 13] The two groups that hated Jesus the most, and we'll see if this is true in our lives as well. Here's the first. The strict irreligious.

The strict irreligious. That is, people that don't want anything to do with God. They don't want anything to do with his ways. They want to be left alone to live their life their way. When you speak on the issue of hell or life, or when you say something like this, Jesus is the only way.

There are going to be people that hate that, amen? When you say, listen, Jesus said there's no other way to the Father but through him. He is the only way. Your response, or some people's response is going to be, nope, I have no toleration for that at all, and you'll feel the rub.

But there's a second group that Jesus always experienced persecuted with, and you know this. It's the strict religious. The Pharisees. The scribes. People like that.

The people that have their list of rules, and their way of doing church, and they want to maintain a culture of Christianity. Listen, when you start going against their legalism, when you start breaking their codes, when you start going against their policies, when you threaten their authority, when you go against whatever rules they've made up, trust me, there will be a rub.

[24 : 36] But what they don't realize is that many churches are settling for a comfortable Christianity, and what they don't realize is their comfortable Christianity is captivity to the law. You just sit and dwell on that for a minute.

Their comfortable Christianity is nothing more but captivity to the law. So when others start living free, I mean the freedom of the gospel, and now your life has been set free from the law, but not free from Christ, free to Christ, guess what?

The people that are holding tight to the law won't stand you. And you'll feel the rub. So it's an evaluation for us to say, when I am a peacemaker, when I am proclaiming my faith, there's going to be some people that don't want to hear that, and there's going to be some that the freedom of the gospel is going to so threaten their captivity to the law, they'll want to crucify you too.

Just like they did Jesus. So when your life upsets the irreligious of the world and the religious in the church, take it from Jesus and the apostles.

You're living the good life. Amen? Are y'all with me? Am I the only one excited about this? All right? This is the good life. The good life is making Pharisees mad.

[26 : 04] I drink to that. I didn't say that. Okay, that did not come out of my mouth. All right? Listen, the tragedy here, listen, in all seriousness, the tragedy is not that we're facing too much persecution.

It's that most of us are facing too little. Just be very honest. The sad reality is not that you and I are facing too much persecution. It's that we're not facing enough.

We're settling for comfort rather than the calling of blessed are the peacemakers. So the cause here is the righteousness of God.

It's on His account. And when that happens, irreligious people don't like it and religious people don't like it. But you will attract a lot of broken people.

And I didn't plan this. I've said several things I didn't plan. Let me just take a moment. This is the beauty of Faith Family Church is that we want to attract broken people. We want to see Pharisees repent and believe too.

[27 : 05] Amen? But we don't care if we make you Pharisees mad. We have recognized our spiritual poverty. And we have recognized that we don't have a penny to our name.

And if you are penniless spiritually as well, guess what? You really are welcome here. You really are welcome here. We want to attract and repel for righteousness' sake.

Amen? Amen. All right. I ain't done. Verse 12. Last point here. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. So the last point here is the comfort of persecution. Jesus says, when this happens in your life, rejoice.

It's strange. I know. It's not the response you do. When you take it on the chin for Jesus, does anybody go home and say, woohoo! It's the good life, man.

[28 : 12] No. Very few of us do that. But Jesus says you should. You should rejoice. Not in arrogance at all. Rejoicing in that you're being faithful as a witness to the gospel.

Because you face persecution for the right reasons, and I continue to emphasize that, you can be assured of two things. This is your comfort. Number one is that you have a great reward.

That's what Jesus says. You get the kingdom of heaven. Not that boring place you were taught about growing up that you go when you die. I'm talking about the place where God is that is always exciting and always full of God.

You get God. The true Christian will joyfully suffer persecution for Jesus because their reward is Jesus. They get more Jesus. And would you trade an easy life for eternal life with Jesus?

We would give up the easy life for the eternal life with Jesus every day and twice on Sunday. This is what the apostle Paul did. Philippians chapter 3, verse 8.

[29 : 20] Come on. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ my Lord. For His sake, I have suffered the loss of all things.

And I count them as rubbish in order that I might gain Christ and be found in Him. Not having a righteousness of my own, sounds like the Beatitudes, that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God that depends on faith that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share in His sufferings becoming like Him in His death.

Do you see what Paul was saying? That's beautiful, isn't it? The comfort I have as I'm taking it on the chin for Jesus is Jesus. I consider, sure, I could have gotten their promotion.

Sure, I could have fit in with that crowd. Sure, I could have gone with the flow of American culture and been more comfortable. But my comfort isn't in American culture.

[30 : 31] And my comfort isn't in getting the raise. And my comfort isn't getting liked by that group of people. My comfort's Christ. And so if I get more Him as I'm taking it on the chin for Him, great is my reward.

This is not the life we set out to live, but this is the good life. It's the life of following Christ. There's a scene in the Lord of the Rings when Sam is overwhelmed by evil and he's just tired from the journey as I know some of you are.

And he looks up at, he sees through the dark clouds this white star that's shining. And he says, quote, the beauty of it smote his heart as he looked up out on the forsaken land and hope returned to him.

And that's really what I hope will happen in this moment. Okay? I'm almost done. I'm close. Is that in the darkness, some of you are tired. You've been taking it on the chin week after week after week. I just want you to see that great is your reward. And that maybe tonight, hope would return to you because of what Jesus is teaching in the Beatitudes.

[31 : 54] Here's the second response or second comfort in this persecution is not only do you have a great reward, but you're in good company. You're in good company.

What does Jesus say in the text? For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You see that in verse 12. Right? Jesus is saying that when others revile you at the water cooler or the unbelieving spouse or the college classmate, guess what?

Have you ever thought about this? You're on the same level as the prophets. When they run you off the college campus, you're just like Jeremiah when they ran him out of town.

When they kick you out of that circle of friends, you're just like Isaiah. You're just like what happened in the Old Testament when the prophets were excluded because they took seriously the word of the Lord.

You're in good company. In fact, you're in even better company than the prophets. John 15 verse 20. Remember the word I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master.

[33 : 03] If they persecuted me, Jesus says, they will persecute you. And it's because of these things that we should rejoice.

We should rejoice. True disciples live daily with an understanding that goes far beyond the momentary pleasure and looks to the great reward that is Christ and the redemptive family of God.

So here's our application tonight as we wrap it up. As we think about tribulation and persecution, number one, just expect it. If you take your faith seriously, there's going to be a rub.

Expect it in life. Secondly, examine it. Make sure that it is of righteousness and not your own self-righteousness. And so there is a call to examine what I'm being persecuted for.

Third is embrace it. This is a sign of great things. Great is your reward. You're a part of God's redemptive family. Don't run from this. Embrace this.

[34 : 09] This is part of the Christian life. And fourth, endure it. God is doing great things in and through it. Did you hear me tonight?

Some of you are right in the middle of the ring. You're right in the middle of the grinder. God is doing great things in and through your suffering. And then lastly, exalt God in it.

That is rejoice and be glad in God. So as we close this section of the Sermon on the Mount of the Beatitudes, how do we live these things out?

How do we do these things? Whether it's being merciful or showing meekness or taking seriously evangelism whereby we embrace persecution, well, as we've seen each week, it's not self-effort. We cannot do these things in our own strength, but it's only by God's grace. Amen? The Beatitudes is not a list of morals to follow or rules to live by.

[35 : 19] They are a description of a disciple's life. Even more than that, the Beatitudes are a description of the very life of Christ.

So, faith family, the next time you read, blessed are the poor in spirit, you think 2 Corinthians 8, 9, where the Bible says, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor.

Jesus took on poverty so you could be rich. And the next time you hear, blessed are those who mourn. You think Matthew 26, verse 38, where the Bible says, Jesus said to them, my soul is very sorrowful even to death.

How Jesus mourned so that you would be comforted. The next time you read, blessed are the meek, you think Philippians 2, verse 6 and 7, where the Bible says, though he was in the form of God, he didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.

That Jesus came in meekness, he gave up heaven so you could inherit the earth. And the next time you read, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, you think John 19, 28, where the Bible says, Jesus knowing that all was now finished, said, I thirst.

[36 : 49] How Jesus thirsted on the cross so that you would be satisfied. And when you read, blessed are the merciful, you think Matthew 9, verse 36, where the Bible says, when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

How Jesus was so merciful to you and was abundant in mercy. And when you read, blessed are the pure in heart, you think Matthew 26, verse 39, where the Bible says, and going a little further, he fell on his face and prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Jesus was pure in heart in his devotion to the Father. Why? So that you could be with the Father.

So you could see God. And the next time you read, blessed are the peacemakers, you think Colossians 1, 20, where the Bible says, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, making peace by the blood of his cross.

That Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker. And because of him, we are sons of God. And lastly, the next time you read, blessed are those who are persecuted.

[38 : 11] You think 1 Peter 2, verse 23, where the Bible says, when he was reviled, he didn't revile in return. When he suffered, he didn't threaten. But he continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

That Jesus knows what it's like to be persecuted by the world. And because he was, you will one day suffer no more. Faith family, I hope I've made the case the Beatitudes are not a list of morals to live by.

They're about a life. Not just the life of a disciple, a life that's already been lived for you in the person of Jesus Christ.

And so the Beatitudes are a call, come to Jesus. Run to the cross again and again. Go deeper and deeper every day of your life in the grace of God.

Because every time you do, you will realize just how blessed you are. And all God's people said, amen.

[39 : 28] Pray with me. Pray with me. God, thank you so much for what you've taught us tonight. And just even these last several weeks, we have had to rethink what we assume the good life is.

When we think of a life that's blessed, we tend to think of other things than what Jesus has taught us. So reshape our thinking that we might experience the blessed life, the good life in Christ, the life that has been transformed by your radical grace.

And ultimately, as every word of Scripture does, every single thing brings us back to Jesus. He's the blessed life.

And life is blessed in Him. Jesus, you're the good life. Help us pursue you.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.