

Christ's Beatitudes

The Blessed Persecuted

Expectation of it

The Christian should expect persecution (Phil. 1:29). "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20; cf. 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 11:36-38). T. Watson: "persecution is the legacy bequeathed by Christ to his people." J.C. Ryle: "persecution... is like the goldsmith's hallmark on real silver and gold: it is one of the marks of a converted man."

Description of it

Persecution is hostility as a result of faith in Christ and holding to His truth in a world that rejects both.

1. Physical persecution (Heb. 11:36-37). Christians have been attacked, beaten, wounded, tortured, thrown into prison, robbed and killed and suffered all kinds of physical ill-treatment.
2. Subtle persecution (Lk. 6:22). You can believe and do almost anything, but if you are a Bible-believing Christian you are not tolerated.
3. Verbal persecution (Matt. 5:11; Matt. 11:19).

Qualifications for it

Not all persecution is blessed (1 Pet. 4:15). There are many examples of Christians who have fallen into serious sin and face a lot of criticism, but they brought it upon themselves. Some Christians can be insensitive, unthinking, untactful in words and actions. Jesus gives 3 qualifications

1. For righteousness sake. If God has given the new birth, there comes new life, which conflicts with the world (Jn 15:19).
2. Say all manner of evil against you falsely.
3. For Christ's sake (Matt. 5:11).

Implications of it

Statement: We should not seek acceptance and popularity with the world.

Question: Are we persecuted?

Benediction with it

1. ***Because of the fellowship it gives.*** “For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Look at whose company you are in!
2. ***Because of the assurance it strengthens.*** The world cannot tolerate the idea that God has a chosen people and is angry when God’s people refuse to conform to the standards of the world (Jn. 15:18-19). John Calvin: “persecutions are in a way seals of adoption to the children of God.”
3. ***Because of the doors it opens.*** Persecution is not a hindrance for the gospel, but the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 1:12).
4. ***Because of the future it reveals.*** “Great is your reward in heaven” (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17). A.W. Pink: One breath of paradise will extinguish all the adverse winds of earth (Rev. 7:15-17)