

The Sermon on the Mount  
(Lesson 3)

Introduction:

1. Studying the Lord's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) will help us in "*understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Ephesians 5:17).
2. Jesus began His Sermon by giving the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12).
3. Previously, we have studied the first 7 Beatitudes (vs.3-9).
4. We learn from the first 7 that the Lord wants His followers to be poor in spirit, to mourn, to be meek, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, and to be peacemakers.
5. When we practice these Beatitudes sincerely, we can expect 2 reactions from others:
  - a. some will be brought to God because of our good influence (vs.13-16)
  - b. some will not approve and may treat us badly.
6. This brings us to the 8<sup>th</sup> Beatitude (vs.10-12) that is different from the others -- it deals with what we can expect from the world when we practice the first 7.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.10a) "**BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE**"
  - A. Jesus was talking about a particular kind of harsh treatment.
    1. Christians are not to suffer because of doing wrong (1 Peter 4:15).
    2. Jesus talked about being persecuted "*for righteousness' sake*" [doing what is right according to God's will].
    3. (vs.6) The Lord wants His followers to "*hunger and thirst after righteousness.*"
    4. When this is done persecution can be expected (2 Timothy 3:12).
  - B. Persecution may come in various forms.
    1. (vs.11) Those who practice righteousness may be:
      - a. reviled: reproached (Matthew 27:39-40)
      - b. persecuted: troubled, harassed, molested
      - c. spoken against falsely: slandered.
    2. We learn from Luke 6:22 that those who practice righteousness may be hated and separated from friends and loved ones.
  - C. Examples of people being persecuted:
    1. Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-23)
    2. Stephen (Acts 6:8-13; 7:57-58)
    3. the members of the Jerusalem church (Acts 8:1, 3).
  - D. Persecution sometimes accompanies righteousness because the world hates righteousness (John 3:19-20).
- II. (vs.10b) **THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE WILL BE BLESSED: "THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"**
  - A. Persecution will keep us out of the kingdom if we allow it (Matthew 13:20-21).
  - B. Those who bear up under persecution for practicing righteousness will be part of the kingdom.
  - C. Let us consider some passages that teach us how to face persecution so we can receive the Lord's blessing.
    1. (Matthew 5:12a) Jesus said, "*Rejoice, and be exceeding glad*" (1 Peter 3:13-17; 4:12-16).
    2. To react to persecution correctly, we must:
      - a. keep our minds focused on the reward that God has promised (Matthew 5:12b)
      - b. consider the example set by others (Matthew 5:12c; Acts 5:40-42; Hebrews 12:2-3).

Conclusion:

1. The Christians in Jerusalem had "*favor with all the people*" for a time (Acts 2:47).
2. However, it wasn't long until they began to be persecuted.
3. Rather than compromise or give in, they did the Lord's will.
4. Let us follow their example -- those who do so will be part of the kingdom of heaven.