

SERMON-BASED STUDY: PEACE AND PERSECUTION

Matthew 5:9-12, ESV – ⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Notes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 This week we learned that peacemakers are not easygoing, tolerant, or appeasing. Instead, they “wage peace.” What does it mean to “wage peace”?
- 2 To “wage peace,” a person must have peace in them. How can a person have peace in them and maintain that peace through the trials of life?
- 3 Why does the world not tolerate righteous living and inevitably persecute those who do live this way?

DIGGING DEEPER

A ***Ephesians 4:1-3, ESV** – I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

4 According to the passage above, unity is bound by peace. How is unity of the Spirit bound in peace?

5 Paul refers to himself as a prisoner for the Lord. What does he mean by this? Do you see yourself as a prisoner of the Lord? Why or why not?

6 Paul lists characteristics of a person who seeks unity in the bond of peace. Which of these do you find the most difficult in your life? How can you better exhibit this characteristic in your life?

B ***John 15:18-20a, ESV** – ¹⁸“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*

***Acts 5:41-42, ESV** – ⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.*

7 Why does Jesus give this clear warning to all believers in John 15:18-20a?

8 Looking at Acts 5:41-42, how did the apostles react to being persecuted? Why did they react this way?

9 In light of this understanding, how should believers prepare themselves for the inevitable persecution that will come?

TAKING IT HOME

Jesus reminds us that we are to actively seek peace and to expect persecution. Both involve difficult interactions with other people. These things are part of our calling and are not optional. How can we best interact with others? How are you doing with being a peacemaker? How are you doing with dealing with persecution? Share with your group or accountability partner what God has been showing you. Pray for one another as you seek to be peacemakers and people who rejoice in the midst of persecution.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Isaiah 9:6
Luke 2:14
John 14:27
Romans 12:17-18, 14:19
Colossians 1:19-20
2 Timothy 3:10-14
James 3:13-18