VIII. Blessed are those who are <u>TREATED WRONG BECAUSE THEY DO RIGHT</u>

("Blessed are they which are persecuted. . ." v. 10)

INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

A. The <u>REAL REASON</u> for Persecution (v. 10-11)

(*<u>Be aware</u>* of why you will be treated wrong)

1. ***"For righteousness sake"*** *(v. 10)*

2. ***"For My*** *[Jesus]* ***sake"*** *(v. 11)*

B. The <u>VARIED TYPES</u> of Persecution (v. 11)

(*<u>Be ready</u>* for different kinds of oppression)

1. ***You may be the object of <u>insult</u>***

2. ***You may be the object of <u>injury</u>***

3. ***You may be the object of <u>lies</u>***

C. The <u>OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE</u> of the Persecuted (v. 12)

(*<u>Be joyful</u>*, not discouraged)

1. ***"Rejoice!"***

2. ***"Be exceeding glad!"***

D. The <u>END RESULT</u> for the Persecuted

(*<u>Be expectant</u>* because something great is in store for you)

1. ***An Eternal <u>Kingdom</u>*** *(v. 10)*

2. ***A Great <u>Reward</u>*** *(v. 12)*

E. The <u>SWEET CONSOLATION</u> for the Persecuted (v. 12b)

(***Be encouraged*** because you are not alone)

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INTRODUCTION: Verse 10

"Some years ago a popular national magazine took a survey to determine the things that make people happy. According to the responses they received, happy people enjoy other people but are not self-sacrificing; they refuse to participate in any <u>negative feelings</u> or <u>emotions</u>" (MacArthur, p. 219)

V. 11

"When" - not "if" It is unavoidable.

Many would say: But it's not fair; it's not just! Did God always promise us fair and just treatment by the world?

"Blessed are <u>ye</u>" - Jesus moves from third person, to now second person, to specifically apply truths to his disciples. This applies to you and me.

A. The <u>REAL REASON</u> for Persecution (v. 10-11)

(*<u>Be aware</u>* of why you will be treated wrong)

1. ***"For righteousness sake"*** *(v. 10)*

"For righteousness sake" - because you do right (justly)

There is no blessing in being persecuted if you did wrong and are getting what you deserve (I Pet. 4:15 - "But let non of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.")

Two basic reasons why those who live righteously would be opposed:

a. Righteousness is a <u>rebuke</u> to unrighteousness

The reason people would persecute the righteous is because their righteousness is a rebuke to their unrighteousness.

Doing good is a rebuke to their doing bad.
Holiness is a rebuke to impurity.
Honesty is a rebuke to lying, fraud, and theft
Light is a rebuke to darkness.

Lost men, in an effort to extinguish the light that exposes their darkness, strike out at the light.

Do you ever wonder why when you seek to help some people, they get angry? EX: Acts 7)

It is because you have struck a tender nerve. You have hit a sore spot; you have opened a closet; you have exposed a secret. You have uncovered the truth; often the truth hurts.

Righteousness by its very nature is confrontational; it cuts across the grain of the world.

Godliness will generate antagonism, hot emotions, and hostility from the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33)

EX: Savanarola (MacArthur, p. 221)

b. <u>Satan</u> hates righteousness

We have an adversary (I Pet. 5:8) who wants to keep men blind to the truth (II Cor. 4:4), so he incites lost men (who are at his disposal) to stir up opposition to the truth in order to turn men away from the truth (EX: Elymas the Sorcerer - Acts 13:8, 10) (EX: The masters who exploited a demon-possessed girl - Acts 16:19-20) (EX: The unbelieving Jews - Acts 17:5) (EX: The Ephesian craftsmen - Acts 19:27-29)

Persecution is an earmark of Godly living (II Tim. 3:12 - "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.")

It is an inevitable "gift" (Phil. 1:29 - "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake")

ILLUS: The Secret Christian (MacArthur, p. 220)

2. "For My [Jesus] **sake"** (v. 11)

"For my sake" - to be persecuted for Jesus' sake is synonymous with being persecuted for righteousness sake, because he is righteousness personified.

If they persecuted the Master (Christ), they will persecute His servants (Christians) (Jn. 15:18-21)

Because of opposition, many who have a shallow profession of Christ fall away when the pressure is on (Mt. 13:20-21 - "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended")

For fear of persecution, many deny Christ (often by default)

EX: Peter

Mt. 10:33 - "But whosoever will deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

"When we are hated, maligned, or afflicted as Christians, the real animosity is not against us but against Christ. Satan's great enemy is Christ, and he opposes us because we belong to Jesus Christ, because He is in us" (MacArthur, p. 228)

EX: Rome's persecution of Christians (MacArthur, p. 223-224)

Persecution may often come from those closest to us - family (Mt. 10:34-39; Lk. 12:52-53)

B. The VARIED TYPES of Persecution (v. 11)

(***Be ready*** for different kinds of oppression)

1. You may be the object of insult

"Revile" - to reproach; to insult; to mock and ridicule (EX: "Virgin Vinny"; "The Preaching Printer")

"Bible-banger" "Funny-mental-ist" etc.

EX: How Jesus was insulted (Mt. 26:67-68; Mk. 15:19-20)

2. You may be the object of injury

"Persecuted" - to pursue after; to hunt down

Like a dog would hunt a pheasant or rabbit; like a hunter would pursue and lie in wait for a deer.

The most intense opposition that Christians will ever face will come from the Antichrist in the Tribulation.

How will we overcome?

1) By a confidence in God's Word (Rev. 12:11)

2) By a sacrifice of self (Rev. 12:11b)

Our awareness of the eternal doom of those who receive the mark of the Beast will prevent us from receiving it (Rev. 14:9-13)

3. You may be the object of lies

"All manner" - all sorts of; every kind of; vicious words come in a wide variety.

"Evil" - to accuse of wickedness and sin

"Falsely" - the lost will lie and hypocritically seek to defame a Christian and ruin his testimony.

Don't give Satan any ammunition! (Titus 2:5, 8, 10)

Jesus was lie about; accused of being "gluttonous and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (mt. 11:19)

C. The OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE of the Persecuted (v. 12)
(*Be joyful*, not discouraged)

1. "Rejoice!"

"Rejoice" - our response of faith (James 1:2)

2. "Be exceeding glad!"

"Be glad" - like Peter and John who rejoiced at the privilege to suffer for Jesus (Acts 5:41) and like Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25).

How does gladness come? Suffering for Jesus is a confirmation to us that we are saved (I Pet. 4:14 - "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified")

D. The END RESULT for the Persecuted
(*Be expectant* because something great is in store for you)

1. An Eternal Kingdom *(v. 10)*

"Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" - Jesus ends the Beatitudes with the same blessing He promised when He began (v. 3)

To suffer now is nothing by contrast with the glory later (Rom. 8:18 - "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us")

If you are opposed for righteousness, keep you head up and your eyes on eternity. And realize that what they say is not true and it does not alter your destiny (SEE: Isaiah 51:6-8)

2. A Great Reward *(v. 12)*

"Great is your reward" - Much is your payback

A "Crown of life" is what Jesus promised to the suffering church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:10-11)

ILLUS: John Chrysostom (MacArthur, p. 232-33)

E. The <u>SWEET CONSOLATION</u> for the Persecuted (v. 12b)
(*<u>Be encouraged</u>* because you are not alone)

God does not call his people to be "sanctified celebrities" but often to be suffering martyrs.

The prophets from <u>A</u> to <u>Z</u> (Abel to Zecharias) were persecuted (Mt. 23:37)

When you are persecuted for righteousness sake, you are stepping into the shoes of great men of the past (II Chron. 36:16 - "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.")

We enter the ranks of men like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Jeremiah; Michaiah (I Ki. 22:8, 14, 24, 26-27), Paul; Stephen; John, etc. (SEE: Heb. 11:36-38)

CONCLUSION:

SEE: I Peter 4:12-16