

Rejoicing Though Persecuted
Matthew 5:10-12

Introduction

Last week we examined the final Beatitude in Matthew 5:10-12. Please turn there again as we continue this morning to examine this extremely important subject.

We live in a time when the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has been perverted to tickle the ears of those who want to feel good about themselves. Since people do not like to hear about their sinfulness, sin is either ignored or excused. Since people want to feel loved and have their felt needs met, the emphasis is placed on the love of God and how you can get whatever you need from Him. This is certainly more obvious in those churches that openly proclaim the heretical health, wealth and prosperity gospel, but the ideas seep into more mainstream and conservative churches too because it increases attendance and finances. The tragedy is such a perverted gospel presents a false hope in a false God. People feel good as they merrily make their way through the wide gate and down the wide road that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13).

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is about the love of God, but it is a love that can only be understood in light of the sinfulness of man. It is a love that can only be understood when the true identity, nature and character of God is known so that the human is absolutely humbled before Him. God is not a doting father seeking to make His offspring happy. God is eternal, self-existent, self-sufficient, and is infinite in power, presence, knowledge, wisdom, majesty, glory, holiness, love, mercy, righteousness and justice. God does not exist for man's will and pleasure. Man exists for God's will and pleasure.

The gospel cannot be comprehended until the bad news is understood. Every human is inherently sinful and so is rebellious against God. Man is selfish and desires what he proudly thinks is best for himself. He disobeys God's commands and defies God's will. What man earns for himself by all this evil is death and God's condemnation. Psalm 14 and Romans 3 make it painfully clear that there are no exceptions to this. All have turned aside. All have become corrupt. There is no one that does good, not even one. If that was the end of the story, there would be no hope and none of us would be here today. But it is not the end of the story. The rest of it is the good news that contrasts this horrible reality.

God does love, and out of that love all of God's attributes work together to provide a way for both His justice and mercy to be satisfied, and for both His holiness and grace to be extended to man so that man can be redeemed, forgiven and adopted into God's family. That plan of course is the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the eternal godhead becoming a human through the virgin Mary, living a sinless life, dying as the substitute sin sacrifice that atones for the transgressions of man, conquering sin and death by rising from the dead, and now ascended to heaven where He intercedes for His disciples with the Father and is preparing a place for His followers to join Him when He returns in the future. The purpose of all of this is for the praise and glory of God (Ephesians 1:6).

What does this have to do with our text and subject this morning? Simply this. Without the true gospel, you cannot understand Matthew 5:10-12 and the other related texts or how to rejoice when persecuted.

Review

Jesus states in this final Beatitude, *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and*