

MATTHEW 5:10-11

We conclude our series on the beatitudes this week with a look at Mt. 5:10-12. It is important that we view the beatitudes as problem solvers and confidence builders. The intent of this column each week is to encourage people to live the Christian life and develop a Positive Spiritual Attitude (PSA). Our Lord does just that in His sermon on the mount. He speaks of great and precious truths that, if we will allow them, shape our lives into the very mold that God desires for one to be a child of His.

Because we are trying to do good in our lives, Satan will do all that he can to stop us. He works through temptation and persecution in hopes of making shipwreck of one's Christianity. God knows this, and through His Son tells us to be prepared when persecution comes our way. Christ said, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall reproach you, and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that, were before you."

With these thoughts in mind it comes as no surprise for Paul to say, "And indeed, all who desire to Live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2Tim. 3:12). One of the unfortunate facts of living for Jesus is that, we will have to suffer while wearing that name. Peter said, "but, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God" (1Pet. 4:16).

As difficult as it may seem, the admonition of the New Testament is that we are guaranteed problems and persecutions; so therefore, take note that because you have them you are living the Christian life and should rejoice in that. Those who do not suffer as Christians because of their beliefs and actions may not be living the kind of life outlined by Christ. This doesn't mean we go looking for trouble, but it does mean that when an individual is trying to live for Christ he is on a collision course with the world. When we convict the world of its sin by our life and our words, there is bound to be some "fireworks." Satan is active in pursuing our downfall. Those to whom are giving him allegiance of committing sin are in his fold, so he will spend more time in trying to cause the faithful to sin. Satan is evangelistic in his cause.

We must not confuse however, the possibility of our own misconduct causing some of our problems and persecutions. This realm is not covered in this beatitude but rather Christ is speaking of persecutions that arise from without, not within.

Our comfort in the midst, of trial comes in two forms according to our Lord. First, we can have comfort in knowing that it, is through persecutions we enter in the kingdom and receive our reward in heaven. The saying is true; nothing worthwhile ever comes easy. And secondly, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we are not the only ones who have suffered. The prophets were persecuted just as we, and we have their example to help us and encourage us (see Heb. 11:37-12:2).

The beatitudes mark the inner character of the Christian and can be used as identifiers of His true followers. Let us strive to develop our PSA and our Christianity by being the type of people described in Mt. 5:3-12.