

Happy Are the Persecuted
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“Happy Are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Happy are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of things about 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.” Matthew 5:10-12

WHAT TO REMEMBER

1. OPPOSITION CAN MAKE ME MORE LIKE JESUS.

JESUS: “When the world hates you, remember it hated me first. The world would love you IF you belonged to it, but you don’t. I chose you out of the world. That’s why the world will hate you. No servant is ever greater than his master. So since they persecuted me they will persecute you too.” John 15:18-20

“If you’re abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It’s the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others.” 1 Peter 4:14 (Msg)

2. OPPOSITION WILL DEEPEN MY FAITH.

“These troubles will prove that your faith is genuine. Just as gold is purified by fire and heat, so your faith, which is far more precious than gold, must also be purified by fire so it may endure. Then you’ll receive praise and glory and honor on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” 1 Peter 1:7

3. OPPOSITION WILL GIVE ME ETERNAL REWARDS.

“God BLESSES those who are persecuted because they live for God: the Kingdom of Heaven will be theirs! You will be blessed WHEN people insult you, and 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.” Matthew 5:10-12

WHAT TO DO

1. DON’T BE SURPRISED.

“Dear friends, don’t be surprised or shocked when you go through painful trials that are like walking through fire, as though something unusual is happening to you.”

1 Peter 4:12

“In fact everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” 2 Timothy 3:12

2. DON’T BE AFRAID

“If you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it, so don’t be afraid and don’t worry! Instead, worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.” 1 Peter 3:14-15 (NLT)

3. DON'T BE ASHAMED.

"It is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Instead, thank God for the privilege of being called by his name!" 1 Peter 4:16 (NLT)

"Take a firm stand against Satan and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are." 1 Peter 5:9 (NLT)

"Remember, it is better to suffer for doing God's will than to suffer for doing evil." 1 Peter 3:17

4. RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE OF THE OPPOSITION.

"We're not fighting against human beings, but against wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly realm . . ."
Ephesians 6:12

"Stay away from stupid and senseless arguments. These only lead to trouble. God's servants must never quarrel. (Instead) be kind to everyone . . . and be patient. Be humble when you correct people who oppose you . . . they've been trapped by the devil, and he makes them obey him, but God may help them escape." 2 Timothy 2:23-26

5. REFUSE TO RETALIATE.

"Never pay back evil with more evil . . . If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. And never avenge yourself. Leave that to God, who has said, 'I'll be the judge and I'll take care of it.'" Romans 12:17-19

"Those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." 1 Peter 4:19 (NIV)

6. RESPOND WITH A BLESSING.

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21 (ESV)

Jesus: *"Love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. BLESS those who curse you. PRAY for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn the other cheek."* Luke 6:27b-29a (NLT)

