



BUILT to Last

"These words I speak to you are... foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock." But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards." Matthew 7:24-27 (MSG)

The strength we need in life requires us to be **all in** with God.

God has to be **your** everything, or He is **nothing**.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:10-12 (NIV)

● Those who follow Jesus will be **persecuted**.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted... 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

What this does not mean:

This is not a persecution that comes from our **political** views.

This is not a persecution for being **rude** to others.

Christ followers are persecuted because:

● We are persecuted because we're **righteous**.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness... Matthew 5:10 (NIV)

Definition: **Righteousness** - Being right with God and from that relationship we seek to do the right things, or things that please God.

The blessing tied to persecution comes from a **lifestyle** that pleases God.

● We are persecuted because we're **different**.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Matthew 5:11 (NIV)

If you find the godless world is hating you, remember it got its start hating me. If you lived on the world's terms, the world would love you as one of its own. But since I picked you to live on God's terms and no longer on the world's terms, the world is going to hate you. John 15:18 (MSG)

...only someone who has God's Spirit can understand spiritual blessings. Anyone who doesn't have God's Spirit thinks these blessings are foolish. 1 Corinthians 2:14 (CEV)

God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. John 3:19-20 (NLT)

The World loves the **darkness** not the **light**.

Dear friends, **don't be surprised** at the **fiery trials** you are **going through**, as if something strange were happening to you. 1 Peter 4:12 (NLT)

...in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:12 (NIV)

Persecution includes:

● Personal **rejection**.

● Physical **attacks**.

¹³ Instead, **be very glad**—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. 1 Peter 4:13 NLT

● Persecution makes us **partners** with **Christ**.

¹⁹ So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, **keep on doing what is right**, and trust your lives to the God who created you, **for he will never fail you**. 1 Peter 4:19 (NLT)

How we respond in persecution:

● Don't be **surprised**.

Dear friends, don't be surprised or shocked when you go through painful trials that are like walking through fire, as though something unusual is happening to you. 1 Peter 4:12 (TEV)

● Don't be **afraid**.

"If you **suffer for doing what is right**, God will reward you for it, **so don't be afraid and don't worry!** Instead, **worship Christ as Lord** of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it." 1 Peter 3:14-15 (NLT)

● Don't be **ashamed**.

"It is no shame to **suffer for being a Christian**. Instead, thank God for the **privilege** of being called by his name!" 1 Peter 4:16 (NLT)

● Recognize the source: **Satan**

"We're not fighting against human beings, but against wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly realm . . ." Ephesians 6:12 (TEV)

● Respond with a **blessing**.

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21 (ESV)

Jesus: "**LOVE** your enemies! **DO GOOD** to those who hate you. **BLESS** those who curse you. **PRAY** for those who hurt you. Luke 6:27b-29a (NLT)

Here's what gives our lives strength:

● You're living for the **right** world, and you will be **rewarded**.

...great is your reward in heaven.... Matthew 7:12 (NIV)



TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

Questions for Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Explain why?
- Do you find this beatitude to be difficult for your natural man to accept? Explain. Do you find persecution to be a privilege? Do you think persecution will become greater for us here in the United States?
- Do you experience persecution in your life? In what ways?
- Why are we persecuted because we are righteous and different?
- Has any persecution you received made you feel like a partner with Christ? How does persecution partner us with Jesus?
- Talk through the points under the subheading: "How we respond in persecution:"
- Why should we not be surprised by persecution? Why should we not be afraid? With that said, when persecution happens are you surprised and afraid?
- Do you find it difficult to recognize that persecution comes from Satan? Why do get the "Enemy" confused?
- Are you able to respond with blessings?
- How does the reward of persecution give your life strength?

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