

The Beatitudes
“The Persecuted”
The Week of June 2, 2024
Matthew 5:10

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“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...”

- Can you give an example of someone who has been “persecuted for righteousness’ sake”?

- In a country where we know religious freedom and little threat of violence because of our faith, this beatitude can be difficult to relate to. Yet, the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). What does it mean for the Church to be persecuted for righteousness’ sake?

- How might we foster a greater sense of solidarity to “bear with” sisters and brothers around the world, who are persecuted for following Christ?

- Have you ever experienced “persecution” for being a follower of Christ in your relationships with family, friends, or co-workers?

- Reflecting on this beatitude, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote “Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering of Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer. In fact, it is a joy and token of His grace... Not recognition, but rejection, is the reward Christians get from the world.” How does this idea encourage or challenge you that persecution will be a normal part of discipleship?

- Finally, persecution, whether great or small, is an opportunity for fellowship and communion with Jesus Himself, who “for the joy set before Him endured the cross.” What is one thing that the suffering of persecution teaches us about our Lord and His Kingdom?

- To see more of the blessing and inheritance associated with persecution, read **Acts 5:12-42**. Pray together in light of this week’s beatitude.