

## **“Groans & Glory” Matthew 5:10-12**

**Wednesday 5/29/19 – Jeff Lyle**

**One of the most challenging things for us to process is how to reconcile the truth that all Christians are unspeakably loved, graced and blessed by God while, at the same time, recognizing that we are not kept insulated from loss, pain and suffering. As we approach the last beatitude, we hear what Jesus teaches about our being persecuted because of our loyalty to Him. The bible promises persecution for all who live committed lives to Jesus. But this is NEVER the end of the story. The Savior emphatically reminds us of the glorious end of the Christian’s story so that we might overcome the painful days that we experience before we reach that appointed end.**

### **I. The Burdens: Where We Must Walk as Christians (10-12)**

**“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

**A. The reason for persecution (10a, 11b) - “...for righteousness’ sake...on My account.”**

Not all personal mistreatment is equal to persecution. Not all suffering is connected to persecution. Jesus is declaring a blessing on those who are treated wrongly due to their connection to Him. In our public commitment to live in loyalty and love to Jesus, we will eventually encounter strong opposition. When we maintain that loyalty to Him in the midst of persecution, Jesus declares that we are a blessed people.

**B. The mode of persecution (11a) - “...when others revile you and persecute you, utter all kinds of evil against you falsely...”**

The reality of persecution can be as mild as others' stinging, wounding words against us. It can also reach the intensity of being the targets of harmful actions. Christians are stripped of dignity, honor and property all around the world as they refuse to compromise their loyalty to the King who loves them. Their steadfastness costs them. Paul declares in 2 Timothy 3:12 that all who desire to live godly lives will encounter some level of persecution. We expect to revile, rejected and mistreated. As the end of the age approaches, this reality will increase. We are called and empowered to remain steadfastness.

**C. The response to this persecution (12a) - “Rejoice and be glad...”**

This cannot be achieved in the energy of human will. To truly rejoice and express gladness when we are mistreated can only become our reality through intimacy with Jesus and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The rejoicing is not connected to some twisted love for shame and pain. The rejoicing is that we are participating in a degree of identification with Jesus that positions us for the world's hostility against Him. We are made glad because we recognize that they see enough of Him in us to treat us like they treated Him when He was on earth. We do not embrace the identity of a helpless victim. We rejoice in that we are counted worthy of experiencing the very same treatment that our Lord experienced. We are seen as being one of His own people. The joy of our identity in Jesus is greater than the pain of our rejection by the world.

**D. The precedent for persecution (12b) - "...they persecuted the prophets who were before you."**

Simply put, the people of God have always been reviled and rejected by a world that does not know Him. This is not new. This has been the case since Cain and Abel in the garden. The persecution of those who are in Christ will climax at the end of the age with countless thousands (millions probably) being slain for refusing to recant their commitment to Jesus. One of the glories of the eternal state is that there will no longer be any enemies of God, and our reality will only be that of the loving, tender care of the Father who shepherds His flock through human hostilities.

**V. The Blessings: Where We Arrive As Christians (3-12)**

**A. We have a guaranteed inheritance (3, 5) "...theirs is the kingdom of heaven...for they shall inherit the earth."**

Slow down a moment and consider what Jesus is saying to us. As those who are found in Him, we are promised an inheritance which will come to us from the Father. The inheritance is described as our possessing the Kingdom of Heaven while simultaneously inheriting the earth. Jesus leaves nothing untouched - the entire realm of Heaven and Earth is ours. There is not one among us who can fully fathom what He is teaching here. The big picture promise is that, as co-heirs with Him, Jesus is declaring that all He has, we also have. During this present age, we walk in a poverty of spirit - bankrupt of pride and ego, trusting in nothing from our own selves apart from Him. We are meek - unimpressive by the standards of our generation. We actually give ourselves away for the glory of an invisible King. When all

is said and done, however, there will come a full revelation that we have been heirs of the Kingdom and rulers of the earth the entire time. This is a promise from the Father, through the Son and unto us. The identity that we currently possess by faith will become unhindered and fully manifested for all of eternity. It is no exaggeration to declare now that we are nobility, we are wealthy, we are powerful, we are positioned for glory. Yes, we are waiting for the fulness of that reality to manifest, but it is no less true just because it is believed by faith in this current season of our existence. We possess a guaranteed inheritance in Christ.

**B. We are promised relief (4) “...for they shall be comforted.”**

We should expect to mourn, but not forever. Our deepest longing is for Christ to return, therefore we live presently in a state of longing, mourning for our Bridegroom to appear. We also mourn over sin - our own and that of our generation. We mourn over injustice and death and loss. We must remember that all of these things are temporary. We are presently comforted in all our affliction by Holy Spirit who lives within us and draws our hearts near to the ministry of comfort that He releases. When Jesus returns to this planet, all of our mourning will cease and desist. This is the promise! Are you suffering now? Is sadness finding you at impacting levels? Have you experienced a deepening of your longing for your King to appear? Rest assured, you will be comforted, along with all others who cannot be fully satisfied until they see Jesus upon the earth.

**C. We experience fullness in life (6) “...for they shall be satisfied.”**

Our hungering and thirsting after righteousness indicates that Jesus is alive within us. We are receiving His own desires as He imparts them to us through the Spirit and the Word of God. We hate sin - especially our own when it arises. We long for the day when the entire planet will come under the righteous rule of King Jesus. This is the climax of the Kingdom! When Jesus returns to earth, it will not be to observe and inspect in neutrality. He is coming to establish a dominion of holy authority and power. He will rule in love toward those who are His. He will satisfy our hearts desire for what is just, holy and good. It will no longer be intermittent when He returns to rule. The entire atmosphere of the Kingdom will be righteousness. We will have no sin to put to death within us. We will be made perfect in that Day. Until then, we keep hungering, thirsting, longing, dying to self, rising to Christ and believing for the fulness of righteousness to come and satisfy us.

**D. We receive mercy (7) - “...for they shall receive mercy.”**

Our mercifulness to others does not always seem to be rewarded in this life. Yet, Jesus continues to lead His people deeper into a willingness to live in

mercy toward others. This call to mercy is 100% horizontal - we can only release mercy on others because God needs none from us. He declares that, as we live out the mercy which He releases through us, we also position ourselves to be recipients of mercy. Also included in this promise that we receive mercy is a forward look toward the final judgment. Those who give mercy prove that they have received mercy, therefore they should expect more mercy when the final appraisal of our lives is given. If one can live with no pattern and desire of releasing mercy on other people, it is highly unlikely that they have ever received mercy from God. Mercy from God to us births mercy from God through us. The mercy recipients will live as mercy dispensers. In the end, we will glorify God for being the lone source of all mercy.

#### **E. We experience intimacy with God (8) - "...for they shall see God."**

What an amazing promise is here found! Could there be a greater one? To see God is the pinnacle of all promises made to us as Jesus-followers. There is a manner in which those who are purehearted can see God - experience intimacy with Him - here and now by faith. We draw near unto the invisible God and sense His nearness when we approach Him by faith with hearts that are singular and surrendered. Jesus is speaking of more than intimacy with the Father by faith. Jesus is expressing in human words the future experience that all of the redeemed of God whose hearts have been made pure through the blood of His Son will find themselves for all of eternity in God's very presence. We will, in some unfathomable manner, see God. In glorified bodies which can survive the blaze of His immeasurable glory, we will behold our God. Remember that this promise is given to the pure in heart. If we have been saved from our sins, our hearts have been declared pure. If this declaration of justification is over us, there will be a practical purity about our lives. Pure heartedness is a verification of our salvation. For those who believe and live in a holy pattern of purity, there is the unwavering hope that we will see God.

#### **F. We resemble and reflect God (9) - "...for they shall be called sons of God."**

Holy Spirit is working on you, making you to look like God. This is not a physical resemblance, but a spiritual one. As our children often resemble us physically, we will begin to look more and more like God as we walk in faith with Him. Even when our children do not physically resemble us, they pick up our mannerisms. Our children adopt our habits, our patterns of behavior and our values. It is no different with the children of God. Particularly, this promise is for those who live as peacemakers. All believers are ambassadors of peace - reconciling people to God and people to other people. Jesus indicates that living in this way will make us image bearers to

such an extent that we will be known as sons of God - children that remind others of our Father.

**G. We have great reward awaiting us (12) - "...for your reward is great in heaven..."**

Again, Jesus reminds us of an eternal victory which follows temporary losses. The persecuted will experience pain and loss - even agony - while on earth. To be so aligned with Jesus that people hate you as much as they hate Him is an honor most modern Christians do not immediately value. Our flesh wants our cake and eat it too. We want ease, comfort, blessing, power, breakthrough and bounty. Jesus leaves no room for any realistic expectation that this could be our lot for the entirety of our earthly pilgrimage. He says that those who remain loyal to Him will experience persecution - relational, physical and verbal attacks will come. He says that, as we endure, we will be joining in with the faithful prophets of old who often died for their faithfulness and loyalty to God. In the end, all these temporary losses will disappear into the blaze of God's glory as He chooses to honor and reward our allegiance to His Son, Jesus. It is no token reward. It is a GREAT reward according to the King. One can only imagine what He has in store for those who endure whatever comes their way in this life in order to remain faithful to Him. Yes, there must be groans, but the end of the story is not groaning, but glory.

**The word BLESSED indicates that Jesus is saying, "Oh how happy are they!"**

**The reason that repentant, broken, meek, thirsting, merciful, pure-hearted, peacemaking, persecuted people are happy is because:**

**They are inheriting the Kingdom of God both now and forever (3, 10)**

**They receive their comfort from the heart of God (4)**

**They understand that all that is denied them now will one day be under their rule (5)**

**They alone are the only ones who can be completely satisfied (6)**

**They experience God's mercy (7)**

**They are experiencing intimacy with God now, and will do so forever (8)**

**They are fulfilling the will of God in that they are taking on His character so much that they are known as His children (9)**

**They are promised a great reward when their life is over (12)**