

Lessons From the Sermon of Jesus on the Mountain Part 38

“11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake:” (Matthew 5:11 KJV)

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you: These words are particularly directed to us, the disciples of Christ, and are designed to inform us, that we should not be exempted from reproach and persecution in order to fortify us and strengthen us against it. The first Christians particularly, were to endure for Christ's sake. We too shall we pass through that. Men would revile us, speak very reproachfully, brand us with infamy, and load us with disgrace and shall persecute us for Christ's sake.

This excludes those who suffer justly for their real crimes and sins, for then that is their punishment: ***“15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.” (1 Peter 4:15 KJV)*** *We should not suffer because we sinned, committed murder, stealing, or we had done evil, or wrong to others.*

And shall say all manner of evil against you: The worst things they could think of and invent against us is that we are causing seditious or division, they may say that we are enemies to the commonwealth, and the public good, guilty of murder, or other crimes, but what would work to relieve us under these heavy charges is that they are falsely laid; that there is not a word of truth in them; wherefore our own hearts would not reproach us because all were the malicious lies of men, invented on purpose to bring us and God's Word that we proclaim into disgrace. We will be cursed by them and evil spoken but finally we will be blessed, and vindicated, for Heaven for us, and we will be rewarded but they who did evil against us shall perish, ***“So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.” (Judges 5:31 KJV)***

** People may not understand us and will not understand what we are doing for God and for His Word, that is why we will be treated in ill way when we will pursue the righteousness of Christ and do His work. * I always pray that people will understand what I am doing or what the church is doing, because those who persecute us and the church may not understand what we are doing, as well as they might be deceived by devil or by others who had taken them captive to do their evil will. * That is why also we need to forgive those who ill treat us and persecute us, putting in our minds that they are deceived by devil or by other people who are trying to pull them far away from the will of God.*

“12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you:” (Matthew 5:12 KJV)

Rejoice and be exceeding glad: *Why the disciples of Jesus and we today need to rejoice and be exceedingly glad when we are persecuted? Because of the honor put upon us, the glory we bring to Christ and His cause, by cheerfully suffering for it; and because of the glory and happiness that shall follow upon our sufferings.* With this Word of Jesus the suffering saints will receive the comfort. They and we are blessed; for they

now, in their life-time, receive their evil things, as Abraham said to the rich man, ***“But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” (Luke 16:25 KJV)*** *Persecution, rejection, separation, isolation, boycotting and the rest are the tokens of our reward in Heaven.* The opposite of that is when we live in prosperity and non willingness to suffer for Christ, ***“24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. 25 Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.” (Luke 6:24-25 KJV)*** So when we live in suffering for Christ we will be rewarded and comforted in Heaven. *But when we flatter the people and compromise with them to make them love us and like us, and we refuse to rebuke them for their sins to avoid suffering and persecution then the woes of God shall be what is left for us.* When we flatter the people the people will flatter us and in such we will be receiving the curse from God: ***“26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” (Luke 6:26 KJV)***

For great is your reward in heaven; Saints must not expect their reward here, but hereafter, when God himself will be their reward; He will be all in all; Christ and all His glory, and all the riches of it will be the reward of the inheritance. If we suffer now rejection and persecution, later on we will receive our reward and the blessedness of Heaven. We are blessed that is why it recommended by Christ to be joyful while you suffer, for it is an honor to us as it was to the apostles and the disciples of Jesus, ***“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” (Acts 5:41 KJV)*** ***“16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” (1 Peter 4:16 KJV)*** Let us rejoice and consider it worthy to suffer shame for His name.

We are also recommended to rejoice so we can continue our journey in a good morale and in a good spirit until we reach Heaven.

Also persecution involve isolation and separation, for the enemy will try to isolate us to feel lonely in order to be fearful and give up, ***“22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” (Luke 6:22-23 KJV)*** Here one of the things that we will face in our lives to walk in the narrow way is that we will be losing people, and people will hate us, will leave us, others will pull others from us in order to isolate us and cut various resources from us. Here the Lord recommends us to rejoice and leap for joy. Yes I cannot leap because I cannot jump, but I rejoice with persecution even when I have the pain.

Persecution is an opportunity of glorifying Christ, of doing good, and of experiencing special comforts and visits of grace and tokens of His presence, ***“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:5 KJV)*** We will receive bountiful consolation from Christ, especially when those we love and serve they are the one who hurt us and harm us.

We shall be recompensed for to us who are persecuted is the kingdom of heaven. We have at present a sure title to it, for we are promised a reward, **“for great is your reward in heaven.”** It is a great reward. It is in Heaven, we will receive it in the future, it is out of sight; but well secured, out of the reach of destruction, fraud, and violence. Heaven, at last, will be an abundant recompense for all the difficulties we meet with in our way. For this reason, as we, and the rest who got persecuted will receive salvation and the reward in Heaven, such will set joy in our hearts and minds.

Christ is with us when we are insulted revile or persecuted, **“He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”** (Daniel 3:25 KJV) Christ was with the three friends of Daniel. Let us read the whole story and get inspired and motivated.

“1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (In this world we are surrounded with people who focus on certain things like power, weapons, nuclear power, scientific researches and the power of finances in doing things and they are not aware about God and the power of God. Therefore one purpose of persecution is that we need to let these people know God and to direct them to God and what He can do in their lives. Here the king did this great preparation, an image, the music and the instruments, and gathered all the kind of people to honour himself with that image. When we live our lives for Christ and for His righteousness sake, preaching His Word and living His Word, we will be meeting people who delight to honour themselves, their lives and their names and achievements. Well we may not be bothered of what they do with themselves but time will come that they want others to move and to honour them more than what is due for them, or in a way that would contradict the Word of God, as the king did here): **4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:** (that request is not correct were the king is forcing the people to go along with him and worship the idol that he had created. According to the Word of God we should not worship idols or images. Therefore, that needed to be faced and beforehand he made a degree to persecute those who will refuse to go along with him.) **6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.** (Here we can see clearly how when we live the righteous life for God and Christ we will be shunning the mandate of devil and its instruments who would force us by their persecution to do evil and sin against God by forcing us to bow down to other gods and to other principles than the Word of God and that is the core of persecution to force us to deviate us from God and move in the direction away from God and from His ways. Devil and the people whom he use will force us to tell lies, to cheat, to compromise, to flatter, to go to parties, to

bribe, to fraud, and the rest of the evil doings, therefore we need to refuse and refrain from doing such). **7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. (All the people who do not know God will do such, but we who are the people of God we should not deviate from our course of living our life to God and go and do evil against Him. We cannot bow down to lies, to cheating, to stealing, to boasting, to flattering, to parties, to functions, to worldly celebration, to immoralities, to be bias and favour rich and powerful people when they are at wrong and in sin.** All the people will do that, but we are the people of God and we should not do that. All those people did not know God and here the purpose of persecution is not only to test our faith, but that we are called to testify about God and let this people experience Him and His presence and His power). **8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.** (Here devil came and use people; sometimes the people themselves they will volunteer to do evil against us, so they will receive the favour of others. They will come and report us and put us in troubles by telling the story how we disobeyed the instructions that is want us to compromise with the Word of God and the rules of God. We need to disobey such instructions and avoid doing wrong and sin against God and against His Word because we are the true people of God). **9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.** (Notice the language of flattery, they came and flatter the king, by saying O king, live for ever). **10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:** (They started to magnify and adore and beautify what the king did, that is how the people who does not know God will flatter and adore the worldly and the devilish achievements) **11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.** (Here after they magnified the king and what he did, then later on they presented the people of God as defectors to the commands of the king, while they are working as appointed officers over the affairs of the province of Babylon. They made for them a perfect cooked story to push them into the fire of persecution. They were telling the king that he gave the three friends of Daniel work, and gave them income and appointment therefore they should be the one to come and support you and approve what you are doing. We should not be the first one to approve wrong doing even if that will affect our jobs and our income). **13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.** (Persecution will be promoting the anger of the evil one against us, and that will bring more damage against us. That is here we can see the evil power of persecution by the tongue. It is start by tongue and progress to material losses and violence and physical injuries). **14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?** (The king did not believe that they did such and that they did not bow down to his order and did not worship the image that he made and did not comply with the rule that he released). **15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if**

ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? (Here the king gave them the final warning, otherwise they will be thrown to the burning furnace. People will challenge us with separation, isolation, boycotting, and the other threats if we will not bow down to their requests. The king also challenged God, that He will not be able to save them, by saying to them **“and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”** Those who persecute us because we are against their principles and refuse to bow down to them, they are infact challenging God and put Him to the test. Therefore when we are persecuted God is counting much on us to stand and to defend His cause. If we will be behaving like other people and do the wrong things that we are asked to do, then we are lost, and God will not be gloried in our lives. But we shall never fail God, for the righteous live by faith, and here we are accountable to stand the challenge and the persecution that devil is putting against us). **16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.** (They did not flatter the king as those who accused them, but they called him by his name only. Not that they did not respect him, but since it is now related to the God that we worship they made it clear to him that they are loyal to the King of kings and the Lord of lords, our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be assertive in such circumstances. We should make it clear to those who persecute us that we are loyal to Jesus and He is our only King that we worship and bow down to Him. They at once directed Nebuchadnezzar toward God, they told the king that there is a God that they serve, that He is the one who will defend them. Therefore in persecution we are lifting the name of God and we are telling the whole world that God will fight for us, and in standing firm we are giving the way for God to do miracles in our lives as we will see here in this event). **17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.** (They told him God will save them from the furnace and from his hands. In persecution we need to trust God and tell those who persecute us, that God will save us from the trouble that they are making for us and He will deliver us from their hands. Yes God shall deliver us from the boycotting, the isolation, the separation, the injustice, the injuries, their slur and their corruption and the injustice). **18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.** (They told him also that even to the worst situation, and even if God will not intervene, for whatever reason He has in His mind, we still will not do the very wrong thing that you are asking us to do). **19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.** (When we stand firm for the truth, the people get angry to us, their faces will be changing against us, and they will do all what they can to revenge from us and harm us or annihilate us by any way and to finish our lives in order to finish our ministry because our stand and testimony will be against them). **20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.** (Many are those who will stand and support those who persecute us. The fear of men will drive them to do that against us. As well as they cannot see God. You will found many rallies against the righteous, for they cannot bear the righteous stand of the righteous man. The king thought that the mighty men with him are his power, because he did not experience the power of God yet). **21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the**

midst of the burning fiery furnace. (The three friends of Daniel were powerless, helpless, and were bound with their clothes and other garments to make their death more intolerable and worse pain to inflict on them, and were cast into the furnace. Such instance of persecution, where we are powerless and helpless, the only thing we can do is to fully trust God and fully surrender to His will, that He will save us. That is also the expression that the righteous shall live by faith. When you are powerless and helpless this is the time that you need to surrender fully to God and let Him reign over your life, trusting Him that He will take you out of it). **22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flames of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** (The first miracle God did is He killed those who carried them to the fire. God is great and mighty to save us and defend us in the time of troubles. The first things that the king witnessed is that his mighty men were first put to death). **23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.** (They fell down bound into the fire. That was not a bad thing but a relief to them, for the fire consumed the ropes and the bonds that tied them. The persecution that we are passing through shall dissolve the bonds and the chains that restrict us. God in the midst of trial is with us. He will do miracles for us. He will let the enemy be amazed of what He is doing in our lives to save us from the power of darkness). **24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.** (They cast them three men, but now the king is seeing something else that made him astonished calling other men to witness with him and to verify from them if what he is seeing is the truth that just now is clear to Him. They confirmed it to him). **25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.** (The king was able to see Jesus, the Son of God, in the midst of the persecution that he was waging against God's people. God allow persecution to come to us, so that He will reign, gloried and revealed Himself to others who persecute us). **26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.** (After people persecute us and witness how God is defending us and He is freeing us from the bonds and the restrictions of persecutions, and they will see God with us and they will start to have faith on us and on God, and will consider us the servants of the most high God. The king Nebuchadnezzar believed in God while he persecuted those three men of God). **27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.** (The people shall witness that all the evil and the persecution that they did on us had not harm us or affect us and we are the same, continuing to serve the living God, and that would give glory to God who protect us in time as such) **28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.** (The king blessed God, and blessed his servants who challenged him and defied his word and refuse to worship idols. We ought to refuse to worship money, medicine, men, doctors, engines, weapons, friends and the rest kinds of power.

The King testified about God that He sent His angel to save his servants. In our sufferings and in our persecution God is with us and He is defending us and will work to rescue us as the prophet Isaiah declared, ***“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:9 KJV).*** ***29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.*** (God now used the king who believed to evangelize and he promised to defend and protect the people of God and he will punish any people who would speak against the true God. *See here how we should not be afraid or compromise or flatter when we are challenged and asked to do wrong things, but instead we need to trust that God will help us and will deliver us from all the evil hands that devil will use to harm us.* ***My dear and beloved: As we trust God, He will not only deliver us but as well as He will change the people, even those who persecuted us and will bring them to our side. We will be also rewarded and got promoted after each and every session of persecution. Persecution will edify us and will edify the church and will make us strong.*** The king said, ***“because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”*** There is no one can save like our Lord, Jesus Christ, from sin and from death and from all the power of devil and the power of evil men). ***30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.” (Daniel 3:1-30 KJV)***

My prayer:

Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord, thank you for your Word that made me understand your will for me to be persecuted, and how I need to persevere bearing the trial of persecution enduring people's conspiracy, slurs lies and slanders, economic boycotting, isolation, physical hurt injuries and death. Lord thank you for awaking me that persecution is coming as I decided to go on and serve you.

Confess to God your sins and renounce your flatteries, compromises with worldly things and worldly friends, and your non willingness to be persecuted.

Lord forgives me the following sins _____. Ask God forgiveness for your non willingness to be persecuted. Ask God forgiveness for your flatteries and compromises. Ask God to give you strength and power to endure the pressure and the various hurts during the whole trial of persecution.

Lord I commit myself to abide with this Word of yours that I receive in this message to be a good example to others around me who do not know you. Lord give me strength and patience to bear the pain and suffering while I am waiting for your miracle to deliver me out of their hurts and injurious acts.

Lord I am willing to cultivate and develop more fruit of the Holy Spirit; love, peace, joy, gentleness, kindness, patience, perseverance, and long suffering while I am waiting for your miracle, deliverance, your second coming and your reward in Heaven.

Lord, I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who accepted your Word and are willing to live their lives for you, to speak your Word, and to be persecuted for your righteousness' sake, Lord protect them and provide all their needs, Lord save them from the evil hour. Lord work miracles for them and enable them to persevere in serving you. Lord gives them joy, comfort, assurance and peace. Lord visits them as you visited the three friends of Daniel, Lord save them, Lord proves to their persecutors that you are the true God and they are your servants. Lord comfort them, lift them up, and uphold them with your grace at the time of persecution, as they are willing to evangelize, to start new Bible study and to plant new congregations. Lord rewards them and bless them for the persecution that they are receiving and enduring for your name's sake.

Lord bless and sustain our church. Lord help us, protect us, and provide for us to go on in serving you and do your work and your will. Lord protect us from those who hate us due to your Word and who want to revenge from us. Lord deliver us, spare us hurts and troubles. Lord give to us more of the Holy Spirit gifts to be ready to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the message of the Word of God. Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus' name, Amen.

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