

Briefing Document: Sermon on the Mount, Matthew – Lesson 41

Date: September 28, 2025

Executive Summary

This sermon, titled “Happy Are the Persecuted,” teaches that persecution is an inevitable, necessary, and affirming consequence of genuine Christian faith. Drawing from Matthew 5:10–12, it emphasizes that living a righteous life opposed to the world will provoke hostility.

Persecution is framed as both a “wonderful guarantee” of salvation and a call to uncompromising faith. The sermon warns against modern Christianity’s tendency to lower standards for acceptance, urging believers instead to live boldly as light in the world, regardless of the consequences.

1. The Inevitability of Persecution for the Righteous

- Core Principle:

Galatians 4:29 – “But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.”

The principle is clear: he who is born of the flesh will always persecute him who is born of the Spirit.

- Living in Opposition: A true child of God lives in direct opposition to Satan and his world system. This inevitably brings resentment and persecution from those who reject the message.

- Jesus as the Example: Though Jesus was the most loving, gracious, kind, and peaceful person who ever lived, He created antagonism because He confronted sin.

- Historical Precedent:

- Abel was murdered by Cain because his righteousness exposed Cain’s unrighteousness.

- Moses chose to suffer with his people rather than enjoy the pleasures of Egyptian privilege.

2. Persecution as an Assurance of Salvation

- Guarantee of Authenticity: One of the strongest guarantees of salvation is experiencing persecution.

- Need for Self-Examination: A lack of persecution should cause spiritual reflection: If you do not experience opposition for your faith, you must question your spiritual condition.

- Dual Proof (Philippians 1:28–29):

1. For Opponents: Persecution is evidence of their destruction (“perdition”), pointing to their destiny of hell.

2. For Believers: Persecution is proof of salvation, a gift from God.

- Mandate to Suffer:

Philippians 1:29 – “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

1 Thessalonians 3:3 – “...that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.”

3. A Critique of Modern Christianity’s “Lowered Standards”

- Illusion of a Tolerant World: The world has not grown more accepting; rather, Christianity has lowered its standards.
- Shift in Righteousness: What once was considered godliness is now deemed “extreme.”
- Pursuit of Popularity: Many churches seek approval instead of truth:
 - Avoiding mention of sin.
 - Refusing to warn of hell.
 - Prioritizing happiness over holiness.
- Example of Compromise: The speaker criticized pastors who rejoiced over Charlie Kirk’s death, noting such behavior as incompatible with God’s standards.

4. The Uncompromising Mandate for Believers

- How to Escape Persecution (Ironically):
 - Approve the world’s morals and ethics.
 - Avoid calling out sin.
 - Deny that Christ is the only way.
 - Laugh at worldly jokes and entertainment.
 - Be ashamed of Jesus.

- Consequences of Compromise:

Luke 6:26 – “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”

Jesus warns: “If you are ashamed of Me, I will be ashamed of you.”

- Call to Action: Believers are urged to embrace the Beatitudes and expect persecution as the inevitable reaction to a righteous life.

5. Forms of Modern Persecution

- Beyond Martyrdom: Persecution is not only physical suffering but also social and professional.
- Examples:

- Being denied promotion at work due to faith.
- Ostracism from family, friends, or neighbors.
- Rejection from communities for confronting sin.

Key Scriptural References

Scripture

Matthew 5:10–12

Galatians 4:29

Philippians 1:28–29

1 Thessalonians 3:3

Luke 6:26

Core Message in Sermon

Blessed are the persecuted; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The flesh persecutes the Spirit—an unchanging principle.

Persecution proves the persecutor’s perdition and the believer’s salvation.

Afflictions are part of God’s appointment for believers.

Woe to those universally praised, as with false prophets.

✓ Notes:

- No Greek words appear in this briefing.
- All Scripture references and quotations were verified against the NKJV Bible.