

**HAPPY ARE THE PERSECUTED
(The Upside-Down Kingdom- Part 8)**

October 20, 2019

Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 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.

PERSECUTION THEN AND NOW:

CAUSES OF PERSECUTION:

Persecution You _____

1 Pt 4:15

Persecution You _____

Mt 5:10; Col 1:24; Gal 6:17; Ac 5:41

HANDLING PERSECUTION:

_____ **IT- It comes with** _____

Mt 5:11; Jn 16:33; 2 Tm 3:12; Mt 10:22, 24; Ac 14:22; Phil 1:29

_____ **IN IT- You're in** _____

Mt 5:12; Lk 6:26; 1 Pt 4:14; Mt 10:25; Jn 15:18

Fill-ins: Physical, Legal, Career, Social; Bring on Yourself; Take for Jesus; EXPECT; the territory; REJOICE; good company

Life Group Questions for the Week of October 20, 2019

1. Looking back at your notes from this Sunday's message, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Have you ever felt "left out" or "alone" because you were a Christian?
3. 1 Peter is written to "God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces...foreigners..." (1:1; 2:11) As a Christian, what does it mean to be a stranger, or exiled, in this world?
4. Read 1 Peter 3:13-18. What can happen in the life of a Christian when they suffer unjust persecution because of their faith in Christ? How can this be a good thing and how can persecution cause the church to grow?
5. Read 1 Peter 4:12-19. The letter of 1 Peter is written during a time when Christians were being persecuted. Peter reminds the church to expect suffering for the cause of Christ. How is this attitude different from the attitude that most American Christians have towards suffering and trials because of their faith in Christ?
6. Read 2 Timothy 3:12 and 1 John 3:13. What was the main message of the New Testament writers about persecution in the life of a Christian? What can you do today to prepare for persecution?
7. What did Jesus tell his disciples about persecution in John 15:18-20? If Jesus says we are to expect trouble in this world on account of him, what does that say about us if we rarely, if ever, have experienced any troubles because of Jesus?
8. Are there poor reasons to be "picked on" for being a Christian? What would those reasons be? (For example, you might simply be overbearing and arrogant with others when you talk about Jesus.)
9. How can we better live out as individuals and as a Life group the following passage? Hebrews 13:3, "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body."