

Beatitudes 5... Sermon on the Mount

NIV

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

NSRV

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

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

THE MESSAGE

“You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom. “Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven. God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.

What do you see as differences between these four translations?

How are they similar?

Which one seems best to you?

“For it is by these that they who renounce possessions, fortune, rights, righteousness, honour, and force for the sake of following Christ, will be distinguished from the world. The world will be offended at them, and so the disciples will be persecuted for righteousness’ sake. Not recognition, but rejection, is the reward they get from the world for their message and works.”– *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Change of focus from “blessed are those” to “Blessed are *you*.”

When vs. if

What was the experience of the early Church? Why?

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – Daniel 3 (p. 1374)

What had they done to deserve their punishment? Why did they do it?

Why should the disciples expect to be persecuted? Why should we?

“If you haven’t discovered something that is worth dying for, you haven’t found anything worth living for.” – *Martin Luther King Jr.*

“When the devil harasses us, we know ourselves to be in good shape.” – *Martin Luther*

“For my sake’ the disciples are reproached, but because it is for his sake, the reproach falls on him. It is he who bears the guilt. The curse, the deadly persecution and evil slander confirm the blessed state of the disciples in their fellowship with Jesus. It could not be otherwise, for these meek strangers are bound to provoke the world to insult, violence and slander.” – *Bonhoeffer*

What didn’t Jesus say?

- Blessed are the happy (what about our unalienable right to the pursuit of happiness?)
- Blessed are the cool... the good looking
- Blessed are those who find themselves totally independent