

The Persecuted

Matthew 5:10-12

WEEK 6

*Your
Kingdom
Come*

☑ OPEN

Welcome to our series called “Your Kingdom Come.” Each week, we, like Jesus’ original audience, have been called to repent—change our minds—by aligning our understanding of Christ’s Kingdom with His surprising, even shocking, declaration that His kingdom will be found amongst the **humble** and saddened **mourners** who dare to believe that **meekness** is the way to have their longing for **justice** satisfied and who, as they wait, are learning to show **mercy** to those might have hitherto stoked their clamour for justice. Last week we added to this list those who are **pure in heart**. And because harmony in relationships is a huge part of purity (holiness), kingdom people are also **peacemakers**. And for living like this, kingdom people often find themselves among the persecuted—a blessing in disguise, says Jesus.

SHARE & RECONNECT

- Slowly read the above summary of a “blessed” people. By this yardstick, where are you most blessed and where do you most need to grow?
- Share about an occasion when you have (or someone you know has) experienced “persecution” (mild or serious)? How did you/they handle it?

READING

Read Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4; 1 Peter 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:12.

- If you were unaware of these verses, share your initial responses.
- If you have encountered these verses in the past, how have you come to terms with their sober implications?
- In light of these verses, why do you think most Christ followers in North America have experienced very little persecution?

REFLECT

Focus on going deep rather than skimming. It doesn't matter if you don't "cover everything."

- Take some time to reflect on how/what to think when under persecution. What adjectives come to mind as you read and reflect on these verses:
 - Matthew 5:12 _____
 - 1 Peter 4:12-14 _____
 - 2 Cor 4:7-12, 16-18 _____
 - Phil 1:27-30 _____
 - Pie in the sky; totally unrealistic; how do we ever pull this off?

- Read Hebrews 10:32-38; 11:24-27, and 12:1-3.
 - What insights from this section of Scripture (remember there are no chapter divisions in the original) might help when it comes to translating "pie in the sky" advice into reality in our lives?
- In the light of the above, what are some of the ways in which we could/should prepare for "persecution" before it comes?
 - Why do most Christians give very little attention to such preparation?
- "Remembering the imprisoned as if..." (Hebrews 13:3).
 - List all that "remembering" might entail.
 - You probably listed prayer. Reflect on a few obstacles you/others run into when it comes to praying for the persecuted and how you might transcend them.
 - Share any books/publications you might have read that have helped you connect with persecuted believers (if you haven't, the message mentioned two resources that are a good starting point).

PRAY

You have reflected on yourself and the persecuted in the light of Scripture. Conclude your study with prayer. Begin each segment with a **brief** brainstorm as a group how you might pray for the following:

- For yourself
- For persecuted believers (especially any you might know by name)
- For Wellspring

Pray Psalm 74 together remembering the 5000* burnt down churches globally.