

LESSON 3

. . . BEATITUDES FOR TIMES OF TEMPTATIONS

The Beatitudes for Times of Temptations

1 Corinthians 10:13.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

During times of temptations, trials and testing, when our faith is being stretched to its very limits, **IF** the promise of God our Father (1 Cor 10:13) that He will make a way of *escape - will give us the strength to endure, to bear up under the temptation without snapping/breaking, to come into that place of rest and receive God's intended blessing* **IS** to become a reality in our lives, **THEN** we need to **HEARKEN** to the voice of Jesus, our Teacher **AS HE TEACHES US THE WILL OF OUR FATHER.**

The will of our Father for times of temptation, trials and testings when our faith is being stretched to its very limits is expressed in the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-10.

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus would have us learn from these Beatitudes that in times of the stretching of our faith the will of our Father for us is to put into practice in our daily lives His expressed will for us in these Beatitudes for in so doing we will experience blessings, rest and refreshing our souls and thus a way of escape in the midst of the temptation/stretching.

VERSE 3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit*

The poor in spirit speaks of being humble. It is to have a spirit of humility.

God our Father's attitude toward one who has an humble spirit is seen in Jas. 4:6 & 1 Pet. 5:5-6.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

. . . be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

In times of testings when our faith is being stretched to the limits it is important to have a attitude of humility. Humility is necessary if we are to be teachable. If we are to learn from this situation which God put or allowed us to be in. A spirit of humility will say, "Lord what would you have me learn from this situation/stretching." It is to say with David, Psalm 139:23-24.

Search me, 0 God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

An humble, teachable spirit cries out for God to reveal what changes need to be made in his heart.

. . . be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5c)

An humble spirit brings God's intended blessings in the situation into reality. **Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:6).**

VERSE 4 - *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

The blessing of comfort comes in times of temptation, trials, testing and the stretching of ones faith when one MOURNS over the sin in his life, as the Lord responds to his cry "Search me 0 God" and reveals that sin, that wicked way and condition in his heart. 2 Corinthians 7:10 says:

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

We are to mourn over the fact that we have sinned against God our Father, that we have grieved the Holy Spirit. This mourning will cause us to respond like David in Psalm 51:1-12

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy upon me, 0 God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 ¶ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall

be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Mourning, having Godly sorrow because of sin in our lives will lead to true repentance which them will bring comfort and refreshing to our souls. Bringing about then a change or conversion in our heart.

Acts 3:19, Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

VERSE 5 - *Blessed are the meek*

Meekness brings us into the realization that we deserve nothing from God but his wrath and condemnation It is to know and understand that all we have is a gift of God's grace in and through Jesus Christ our Savior Romans 5:8 says:

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Meekness in the time of temptations, when our faith is being stretched to its limits will have us respond to God our Father in a like manner with David in Psalms 103.

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 ¶ The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust 15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them. 19 ¶ The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do

his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. **21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.**

Meekness in the time of temptation will lead us to bless and thank our Father for all of His benefits to us. It will lead us to thank our Father that:

He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities...But (that) the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

Psalms 136:1, ¶ O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

An attitude of MEEKNESS will respond to God with gratitude and thanksgiving and will bring Rest and Refreshing to our soul in times of temptation.

VERSE 6 - *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness*

When person is born again, receives, by faith, Jesus as his personal Savior from sin death and hell, Romans 4:5-6 says his faith is counted to him as righteousness, that is, righteousness is imputed to him by grace without works. He now has the righteousness of Christ.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works

Thus to hunger and thirst after righteousness is not to hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ, but rather it is to hunger and thirst, to desire, to want that righteousness of Christ which was imputed to him when he received Jesus as his Savior to manifest, to come forth, be evident in and through his life.

Now for this to take place we must have the attitude or the spirit of John the Baptist as expressed in John 3:30, where John says:

He (that is Christ) must increase, but I must decrease.

If we are truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness we will allow the Holy Spirit to make Paul's confession in Galatians 2:20 a reality in our lives and not just a confession.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

To hunger and thirst after righteousness is to be an imitator of Christ, to be a disciple. Jesus in Matthew 16:24 says unto His disciples:

If any will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow

A good paraphrase of this verse might read:

If any hunger and thirst after righteousness let him die to self and follow Me.

In order for the righteousness of Jesus which was imputed to us to be working in and through us; in order for our confession, 'the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God' to be a way of life; in order for Christ to increase in us and for self to decrease we must, even as Paul said of himself in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "DIE DAILY."

We must daily take up our cross, which is to die to self and follow the example of Jesus. We must be an imitator of Jesus.

Now if we in the time of temptation and stretching are to stand up under that temptation/stretching and not break we then need to hunger and thirst after righteousness. We need to die daily to self; so that the life of Jesus in us will be evident in our life.

God allows temptations, trials, sufferings, testing, the stretching of our faith to come upon us to teach us His ways, to teach us to hearken to His voice and obey.

Hebrews 5:8 says of Jesus:

Though He were a Son, yet learned He OBEDIENCE by the things which He suffered;

Trials, temptations, the stretching of our faith, personal sufferings have the purpose of teaching us obedience. Teaches us that we need to be truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And "Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst after righteousness: FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.**

Those who during the temptations and stretching are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, who are daily dying to their self wants, desires, aspirations and following Jesus and hearkening to the voice of God, in their life, the LIFE OF JESUS IN THEM will be evident in what they do and say. They will be so full of Jesus that every one will see Jesus and acknowledge "that they have been with Jesus".

Beloved, God our Father, is working in us to bring forth the righteousness of Christ in our lives, because He desires to give us the Kingdom, that is to say, He desires that we have and benefit from all that the kingdom of God has to offer.

You see, your righteousness as Isaiah says, "is as filthy rags" and they will get you absolutely none of the benefits of the Kingdom of God. Only the

righteousness of Christ working in and through you will allow you to enjoy the benefits of the Kingdom which were provided at Calvary through the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ for us as our substitute.

Therefore, don't resist what God is doing in your life, it is hard, (that is hard on you) to kick against the pricks or ox goad as Jesus told Paul in Acts 9:5, but rather hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness in you to manifest through you.

VERSE - *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy*

When one by faith receives Jesus Christ as his Savior He then is saved, delivered from eternal death; is cleansed of all his sin; is renewed in the Spirit; and is ushered into the Kingdom of God by the MERCY of God. We see this in the following two Scriptures, Titus 3:5 and 1 Peter 1:3.

Titus 3:5, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his MERCY he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

1 Peter 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant MERCY hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Eternal salvation is a gift of God's MERCY. Mercy being defined as *God not giving us what we deserve*. Psalm 103:10.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

If you, then, have been born again then you have already OBTAINED God's mercy and you are then eternally saved by His MERCY.

Therefore we would conclude that the Beatitude before us: "**Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy**" is not talking about eternal salvation but rather is talking about obtaining God's MERCY for our day to day life.

Beloved, because of sin in our lives we need God's mercy at work in our lives every day of our life, and most especially during those times of temptation when our faith is being stretched to the limits. And praise God, Lamentations 3:23 says:

They (God's mercies) are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

Therefore to have God's mercy freely flowing; freely operating in our daily lives and especially to be operating in our times of temptation and stretching, we need to show mercy, to reach out in mercy to those around us. Our hearts are to be full of love and compassion and mercy in our relationships. We are to extend to those in our families, church and community mercy in their times of temptations and stretching.

Proverbs 3:3, Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them upon thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

Proverbs 14: 21 ¶ He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.

Proverbs 21:21 ¶ He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

Zechariab 7:9, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

James 3:17, But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Beloved, the tendency of our soul (mind, will and emotions) in the time of temptation, testing, trials, troubles when our faith is being stretched to its very limits is to be introspective, that is to say, when we are being tempted, stretched, tried and tested the temptation is to focus our attention on the situation and circumstances in our life and if we do, most often we will then find ourselves feeling sorry for ourselves. And even though we may not say it out right, the thought is "we don't desire this." Or, "why is this happening to me, I'm a good person, I go to church, I pay my tithes, I don't drink, curse and do all those other bad things." And often then depression sets in because things are not going our way. We have become INTROSPECTIVE.

And when we become introspective we rob ourselves of God's mercy in the situation. Jonah 2:8 says:

They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

Jesus, our teacher would have us learn from this Beatitude that when these temptations, stretching, trials, testings and troubles come. That we are to reach out to others who are being tried, tested, tempted and stretched with compassion, love and MERCY.

But so often instead of reaching out in MERCY we express an attitude of "I told you so" or "He got what he deserved" and etc.

Ephesians 5:1 tells us to be". . . **followers of God, as dear children.**" Literally it say to be imitators of God as dear children. And then verse 2 says:

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

We are to walk in love in relationship to our brothers and sisters and even as Jesus gave himself for us we are to give ourselves for them. Amen?

To be an imitator of God is to follow God's example. God's example for us in our relationships is seen in Psalms 145:8.

Psalms 145:8, The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

Jesus in Matthew 23:23 rebukes the scribes and Pharisees because they failed to be merciful.

Matthew 23:23, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

VERSE - Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God

Beloved, Jesus would have us learn from this Beatitude that if we are going to see and experience God our Father at work in our lives when we are being tempted, tried and tested, when our faith is being stretched to its very limits, we need to have a **PURE HEART**.

A pure heart has to do with attitudes.

If ,when we are being tempted, when our faith is being stretched, we have a poor, or bad, wrongful attitude we will miss out on experiencing God working in our lives and the situation or circumstances we are going through will be a miserable one instead of the blessing God intended.

If our attitude during this time of testing is a poor, bad or wrongful attitudes toward the situation WE WILL:

- NOT express a spirit of humility. We will not be "poor in spirit; and thus we will not teachable and learn from this situation;
- NOT mourn the sin in our sins, thus bringing about a state of impenitence rather that Godly sorrow leading to repentance;
- NOT respond to God our father in the situation with thanksgiving in a "spirit of meekness;"
- NOT "hunger and thirst after righteousness", and thus the we will not imitating Jesus;
- NOT be merciful to those around us, and thus rob ourselves of mercy.

What we will be expressing if our heart is not pure; if our attitudes are bad when our faith is being stretched is disappointment, offence, frustration, anger, bitterness and unforgiveness and we will miss out on the BLESSINGS:

- the kingdom of God has to offer
- of comfort in the situation;
- of what God has for us in that situation;
- of being filled to overflowing with Jesus;
- of obtaining mercy; and
- experiencing or seeing God working in that situation.

HOW DO WE KEEP OUR HEART PURE?

2 Corinthians 10:5, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

1 John 1:7, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Galatians 5:22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Ephesians 4:26-27, Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.

Ephesians 4:31-32, Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 5:1-2 ¶ Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour,

Acts 24:16, And herein do I EXERCISE MYSELF, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

Matthew 7:24, Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES in a state of being disappointed, offended, frustrated, angry, bitter and unforgiving because of the trials and testing we are going through.

We do as the Prodigal son in Luke 15:17-21.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

We come to an understanding of the reality of our situation - **what is that reality?** We are robbing ourselves of God's blessings because of our bad attitudes; We make an inward decision to change our attitudes; We carry out that decision to change our attitudes; We go to the Father in Godly sorrow, knowing that we have not only robbed ourselves of blessings, but that we have also sinned against our Father.

Godly sorrow will bring repentance - a cleansing of our heart.

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

John 15:3, Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Now our heart is pure and we will experience God our father working in our life as our faith is being stretched.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

VERSE 9 - Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God

Blessed are the "Peacemakers." Our Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ would have us learn from this Beatitude that when trials, testings and temptations come stretching our faith to its very limits that we are to be "peacemakers". NOT instigators, agitators, mummerers, grumblers, complainers or fault finders BUT PEACEMAKERS.

It is true that misery loves company and so often when we have a case of the miseries because of the situation we have gotten ourselves into, we do our best to make every one around us just a miserable as we are. We are to be "peacemakers" instead of "miserymakers."

WHAT KIND OF "PEACE MAKERS" ARE WE TO BE?

The Bible mentions three kinds of PEACE. Thus we can assume that there are three different areas where peace can be made.

FIRST, THERE IS PEACE WITH GOD.

This peace is the peace that comes to the one, who knows and has Jesus as his Savior and, also, knows that, because of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus that God no longer has any charge against him. This peace comes to the one who knows he is no longer guilty. He knows that God, who, was against him in the past because he was a sinner, is now FOR him because Jesus became sin in his place as his substitute. He knows that he has eternal salvation, full and free.

This is the peace that comes because of sins forgiven at Calvary. And because, NOW, everything is right between him and God. Beloved this is wonderful peace.

Oh, let us understand GOD IS RECONCILED. You don't have to do anything to reconcile Him. God is reconciled.

2 Corinthians' 5:19, To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

1 John 2:2, And he (Jesus) is the propitiation (appeasement) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

God is the "peacemaker." If you are born again, this peace with God is operating in you. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen?

However, during times of temptation and testing the devil tries to convince us that God is angry and displeased with us. Therefore we need to be "peacemakers" by doing what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:20,

Be ye reconciled to God.

"Be ye reconciled to God" by mentally and consciously, fully and completely accepting his salvation, then you experience PEACE, that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God and accepted in the beloved.

SECOND, during times of testings and temptations we are to be "peacemakers" with our soul because in these times of stretching our soul has a tendency to get out of rest. Amen? Our soul needs to be restored to that place of TRANQUILITY. This tranquility of the soul is the peace of which Jesus speaks when He said to His disciples in John 14:27,

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you."

This peace, is a peace which comes to the believer who is trusting and resting in the Father and doing the Father's will.

This is that peace which Paul in Philippians 4:7 says,
". . . **passeth all understanding.**"

We can be a "peacemaker with our soul" by speaking to our soul as the Psalmist does in Psalm 42:5, Psalm 116:7 Psalm 146:1 and in other Psalms.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

Psalms 116: 7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

Psalms 146:1, ¶ Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

And Paul in Colossians 3:15 says,

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

WHO IS THE PEACE OF GOD? JESUS!! When Jesus is ruling and reigning in our hearts/soul there will be TRANQUILITY OF THE SOUL, AND PEACE WILL REIGN.

THIRD, there is peace in the World. WORLD PEACE - peace between men, families and nations. The United Nations since its conception has worked for and toward world peace, as did the old League of Nations. Man has sought after, strived and prayed for peace among men, but it has not happened, nor will it happen.

Jesus, In Matthew 10:34 says,

Think not that I come to send (bring) peace on earth: I came not to send peace. but a sword.

Beloved, as long as there is sin in the hearts of men, there will be no peace in the world, that is peace between nation, peoples and families.

However, in the midst of the turmoil going on in the world we can live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty as Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

HOW? How are we to effect peace with the world and those in the world? How can we be peace makers in the world so that we can live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty during the times of our being tempted, tried and tested; when we our faith is being stretched to its limits?

1 Timothy 2:1-2.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

When we pray and make intercession for all men and for those in places of authority, WE ARE BEING PEACE MAKERS.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS: FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

VERSE 10 - *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake*

"FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE"

What does it mean to be persecuted for "righteousness sake"?

The answer is seen in Matthew 5:11 and in 1 Peter 4:1

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

1 Peter 4:14, If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

In these two passages there are three words or phrases that describes what it means to be persecuted for "righteousness sake", that is to say, to be persecuted because you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

1. REVILE YOU

Revile in Matthew 5:11 and reproached in 1 Peter 4:14 are translations of the same word, which in these passages has the meaning of "criticizing, to making fun of, to mock, to make one feel ashamed, to find fault."

You then are being revile for "righteousness sake" if someone "criticizes you, or makes fun of you, or tries to make you feel bad/ashamed or finds fault with you (that is considers you to be a lesser person, one who is weak, not an independent thinker) because you are a Christian - a follower of Jesus, go to church, living a clean moral life and want join them in their vulgarity and immorality.

2. PERSECUTE YOU

Here in Matthew 5:11 has the meaning of "pursuing you", that is to say. Following one around, or whenever they might meet/get together to continually pursue, never letting up to continually "criticizing, to making fun of, to mock, to make one feel ashamed, pointing out ones faults, finding fault."

An example of this type of persecution is seen in 2 Samuel 16:5-13 where Shimei came out and cursed David as David and his men came by and then in verse 13 we see Shimei pursuing, following along after David and continued to curse David.

2 Samuel 16:13, And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

You then are being persecuted for "righteousness sake" in the sense of Matthew 5:11 when someone continually pursues, want let up in "criticizing you, or making fun of you, or tries to make you feel bad/ashamed or finding fault with you because you are a Christian - a follower of Jesus, going to church, living a clean moral life and want join them in their vulgarity and immorality.

3. SAY ALL MANNER OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY

That is to say, telling and spreading evil lies about you to all those around and wherever they have opportunity.

The reality is, that if you are serving the Lord, if you are following, being an imitator of Jesus in your daily life and you resist and do not let those who are making fun of you, mocking you, criticizing you, finding fault with you, trying to make you ashamed of Jesus turn you to their way of thinking and doing, THAT THE NEXT STEP is to spread all manner of evil, malicious lies against you.

NOW what would Jesus, our Teacher have us learn from this beatitude when our faith is being stretched to the limits. When this persecution because we are a follower of Jesus comes our way?

First, of all Jesus would have us learn not to be surprised when persecution for being a Christian comes. He would have us take to heart the Words of 1 Peter 4:12.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Secondly, Jesus would have us learn that the way of escape when persecution for His name sake comes to us is to **REJOICE, TO PRAISE GOD FROM WHO ALL BLESSINGS FLOW.**

Matthew 5:12, Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Thirdly, we are to learn and keep in mind that in being persecuted that we stand in good company as Jesus says in Matthew 5:12,

For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.