

Romans 12:14

Blessing

Count it a blessing ...

I. Persecution

A. Perpetrators

B. And Their Purposes

II. Put in Perspective

A. Jesus' Words

B. Jesus' Example

C. Jesus' People

1. What We Know
2. What We Show

D. Jesus' Witnesses

1. Prophets
2. Disciples
3. Us

III. Countered By Blessing

A. A Eulogy

1. On Them
 2. To Them
- About Them
For Them

B. That Provokes

Wrath
Warmth
Repentance

... and turn it into one.

Children, Listen ...

1. What is persecution?
2. What does Jesus say about those who are persecuted because they belong to Him?
3. What does Jesus say we should do if someone persecutes us?
4. What is a Christian martyr?
5. We may not suffer much for Jesus' name here, but in many places in the world Christians suffer terribly for serving the Lord. There are many others places where Christians face great trouble, but will you pray for the Christians in one of these nations today?
China Sudan India Egypt

Counterintuitive Faith

Real persecution for Jesus' names sake is foreign to most of us, and that is something for which we can be very thankful. We may deal with people who marginalize us because of our faith and we should always be prepared for the eventuality of persecution to one degree or another. But whether we face mild jibes or harsh attacks for our faith the godly response is the opposite of what the world would recommend and to what our fallen nature is inclined to do. We are told to "bless" those who persecute us – what an odd prescription for the maltreated Christian! Yet this is what we are called to do. We need grace to react in such a way. It also helps to study the good examples the prophets, apostles and disciples throughout the ages have set in the face of anti-Christian harassment. Above all it helps us to hear the words of Jesus (that Paul echoes in our text) and to observe perfect example of grace, endurance and even forgiveness He set in the face of the reviling and torment of godless men. We should count it a blessing to suffer for the name of Jesus – may we learn in turn to bless those who may make our lives difficult because we belong to Him.