

**The Beatitudes**  
**“Joy”**  
**The Week of June 9, 2024**  
**Matthew 5:11-12**

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“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

- Have you ever experienced being “reviled” because of Jesus? How did you respond? What temptations did you face?
  
- We are often shocked by the reviling and persecution of Christians. However, Jesus teaches that this will be a normal part of discipleship. Tim Keller reflects, “The exclusiveness of Christian belief, and their conviction that Jesus was not just a god but the God, put [early] Christians on a collision course with nearly everyone in that religiously pluralistic society... Christians appeared to be a threat to the whole social order. Historians explain that early Christians were, as a result, often disinherited, excluded from government jobs, cut out of the best business relationships, and occasionally physically abused and imprisoned.” **What is your response to Keller’s observations?**
  
- What reasons does Jesus give us for rejoicing when we are reviled and falsely spoken against?
  
- In what ways can you see that Jesus Christ perfectly embodied what He taught here?
  
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflects on this verse, “Having reached the end of the beatitudes, we naturally ask if there is any place on this earth for the community they describe. Clearly, there is one place, and only one, and that is where the poorest, meekest, and most sorely tried of all men is to be found—On the Cross at Golgotha. With Him who has lost all and with Him who has found all”. **How is the reviling and persecution Jesus endured unique?**

- To learn more about how Jesus Christ inherits the Kingdom, read **Revelation 5:1-14**. Why is Jesus revealed as “the lamb who was slain” in John’s vision?
  
- Think about a place or relationship in your life in which you are persecuted, reviled, mocked or spoken against for being a follower of Jesus. Here are some categories to jumpstart your thinking...
  - showing hospitality or kindness to others
  - praying for and spiritually engaging with co-workers
  - sharing the Gospel with a family member
  - serving the poor or taking up the cause of the oppressed
  - giving generously
  - taking a risk to speak the truth or defend the faith

What heart issues hinder you from taking risks in these areas? What heart issues tempt you to get into the “wrong conflicts”?

- Pray together, that the Lord will give us this perspective (joy) as we live and represent Him in this world.