



Blessed are the Persecuted – pt.2

“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”

(Matthew 5:11-12 NIV)

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

We live in a highly reactive society where people are very vocal and aggressive when they are offended; but as Christians, we don't need to live reactive lives. In those moments, we need to remember that God has called us to respond to offense in a way that is counter cultural. We know that offense is inevitable. So we need to prepare for it and respond to our offenders with love. This uncommon response will point others to Jesus and allow us to be salt and light in a world that desperately needs God!

START THINKING

- What do you usually do when someone offends you? Do you tend to be reactive, or do you take time to think and pray before you respond?
- Is unforgiveness holding you back from experiencing true joy in your life? If so, why are you struggling to forgive that offense?
- What are some practical ways you can “do good” to someone who offends you? What might keep you from taking that step in response to offense?

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Romans 12:21 NIV

MAKE IT PRACTICAL

- Choose to overlook the offense. Instead, empathize with the person who offended you, looking past their behavior and imagining the pain in their life.
- Keep your heart free from unforgiveness. Decide ahead of time that you're going to forgive anyone who hurts you.
- Pray for, bless, and do good to the person who offends you. Speak well of them and go the extra mile to serve them.
- Remember the eternal reward. Set your eyes on heaven and be content with delayed gratification. It will be worth it!

**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep,
to gain what he cannot lose. – Jim Elliot**

PRAYER

Father, thank You for being with us in every situation we face. Give us power to overcome fear when we encounter persecution. Awaken boldness within us so that we will stand on Your word when we are told to kneel. Deepen our convictions in Your truth so that we will never compromise. Give us eyes to see how You're working in our lives when we walk through fire. And help us persevere through trials so that we can pass on our passion and conviction to the next generation, for Your glory. In Jesus' Name.

Processing Kairos:

Our three key questions to ask from this week's message:

1. What is God saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. Who are you going to tell?

