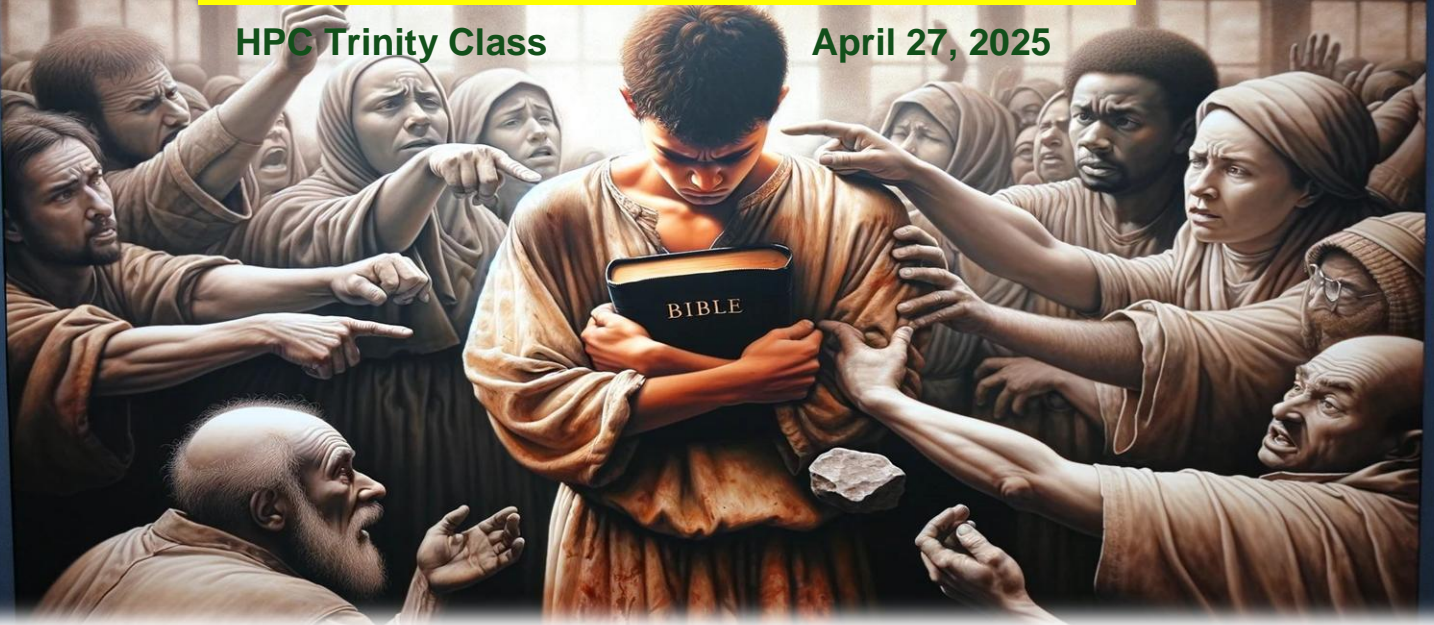


# Matthew 5:10----Those Who are Persecuted

HPC Trinity Class

April 27, 2025



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

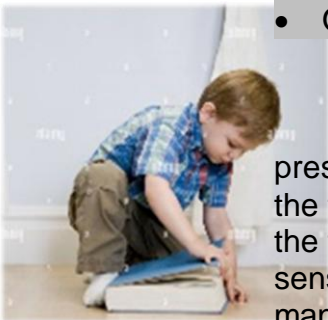
*Beatitudo* (Latin). In Greek it's *makarios*. In both languages it points to certain people who have experienced privileged or fortunate circumstances. When used in a religious sense both the Latin and the Greek infer a blessing from God.

Most beatitudes begin with the word “blessed” or “happy.” In addition, New Testament writers usually included the word “for” or “because” [*ὅτι*] to explain the reasons for the good fortune.

FYI: The word “beatitude” is not capitalized unless it is referring to a specific event. For example, “There were reports of many beatitudes in Jesus’ day.”

**BUT** “When Jesus presented the Beatitudes people listened.”

- Open your own Bibles and flip to the Book of Matthew.



You will find that these first eight Beatitudes are presented in a poetic form, being set apart from the rest of the text. Today’s verse, MT 5:10, is often considered to be the final beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount in its truest sense. (Although verses 11 and 12 begin in the same manner as the previous verses by using the phrase “blessed are you,” they best fit the “salt and light”

## THE BEATITUDES

*Blessed* are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*Blessed* are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

*Blessed* are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

*Blessed* are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

*Blessed* are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

*Blessed* are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

*Blessed* are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

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

Matt. 5:3-10

message of Jesus' that follows in vss.13-16.)

### **Beatitudes in the rest of the Bible:**

In the Old Testament the Book of Psalms has the most beatitudes. Ps. 41:1 and 65:4 are good examples. **[READ PSALM 41:1].** The books of Isaiah and Daniel also contain beatitudes.

Many of those in the New Testament are quotations from the Old Testament. For instance, Romans 4:7-8 is from Psalm 32. (Rom. 14:22, however, is solely from Paul.)



The beatitudes of the New Testament differ from those of the Old in one important aspect:

Those in the NT stress the eschatological joy of participating in the Kingdom of God, rather than simply the rewards during this earthly life.<sup>1</sup>  
**[re-READ PSALM 41:1-3 with this in mind.]**

Beatitudes were meant to be read silently and absorbed. They were a literary technique, not well suited for use in speeches or dialogue. The writer and reader understood this bookend-effect...that the words in the middle were to be taken to heart and etched into his/her memory.

This means "it hardly seems likely that Jesus spoke at one time as many [beatitudes] as reported by the First Evangelist."<sup>2</sup> The Sermon on the Mount, therefore, was probably not a single long sermon, but was instead a collection of sermons and instructions given by Jesus during his entire ministry, which were later compiled by Matthew (and Luke).

### ***Inclusio***

In vs. 3 Jesus begins a series of declarations where he uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven." Verse 10 ends with the same words: "kingdom of heaven." Matthew's gospel treats this phrase as a kind of bookend, which was a common technique in ancient writing and was not unique to either Matthew or Jesus. This bracketing effect is known as an ***inclusio***. We find it in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as in Jewish and pagan literature.

For instance:

Psalm 118, Martin Luther's favorite, is an *inclusio*, beginning (v. 1) and ending (v. 29) with the same phrase:

**"Give thanks to the Lord, for  
he is good;  
his love endures forever."**

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<sup>1</sup> Interpreter's, pg. 370.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pg. 371.



### Back to MT 5:10

Christ says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness." To be persecuted did not refer to simply taunting or shunning. The Greek word for "persecuted" gives a clearer meaning: it refers to those who were harassed and hunted down. It was a term used in describing wild beasts which were pursued by hunters.

### **[READ 1 PETER 3:13-16]**

Also, to describe a person as persecuted did not mean those people who were oppressed in general, such as the poor or crippled. Rather, Jesus here is referring to those who are unjustly victimized and threatened because of their commitment to righteousness. Righteous living is often offensive to others (as we'll find out in next Sunday's lesson).

And such God-fearing people would be easy to spot. MT 5:14-16 points out that they would be conspicuous by their attitudes and actions.

During Jesus' time on earth the bulk of persecution would have come from fellow Israelites, one's so-called "friends and neighbors," who failed to recognize Jesus



as the Messiah. It wasn't until the stoning of Stephen (c. 35 A.D.) that Christians as a whole felt strong persecution from Jews. The government of the Roman Empire could have cared less about this seemingly internal squabble amongst these

"filthy" Hebrew people. They were fairly apathetic toward all of this until later when it became apparent that Christians were unwilling to worship the emperor, as Roman law required. Jesus knew that his followers would experience the same hostility that he had to bear. **[READ JOHN 15:18-19]**

But, as we find in 2 Timothy 2:12, the good news is this: “If we endure, we will also reign with him [Jesus].” On the flip side, “if we disown him, he will also disown us.”

The choice is ours!

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