

**Persecution:
are we feeling
blessed yet?**



**Persecution:
Preparing
for the future.**



Persecution in America: More, less, the same?



**Why aren't we
fighting back?**



**Two churches who are
fighting back**



**Special treatment
based on 1st
Amendment**



**Equal treatment based
on the 1st Amendment
and Equal Protection
Clause**



Special treatment
Equal treatment



Special treatment

Equal treatment

Lesser treatment?



**We strongly endorse religious
freedom under the
1st Amendment . . .**



**We strongly endorse religious
freedom under the
1st Amendment . . .**

**But we are governed by the
1st Commandment!**



**Summary to this point:
What would one look
like who lives out
the beatitudes?**



5:3 Poor in Spirit: I recognize that I'm spiritually impoverished. This compels me to be humble and dependent on God.



**5:4 I mourn my sin. I hate what it
does to God, to others,
and to myself.**



5:5 Meekness. Because of dependency on God and my sinfulness and I give others the benefit of the doubt. I don't need to win arguments, and don't always need to prove I'm right



**5:6 Because I hunger and thirst
after righteousness, I continually
strive to live more like Jesus.**



**5:7 I behave mercifully towards
those who deserve mercy
and those who do not.**



5:8 Purity: I have a single-minded devotion to Christ which drives me to push out of my life anything that separates me from the Focus of my affection.



5:9 Peacemaker. My heartfelt inclination is to help people reconcile to each other, to God, and to me.



**How beloved and admired
would we be if each of
these were true of us?**



Last but not least . . .
And totally different from
each that precedes it . . .



**5:9-10 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.



Why would this be?



**Why would this be?
Satan?**



**7 It is for discipline [*rigorous training*]
that you have to endure. God is
treating you as sons. For what
son is there whom his
father does not discipline?**



He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Heb. 10:7, 10-11

2⁰if, when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 2¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, LEAVING YOU AN EXAMPLE, SO THAT YOU MIGHT FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS. 1 Peter 2



1³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 1⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 1 Peter 2



29 For it has been granted (“*graced*”) to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake . . . Phil. 1



How can we genuinely rejoice
when persecuted?



1. Love our Savior with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.



**2. Love our neighbor as we love
our self – love our enemies
and our persecutors.**



43You have heard that it was said,
**‘Love your neighbor and hate your
enemy.’ 44**But I tell you, love your
enemies and pray for those who
persecute you, **45**that you may be
children of your Father in heaven.

Matt. 5:43-45

