

The 8th Beatitude Illustrated
(Matthew 5:10-12)

Introduction:

1. These verses contain the 8th Beatitude that Jesus presented as He began His Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. He showed how those who *"are persecuted for righteousness' sake"* will be blessed -- *"theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*
 - b. He also showed how His followers are to react to such persecution.
2. This evening we are studying "the message to the church in Smyrna" (Revelation 2:8-11) -- it illustrates the Lord's teaching in the 8th Beatitude.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.8) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. (vs.8a) It was addressed to *"the angel [messenger] of the church in Smyrna."*
 - B. (vs.8b) Although John wrote this message, it was actually spoken by the Lord.
 1. He described Himself as *"the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."*
 2. By describing Himself as:
 - a. *"the first and the last,"* He declared His eternal existence [*"Alpha and Omega"* -- 1:8]
 - b. the One *"which was dead, and is alive,"* He showed that He overcame death.
 - 1) Jesus endured cruel treatment when He was killed.
 - 2) He persevered, He faced death, and He overcame it.
 - C. In the introduction to this message to the church in Smyrna, Christ let this congregation know that He was familiar with ill treatment.
- II. (vs.9) THE LORD KNEW THIS CHURCH'S SITUATION
 - A. He knew:
 1. this church's *"works"*
 2. this church's *"tribulation"* [trials]
 3. this church's *"poverty"*
 - a. From a financial standpoint, this church was poor.
 - b. From a spiritual standpoint, this church was rich.
 - c. Contrast this with the church in Laodicea (3:17).
 4. that this church was being blasphemed.
 - a. This blasphemy was coming from some who claimed to be *"Jews,"* but they were actually followers of Satan.
 - b. Paul showed in Romans 2:28-29 how to identify true *"Jews."*
 - B. In addition to knowing what this congregation was going through, Jesus was able to empathize with it (1 Peter 2:21-24).
 - C. After He informed the congregation in Smyrna that He knew what it was going through, . . .
- III. (vs.10-11) THE LORD EXHORTED THIS CHURCH TO REMAIN FAITHFUL
 - A. The Lord did not remove this church's trials.
 - B. Let us notice what He did.
 1. The Lord told this church not to *"fear"* the things it would suffer.
 - a. This church was already facing trials.
 - b. There would be additional trials -- the devil would cast some of them into prison.
 2. The Lord told this church that its tribulation would last *"ten days"* [a relatively short time].
 3. The Lord encouraged this church by promising *"a crown of life"* to those who remained faithful (James 1:12).
 4. The Lord also promised that those who overcame would not be hurt by *"the second death"* (Revelation 21:8).

Conclusion:

1. The Lord wants us to listen to this message (vs.11a).
2. The church in Smyrna suffered because it did the Lord's will -- we can expect no less (2 Timothy 3:12).
3. Let us remember the Lord's instructions in the 8th Beatitude.