

## ‘8 Ingredients for Authentic Happiness: Persecution’ Matt. 5: 10-12

Series title: What does it mean to live a good life?

**Introduction:** We have seen how the Lord’s path to real joy is different from what mankind thinks will make us happy. Especially in this verse we see this. The beatitudes climax with this sobering truth: those who live faithfully according to the first 7 beatitudes will at some point experience this 8<sup>th</sup> one.

### I. What does it mean to be persecuted?

A. 2 Tim. 3:12 Look at how they treated Jesus, the most loving person in all of history. And do we think they will then treat us better?

Real persecution is when a person suffers in some way because of their \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ not because they said or did something dumb. When Christians are not being persecuted by the world, it *may* mean that the Christian is reflecting the world rather than confronting it.

B. The way to avoid persecution is quite easy. Just live like the world does. Just keep a private faith. But notice too, Jesus does not take being unfaithful lightly. Lk. 9:26.

C. In this beatitude, in verse 11, Jesus mentions 3 kinds of persecution.

1. The first type of persecution mentioned here are verbal insults; they’ll call you names.
2. The next is physical persecution, abuse, harassment.
3. A third type Jesus mentions is false accusations. One thing about false accusations that makes them so hard is that usually you are never given a chance to defend yourself. But God sees all this. One day all will stand before Him and give an account for every careless word.

### II. What is the result of being persecuted?

A. Heaven! Paul said something similar in 2 Thess. 1:5-7.

B. I think there will be blessings now, maybe not in luxurious lakeside homes, perhaps not even in good health, but \_\_\_\_\_ of joy, peace, comfort, satisfaction, even in the midst of hard times. Thus, blessings now and so much more in the future! And that will all be yours, as Christians; so don’t quit.

### III. How should we handle persecution?

A. Well, for one, we should not retreat or hide. Keep being faithful, day in and day out. Keep doing what you’re supposed to do. We pray. We need to be as Jesus said: ‘*as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves.*’ Don’t persecute them back. Don’t get full of self-pity.

B. Notice it says ‘*when*’ people insult you because of your faith. That reminds us of at least a couple of things. One, it doesn’t say ‘if’ but ‘when’; and second, it implies that Christians will not be in a constant state of opposition. It ebbs and flows. The early Christians had times of peace, even times of some popularity; but when insults do come, don’t be surprised by it and don’t get bitter.

C. Rather, what does Jesus say here to do? Rejoice and be glad!’ Talk about being radical and counter-cultural. And it’s even an imperative, it’s a command from Jesus! The world says: ‘get mad, get even, get them before they can get you.’ But God says His \_\_\_\_\_ are not to act that way.

D. So, why be joyful? He gives 2 reasons. First, because then your reward in heaven will be great! A second reason to be joyful is because we’ll be in great company! ‘*for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*’