





COMMUNITY GUIDE

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WEEKLY APPLICATION

TAKEAWAY: What would happen if we lived our faith with the wholeheartedness that characterized Christians of the first four centuries?

HEAD CHANGE: Whenever the Church pursues power, it loses. Whenever the Church practices sacrificial love, it grows.

HEART CHANGE: Break the fear of human opinion.

LIFE CHANGE: Implement the victory of God in the world through suffering love.

OVERVIEW

As we continue our series on the Beatitudes, Jordan preached on Christ's blessing over those who are persecuted. As we look back on church history and consider the global persecution of our brothers and sisters in other countries, we see countless examples of this. But in our modern, American context, we see a perhaps more subtle version of persecutions. Jesus confirms in this passage that we will experience persecution and if we do not, we must ask ourselves, why? Jesus also invites us to respond through rejoicing and gladness. Persecution develops in the Christian, a deep spiritual formation into the image of Jesus and the joy of being faithfully united with Him.

"But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in Heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and unjust alike."
-Matthew 5:44-46 (NLT)-

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you in this teaching? Why do you think that resonated with you?
2. Have you felt persecuted because of your beliefs/stance on moral/ethical issues before? If so, what was the situation (physical/verbal or emotional) and how did it affect you?
3. We need to break the fear of human opinion. Is there a specific area of our lives in which we've submitted to a specific human authority? Why do we think this specific area is so hard for us?
4. What might "working out our convictions in advance" look like for us if we implemented this in our personal lives? In our work lives? On social media?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I ask for self-awareness as to where I might be holding back from being true image bearers of Jesus, and for strength and conviction as light-bearer for you. I pray that you open my eyes to see those around me that need the truth you have revealed to me and the grace that you continually show me. Give me courage to follow you in the light and not the dark. In Jesus' name, amen.

IN THIS TOGETHER!