

# ***The Beatitudes, part II***

## ***Matthew 5:1-12***

**“And seeing the multitudes, he went up on a mountain, and when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he opened his mouth and taught them saying, 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 pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”** Jesus is using a word that was more used than anything for referring to the experience of the Greek gods, it’s this word in Greek, we talked about it last week, *Makarios* [Strongs # 3107...*makarious*...*Blessed, happy*.] He says *happy* are you, are you if certain things are true about you, if certain things are a part of your life, part of your character. Happy and blessed are you if you are poor in spirit. Happy and blessed are you if you then with this understanding, then mourn, shed a tear, two or three, no longer stiffnecked, no longer arrogant, no longer prideful about your life, but instead rather you are broken and contrite in spirit. And blessed are you then, as a result of that, you now hunger and thirst for righteousness, evening agonizing to be delivered, to be changed, to be brought to a different level, to become something else, to become like the holy God that you’re looking at.

*A Very Interesting Letter From Rabbi Shmuley Boteach*

A letter was written, showed up in WorldNetDaily.com [<http://www.wnd.com>], it was written by a rabbi, Shmuley Boteach, and it was titled “*My Love Affair With Evangelicals*” I’ll read some excerpts from it. “*I am a Jew who is deeply in love with evangelical Christians, although I am at odds with them on*

various issues. They today constitute the most potent force for good in all America, and the most influential constituency who consistently demands that America be a nation of justice, standing up for the persecuted, and living up to its founding ideals of serving as a global beacon of freedom. Whenever I'm in the company of evangelical Christians I feel [as if I'm] completely at home among true brothers and sisters of faith. Most so I feel inspired like I'm in the company of an authentic Godly host. Evangelical Christians are at the forefront of asserting that religious conviction demands moral action [i.e. a good example of that would be William Wilberforce in the 1800s, getting slavery banned in the British empire, among other things. Order and watch "Amazing Grace" (<http://www.amazon.com>)] You cannot call yourself religious unless you act with justice, period. Evangelical Christians, like Orthodox Jews, have a deep-seated hatred of evil. Many religious people have a problem with hatred, believing it is inherently ungodly. Evangelicals reject such wishy-washy, on the fence, moralizing, understanding that the hatred of evil is the single best gauge of authentic spiritual commitment." He goes a bit further in his letter, "...When evangelical Christians talk to me about God, they speak with an immediacy and sense of intimacy which is both inspiring and impressive. To the evangelicals, God is a loving Father rather than a distant relative. And unlike secularists who love making up their own morality, evangelical Christians humbly submit to the Divine will. The potency of evangelical faith is manifest in their being at the forefront of feeding the hungry, curing the sick, and giving clothes to the poor, deeds which are practiced by an army of missionaries around the world. Unlike so many Americans, evangelical Christians utterly reject materialism, they raise godly children who are open-hearted and uncorrupted. Evangelical Christian parents protect their children from a corrosive culture that is so harming America's youth. The evangelicals have remarkably created their own music, TV, and film industries which promote value-based entertainment as opposed to crude sexual exploitation [see <http://www.afastore.net/dvds>]. Their women are taught to value themselves, and would never contemplate surrendering their bodies to a man who has not committed to them in marriage. And their men are taught to value women, and to work to be worthy of them [see <http://www.HOWMARRIAGEWORKS.com>]...Just try and find kinder, more compassionate people, who are willing to assist their fellow man in a time of crisis than evangelicals." That's a tremendous compliment by what would be considered, and who considers himself to be a devout Jew. Early Christianity was no different, showing that the basic true Christian is the same

yesterday, today and tomorrow, reflecting the very nature of the true Alpha and Omega. For proof, log onto <http://www.unityinchrist.com/LegacyOfLove.htm>. This rabbi Shmuley is saying *'Wow! These evangelical Christians, pretty wild, but man, have you ever met a kinder group of people, more compassionate? Man, they're right there on the cutting edge when it comes to reaching out to the sick and lost, and the hurting and the suffering.'* Jesus is essentially saying the same things here in these verses here in the Beatitudes.

### **5. Matthew 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy**

Now we're on verse 7, and we pick up where we left off. So the next beatitude, the next statement I believe is the result of what has just been said in verse 6, he says **"Blessed are the merciful...blessed are the merciful."** This springs forth from the previous verses, the first four beatitudes, especially it's a result of the fourth one. In fact, when he follows with **"Blessed are the pure in heart,"** and **"Blessed are the peacemakers,"** I believe verses 7 to 9 actually are a result of verse 6 becoming a reality in your life. If verse 6, what we studied last week, ***'Hunger and thirst for righteousness,'*** is real in your life, and you are filled with the righteousness of God, if that is true, then from your life will come mercy, from in your life will come being pure in heart, and then you'll also become a peacemaker. These things aren't natural to me as a man, they're not part of my personality, they're not even part of my makeup. But when the previous verses, especially verse 6 has then taken place, this stuff starts to happen. And when I'm filled with the righteousness of God, the point is that I can't help but be merciful. When I'm filled with the righteousness of God I can't help but have the pureness in heart thing going on, and also I can't help but be a peacemaker, it's just something that happens. So the more righteous a person is, the more righteous people are, the more merciful they become. The more righteous they are, the more they are pure in heart, the more righteous they are, the more they are peacemakers. And that righteousness comes from one place, it comes from heaven itself. I can't even put it in me, it's just something that God instills in me as I hunger and thirst for him, and for his righteousness.

*"Blessed Are The Merciful"---What Does That Mean?*

When he says **“Blessed are the merciful”** what exactly does he mean there? The Greek word here is *eleemon* [Strongs # 1655: *eleemon* (pronounced *el-eh-ay'-mone*); from 1653; *compassionate (actively)*:-merciful.] It refers to being merciful in the sense of showing pity, showing compassion. Weymouth's translation translates it this way, **“Blessed are the compassionate.”** Young's Literal Translation says **“Happy are the kind.”** It's what Jesus spoke about in the parable of the Good Samaritan: A couple of religious leaders, they're looking fancy on the outside, they walk down the street there, and there's this man in this parable that's been beaten up, has been robbed, he's in a miserable condition. He's suffering. The religious leaders, of course in their religious piety, they don't even want to walk by on the same side of the road, they move away from the man. But there's this good Samaritan, somebody who would be seen as a down-and-outer really in the Jewish culture at the time, but he has such a pure heart for God and love for God, he comes along and he can't help but when he sees this man in his need, he goes over and begins to bandage the man's wounds, and begins to help him and be a blessing to him, puts him into a hotel and provides for all his needs. Jesus then asks the question to those who are listening as he shares the parable, he says, **‘So who was the neighbour to the man in misery?’** The answer came, **‘He who showed mercy on him.’** That word “mercy,” the root Greek word there in that parable is the same word used here, the word here is derived from that word. So it's that sense of showing mercy, active mercy, not so much verbal, like the Good Samaritan, you just can't help but reach out to somebody that's suffering, you want to make a difference, to show them just love and compassion and kindness through actions more than words. Like rabbi Shmuley when he notes these evangelicals, he says in his letter, he says, *“They're at the forefront of feeding the hungry, forefront of caring for the sick, of giving clothes to the poor. These guys, just showing mercy...”*

### *What Makes Christians and Messianic Jewish Believers Merciful?*

Now, when there's someone who says they're born-again, a Christian, I mean to be born-again Christian, it's the very nature of what I am that causes me to be this way. So to say that I'm born-again, and yet this is not a part of my nature, then there's a challenge. If I am instead selfish and self-centered, then there's an issue there. I should be a modern-day Good Samaritan by just who I am, I've been infused with this

righteousness of God, I have this mercy of God in me. I mean, if your friends and your family, people around you, would say *'You know George, the guy is contentious a lot, likes to use his doctrinal understanding to tear other believers apart, he's just got this way about him, and oh, he's so self-centered, he never thinks about anybody else, his deal is his deal, that's all he's ever worried about, not very loving with his wife, not very concerned about his kids.'* If that would be said about me, then there is an issue there. A Christian is by their very nature, as the Holy Spirit is working in and through them, they are demonstrating these beatitudes, they are increasingly becoming part of his or her life.

### *Don't Put The Cart Before The Horse*

The point again of this deal here is, not that we're to leave this building and just go about to be good so that God will be good to us, that's not the point at all, but rather, the point is that when God has touched a life, when righteousness has been poured into a life, then wonderfully, the mercy comes from my heart, and I show mercy---and then I receive mercy more, and then I give more mercy, and then I receive more. Indeed, you know it's better to give than to receive, and to be a Christian that is all the more just letting God work through your life and to show mercy is just to have your socks being blessed off. It is being born-again and having the righteousness of God in you, and then you do these very things, and show a ton of mercy, and then you receive it also.

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## **6. Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”**

And now, Jesus says, **“Blessed are the pure in heart,”** another translation says **“Happy are the clean in heart,”** or this could also actually be rendered, **“Happy are the holy, happy are the holy.”** You would think in our society, *‘Happy are the unholy.’* You know, where is true happiness found? It’s found right here, it’s not found in pleasure. The British poet, lord Byron, lived a life of pleasure beyond just about what anybody did. In fact, he had a lot of romance, love affairs and all that, and he wrote the book “Don Juan,” yet he wrote about his life, said this, *“The worm, the canker and grief are mine alone.”* That’s what he, this lord Byron, said about his life. Jay Gould, the 19<sup>th</sup> century American millionaire, had a lot of money. In fact, even at one time he tried to corner the whole world’s gold market. This man had a ton of loot. When dying he said, *“I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth.”* [see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay\\_Gould](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Gould)] On the other hand, George Mueller and John Wesley died with essentially the change in their pockets, had given it all away, they died happy, in great peace. Lord Beaconsfield was a man who had a lot of position in life, a lot of fame, and he wrote about his life *“Youth is a mistake, manhood a struggle, old-age a regret.”* These don’t sound like happy lives. Personal accomplishment and success, is happiness found there? No, Alexander the Great, this guy, man, as far as success and accomplishment, in his young 30s, after he had done all of that, he went into his tent, and he wept, *“There are no more world’s to conquer”* he said. Extreme intellect and human reasoning, is happiness found there? Well the French writer, Voltaire [ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voltaire> ], considered one of the central figures of *‘the Age of Enlightenment’* wrote one day *“I wish I had never been born.”* 2,000 years ago Jesus said **‘Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, perfect happiness,’** and this is where it’s found. And he says, **“Happy are the holy, happy are the holy,”** that’s the answer, that’s the deal, right here. **Matthew chapter 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart...happy are the holy.”** Happiness and holiness go hand in hand. The Bible is very clear, sin never produces joy. It might give a temporary thrill, maybe a little bit of a good time for a short time, but if you’re seeking to find satisfaction in the world in one way or another, in the end you’ll find yourself just like these other guys, going *‘The worm, the canker and grief are*

*mine, I must be the most miserable person, my life's been a struggle, a mistake.'* In the Old Testament the Bible talks about the springs and wells of the world, you know, those wells that the world has dug, you know, you go in there and try to get that need met, and you find out the well is cracked, it's empty, there's nothing there.

### *What's Meant By Pure?*

Now what is meant by "pure"? You know, the American Heritage Talking Dictionary...But what is meant by "pure"? It defines it this way, "Having a homogeneous or uniform composition, not mixed. Free from adulterance or impurities, free from dirt, defilement or pollution. Free from foreign elements. Containing nothing inappropriate or extraneous" So, pure. The Greek word for "pure" here is *katharos*. It's where we get the word "cathartic." And of course in medicine, a cathartic agent is used to clean out an infected area. And as it cleans it, it's then made pure, which is important. It's used in counseling that term too, cathartic to refer to a cathartic experience where somebody has confessed their sin and now they feel free of it, in a sense, cleansed from it and pure of it. [Strongs # 2513, *katharos* (lit. or fig.): -clean, clear, pure.] In the Greek culture it was also used to refer to the hands that had been washed made clean or the wheat that had been winnowed, the chaff had been winnowed away and had been removed, so you just had the good stuff, the kernels.

### *What Is Meant By 'Heart' in "Pure In Heart"?*

What is "heart"? The Greek culture was a little bit different. ***'The heart is the center of the emotion, the mind and the will, it's the center of a person. In the Greek culture, it was seen as the center of thinking, so you could actually in the Greek culture, where you saw the word "heart" you could put the word "mind."*** The Greeks thought of it as "the mind." So the center of one's being, the personality, the total person, the fount of which all of life flows, the very center of who you are, that's the heart, the way you reason, and think, the way you look at life. In the Bible we also see the heart is "the seat of all troubles," for we're told ***'out of the heart all the evil proceeds,'*** all the evil proceeds out of the heart. The Bible says the issue is "the heart." At the very beginning, first verses of Genesis, you have a perfect world, paradise, you have man, no environmental issues, and man, due to Satan's influence,

falls pretty hard, does some pretty bad stuff, from Genesis 3 to 6, and all of this through an extremely crafty and powerful archangel named Lucifer, Satan the devil who also fills men's hearts with his evil broadcasts of wrath and the works of the flesh (cf. Galatians 5:19-21). So it's the heart. So the heart's the very center of who I am, yet at the same time, man, that's where the issues are dealt with. This focus, this purity, the state of being where there aren't any issues, nothing bad left there, the defiling stuff is taken away. It's to be without hypocrisy, undivided, not double-minded, focused, singleness of heart, pure in heart.

### *How The Bible Defines Purity---Three Different Ways*

**1) One of the ways it refers to, there's the sense of purity in the perfect sense**, the Bible does refer to me in that way, in the sense of the future, speaking of the perfection coming in the future, purity, perfect in every way---that some day, **1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 3, verse 2, "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be like, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."** We shall be like him and he's perfectly holy and I will be like him perfectly one day, in the kingdom of heaven. **2) Secondly, the Bible also speaks to purity in the sense of a positional purity**, and it is also what I am right now. That when I came to Christ as a Christian or Messianic Jewish believer in Jesus, the Bible says at that point, positionally, I became pure---meaning that when God now looks at me, though I have issues in my heart and issues in my life, all kinds of struggles, don't even have to go too far on the clock, all kinds of struggles---yet when God looks at me, he looks at me right now and he sees me positionally pure, in the sense he sees Christ. So he sees the righteousness of Christ. And it is for that reason I can have fellowship with him, because he's Holy and I am unholy, but yet he looks and he sees Christ, and now there's that holiness, so I can have fellowship with him. So, perfectly pure, in the future, positionally pure today. **3) And then there's the sense of practical purity**, that's also included in this word that Jesus is saying here, **"Blessed are the pure in heart,"** the practical purity, what we term "sanctification" [see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/1st%20Corinthians.htm>]. I'm positionally pure, but now I'm working it out in my life, this practical growing and maturing and becoming more and more like Christ, more and more learning in the life of the

Spirit. **Colossians 3, verses 1-11, “If then you are raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”** So your life is hidden with him, and you’re positionally pure. **“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”** So, future purity, perfectly pure. **“Therefore”** now we’re talking practically, **“put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry.”** Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked and you lived in them, but now you yourselves are to put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge, according to the image of him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian [i.e. Parthian], slave or free, but of Christ is all and in all.” So right there you see purity in its three forms: 1) positionally, 2) you see future, perfectly, but then he says 3) practical, practical, a day-to-day deal, happening more and more in your life. So, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the pure in heart...”** When I became a Christian, this work started to happen in my life, where, before I became a Christian, I looked at life a certain way, things didn’t bother me so much, I could look at things and think about things and hear things that were classified as being wrong in the Bible, sin by the Bible’s definition (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:4), and it didn’t really bother me so much. But then as I became a Christian, and I started to grow in the Lord, now suddenly there is this work going on in me and I’m like, you know, I don’t like to look at that, that bothers me, I don’t like to hear that, just the sound of that kind of rubs me now the wrong way. **Ephesians chapter 4**, where Paul speaks about this, about the difference, the contrast of what I was before and what I am now. He says, **“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling”** past feeling, **“having given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”** Past feeling, there’s not that sense of the Spirit’s conviction, there’s

not the conscience. They can listen, they can watch, and no problem, and not understand why I would have a problem with it. But now that I have become a Christian, and I have this work going on within me, this sanctification going on in me, this Spirit, and now this purifying of my life, and now I'm bothered, I'm convicted, it just troubles me, it's not good, I see things differently.

*Hypocritical Purity, Pharisaic Purity, The World's Purity--Verses True "Purity In Heart"*

When Jesus says these things, **"Blessed are the pure in heart,"** there's a crowd around him, religious leaders, there are these people that want to appear pure, that wanted to appear holy and righteous, holier than thou, so they had the outward appearance of it, they had this religious system they had set up, and all these regulations, and man, they just did the regulations so you could watch them do it, so you could see it, and say *'Yeah, these are Godly people.'* But then Jesus comes along and says, ***'You're a whitewashed tomb, you look one way on the outside, but inside it's really a different deal, hypocrisy, man, ugliness. You look nice on the outside, as far as the way you want to appear, all religious, but inside there is such vile stuff in your heart, you're not pure in any way.'*** Jesus says ***'You know, you say you haven't committed adultery, but you've thought about it, how's that any different? You say you haven't murdered, but yet you've thought about it. And how's that any different? You haven't murdered, but you have hatred in your heart.'*** When the heart is right, the rest is in line, the rest follows, the actions are the way they are supposed to be. I mean, godliness doesn't move from the outside in, but from the inside out. It's not a religious system, it's not going to church and going thorough a ceremony. Solomon said this ***'Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life.'***

*How Do We Then Become "Pure In Heart"?*

How do we become pure in heart? How do you become pure in heart? As we've noticed each time, there is a process that is here. Growth through the beatitudes is sequential, it's progressive, step by step. So how do I become pure in heart? Well it starts with **verse 3, 1) it starts with me realizing my spiritual condition, that I am a sinner.** The Bible says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And in that

realizing that before a holy God, what that means is separation, judgment. **2) So I'm now in poverty of spirit, and I realize it, and I become broken over it, "Blessed are those who mourn," I'm broken over it, I mourn, I shed a tear. 3) Then you ask God to fill you with his righteousness, due to this hunger and thirst for it that's developing within you...**and then when you are filled with the righteousness of God, verse 6, as we saw last week, you then start to become merciful in the truest sense. There's the compassion of God, the love of God is flowing in you, **"Blessed are the merciful."** When I am filled with the righteousness of God, then there's this pureness in heart that begins to happen, when I become a Christian or Messianic Jewish believer in Yeshua, it starts to happen in my life, my mind starts to change, the way I think, my desires are different. Next step, **"Blessed are the peacemakers,"** that also comes, I don't have my boxing gloves on, I'm not this antagonistic contentious person, I now want peace, and I want people to have peace with God, and I change, it is as a result of being filled with the righteousness of God. And I have seen within the Body of Christ some believers that are contentious, antagonistic, over their pet doctrinal beliefs, thinking they're the great *Defenders of the Faith*, and go around hurting other Christians who may differ with them over secondary doctrinal beliefs (and prophecy is secondary to God's agape-love as Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13). These Christians or Messianic believers, whoever they are, and there are some, I've been beaten up by a few, these folk have not reached the spiritual level of being "peacemakers." You should never be beating another believer over the head over doctrinal interpretation, which will all pass away in the Kingdom of God when Jesus comes. **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:8,12-13, Charity (God's agape-love) never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away...For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**" I can't make myself pure in heart, I mean, it's a God thing, it's an infusion of the Holy Spirit in me that makes me pure, it just moves in and cleanses and heals. This practicality, there is a practical side of this that goes on in my life, where now I've been saved, I've been made positionally pure, but there's this work going on. Paul, speaking of the mind, practically with the mind, through the power of the Holy Spirit, says, ***'I have this power to take my thoughts captive and so, I'm not just going to let my mind***

*go, and if it does, I'm going to stop it.'* So Paul says, in **Philippians 4, verses 8-10**, **"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything that is praiseworthy, think on these things. The things you have learned and heard and received and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."** And in **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10:3-6**, we have **"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare, are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought [within your own mind, not someone else's] to the obedience of Christ..."** A word to you parents, there are young kids who are unfortunately going down other roads today, and they're reaping the fruit of it, and mom and dad aren't even being wise or aware of it, and stuff is going on in their minds, not pure of heart, and they won't know the blessed joy of happiness, of being pure in heart, because this stuff is going into their minds and taking root, and it's going to hurt them so much more later.

*Why Are We Called "Blessed" For Being---Or Becoming--  
- "Pure In Heart"?*

**"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."** Why are they blessed? Because it says **"for they shall see God."** He doesn't say "blessed" and just leave it at that, he gives reasons why every time, **"for they shall see God."** We think of course of the future, when you are resurrected to immortality, you're eternal, and you'll be with God, so you'll be able to see him. As we read in **1<sup>st</sup> John 3:1-2**, you're going to be able to see him one day. But physically you cannot see God today. The Bible says if we even looked upon him, when he's cranked up to his full glorified state, we'd be in big trouble. He's Holy, he's Light, he's a consuming fire. And in this old tent it is not possible to look on God and live (read **Zechariah 14:1-15**, the very light coming off Jesus melts his enemies at his return to earth). But there's another way to see God. While I can't physically see God, I know I see him in the sense of faith, he's very real. And it isn't something I just conjured up, it's something that started to happen, the light started to turn on in my life. When I think of Moses in **Hebrews chapter 11**, let's

read it, **Hebrews 11:24-27a**, “**By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter** [Hatshepsut, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/lamb/exodus1.html>], **choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked for a reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.**” Paul said in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:12**, “**Now we see in a mirror dimly, then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, just as I am known.**” So, I see in faith, but it’s a little dim picture, it’s a true picture, but later I’m going to see God and stand in his very presence. Blessed, blessed, blessed, six times Jesus says this, six reasons he’s given us for having happiness and joy. You’re not going to find it in money, you’re not going to find it in position and fame, you’re not going to find it in intellect, you’re not going to find it there, but happy, happy, happy right here. And then he gives us reasons, he’s given us six reasons, happy, happy, blessed are you if all these things are true, because yours will be the kingdom of heaven, you will be comforted, you will inherit the earth, you will be filled with the righteousness of God, you will obtain compassion and mercy, and you will see God.

related links:

Two types of sanctification, see, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/1st%20Corinthians.htm>

***Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God”***

So, verse 9, we come now to the 7<sup>th</sup> beatitude that Jesus shares near the shores of the Sea of Galilee there up on the mount, side of the mountain, 7<sup>th</sup> time he says “Blessed, blessed,” specifically this time he says “**Blessed are the peacemakers.**” Or as we’ve noted before, as one translation puts it, “**Happy the peacemakers, happy, divinely joyful are they because**” as he says there, “**for they shall be called the sons of God.**” What exactly is a peacemaker? So we certainly want to understand what it is so we can have this blessedness and happiness in our

lives. A peacemaker is one who makes peace, somebody who helps promote it. That is what a peacemaker is.

### *First, We Should Understand What “Peace” Is*

We first should make sure we understand what peace is. What exactly is “peace”? The Greek word for peace is the word *eirene* [Strong's # 1515 *eirene* (*i-ray-nay*), peace, quietness, rest.] which is found, interestingly in every single book in the New Testament, with the exception of one, and that is in 1<sup>st</sup> John, only time it's not found in the New Testament. The dictionary defines it as (1) “The absence of war or other hostilities; an agreement to end hostilities; freedom from quarrels and disagreement; harmonious relations; security and order: (2) inner contentment; serenity; a state of tranquility; free from strife.” You can divide it into two categories according to the dictionary definition, first of all there's this state we call peace that can exist between people, a group of people, two people, two nations. And secondly then, according to the dictionary definition, there's what we call inner peace, and that is this experience that I can have within myself. There's peace between people, and then there's this peace that I can have in my heart.

### *Peace In Today's World*

Man very much desires to have and experience peace. You hear about all the talk of peace, hear about all the talk of it, but at the same time it doesn't seem like it's going to happen in the Middle East, boiling over with ISIS in Syria and Iraq, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, the Baltic States, China, North Korea. For the entire history of man the world has only known peace between nations for a period less than 20 years.

### *Is World Peace Possible Through Democracy?*

In the Western world as we speak also about peace, it's interesting, in our culture, we speak of the need for democracy in the rest of the world, and we speak of it in the sense that as democracy is promoted, and more nations embrace it, and people then are relieved from oppressive governments, as we speak of democracy, that it'll help bring peace to the world, that democracy brings peace to men. The United States preaches this '*Peace through democracy*' stuff, and that we are in favour of helping spread democracy to other nations, but we have not

done it. Sadly, the real democratic free type government we have has never really been given a chance in many of the 3<sup>rd</sup> world nations. Instead, our government, clandestinely, has been responsible for installing right-wing fascist type governments throughout South and Central America since 1945 onward through the 1980s. Two thorough books that have been written on the subject are *“Open Veins of Latin America* by Eduardo Galeano, and *Killing Hope* by William Blum, both available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). We have been saying we support installing democratic governments around the world, but have we been doing that? Many innocent people have died under these right-wing dictatorships we helped install in Central and South America, and thus many normal civilians in those countries must still take a very dim view of Americans. Wouldn't you? (see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/topical%20studies/America-ModernRomans1.htm>) Then if there's peace in America, if there's true peace as far as democracy is concerned, why do I read the things that I do in the newspapers, or watch on the news, via television or online news services?---shootings, stabbings, countless senseless murders, businesses cheating other businesses, Wall Street white collar crime taking advantage of the average person, and on and on it goes. If there's truly peace in America, in a general sense, then we should see it in the family. But then we're told half of the families in America, half the marriages end in divorce. It doesn't even seem like there's peace in the family unit, and a growing number of families are single-parent homes. So we say democracy brings peace, but has it? It seems that in our society peace is evading most people. You can't go anywhere on the globe and find a place of peace, for the most part, in the sense of the dictionary definition, as far as a physical location where man has been, except for the Moon.

### *Peace Of Heart*

Considering peace in the heart, you know, that's peace within man, peace in the heart, it would seem as you look at society there's also a great lack of that sort of peace. I think of the story of Georges Simenon, aged 67, late 60s early 70s, he was one of the most prolific novelists alive. In April 1970 he finished his 408<sup>th</sup> novel. He'd write a book in nine days. That very day though, 67 years of age, this is what he writes, *“I have only one ambition left to be completely at peace with myself. I doubt if I ever shall manage it. I do not think it's possible for anyone. It's*

*not a question of money, for that kind of happiness must come from within yourself. I do not know anyone, however successful, who is completely happy. I write because if I did not I should die.*" Peace has evaded man throughout history (I can attest to that, just check out my library/study). The great Emperor Augustus of Rome heard once about this guy, this gentleman within the Empire of Rome who had a lot of financial debt, but when he heard about him, the story told about him, this particular man, burdened with debt, yet he would sleep well at night, and was very much at ease. So the Emperor desired to actually buy this guy's bed. He figured, you know, that must be it, I mean, where do you get this peace, this guy's got all that debt and he's sleeping well at night. It turned out to be a useless purchase.

### *Peace, Where Does It Come From and How Does One Get There?*

If true peace does exist, how does one get there, and where does it come from? It's not found by inhaling any type of illegal substance or injecting it, that's for sure. That was Timothy Leary's quest, to find a road to the true Nirvana through drugs, specifically LSD. It's not found even by taking a legal substance for that matter. Neither is it found in discipline, mental exercises or special breathing techniques, it's not found by listening to certain types of music, visiting certain places on vacation, it's not found in certain hobbies, physical exercises, reading various novels, maybe watching a specific TV series, or going to a certain conference, it's not found in "letting off steam," verbalizing and confessing all your issues and anxieties and fears to somebody, or just ignoring everything, hanging loose. Jesus again indicates peace, true peace, can be had between men, as he says, "peacemakers," and peace can be experienced within. This peace comes from God, and as we go on we'll see just how that happens.

### *Peace Between Man and God*

But there is a third area too that we could note, there's those two areas, but there's a third area, and the dictionary doesn't mention it, there's a third area where I can experience peace. And this area is the most important because it's then where I am able to experience peace in the other two areas. As many of you are already giving the answer, and that is peace with God, peace with God. Then the question, do you have peace with

God? Do you have peace with God? Once a person has peace with God, they then can experience the *'Peace of God,'* peace within. With that peace infused into my life, I'm then able to diffuse it, I then can become a peacemaker, as Jesus says here, **"Blessed are the peacemakers."** Having this peace with God I experience now, peace within me, now I can become a peacemaker. There may be people that say you can find peace in other places, you can find it in other ways. They're like the people that God spoke about who confused the Israelites with this sort of foolishness. **Jeremiah chapter 8,** verse 11, there were people telling Israel **"peace, peace,"** but God notes, **"where there was no peace."** And they would speak of their own state, they would say **"We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of help, but there was instead trouble."** *'Oh, we looked for it, but we didn't find it.'* And then God came and he rebuked them and spoke of their latter condition, he said this, **Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 22,** **"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?"** *'You know, you've ignored me, you've looked for peace, but you know, it doesn't look like any good experience has come to you, any healing.'* Has that been your experience maybe? We can be looking for peace and following suggestions of other groups of people, and in the end discovering that it's just empty really, empty promises.

### *True Peace Apart From God Is Impossible*

The Bible just repeatedly shows us, peace apart from God is not possible. I mean, how can a finite man say that he can achieve peace apart from an infinite God, his very Creator? How can man say that or even think that? But we do. But how can we? In the Bible you can go to any chapter and look at who God is and say, *'Wait a minute, how can I have peace apart from him?'* When he can say things like this to a group of people, **"For behold, I will send serpents among you, vipers which cannot be charmed, and they will bite you."** (Jeremiah 8:17) He's not even speaking of physical snakes in that particular case in Jeremiah, he's speaking about bringing tribulation to this group of people. So he can say *'I'm going to bring tribulation into your life that you can't even shake or do anything about it.'* Now if you can say that to a group of people, how can I say that I can have peace and think I can have peace apart from God? He says this in **Jeremiah chapter 9,** **"Behold I will feed them, this people, with wormwood**

**and give them water of gall to drink.” (Jeremiah 9:15)** Now if he can say that, if he can say it and mean it and do it, then there’s no peace apart from him. So the Bible then speaks to those that are apart from God, and says this, **“There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked.”**

### *How Does A Person Achieve Peace With God?*

So then, how does one find peace? It’s found right here in these very verses. We’ve noted each week, how does one find peace with God?---**verse 3**, it starts right there, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit,”** that’s the realization again that comes upon somebody when they see God for who he really is, and see themselves for who they really are, and say, *‘Man, I’m not at peace with God, I’m not in a good state, I’m a sinner, I recognize before a Holy God that I’m a sinner, and I really need a Saviour, I need to be delivered.’* **“Blessed are the poor in spirit” ‘I need forgiveness of my sin.’** Then that realization of being poor in spirit brings the mourning, the *‘I want to change, this is not good, look at my nature.’* And then a resultant meekness, a broken and contrite spirit follows, verse 5, which then leads to, you know, the arrogance is now gone, then this leads to a hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for change, for deliverance (from our sinful natures), for salvation, to be pulled out of our predicament. As we’ve noted each week, God then says right there, Jesus says, **“they shall be filled, they shall be filled”** and that’s filled with the very righteousness of heaven. So what is here, found within this process described in these Beatitudes, is a picture of somebody coming to Christ (or somebody who is a believer coming even closer to Christ, going through a revival of sorts, that applies also). The Bible says about Jesus, God’s Son, **Ephesians 2, verse 14, “For he himself is our peace.”** Then Paul tells the Colossians, **Colossians chapter 1, verse 20, “For it pleased the Father that in him all the fullness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of the cross.”** So he’s our peace, and he’s died on the cross, and he’s made peace, for God and for man. So, I have found peace with the Lord that way, putting my faith in him, receiving him as my Saviour, and I’ve found peace with God as a result. That’s what the Bible declares. That’s how it’s found. I have found forgiveness of sin, and there’s no other place to find forgiveness of sin. I’ve found salvation and eternal life. I’m now on a right standing with God, and that is the only way to have peace with God. So today, very simply, do you have

that peace with God? Do you have peace with God? The Bible says our natural state is not to have that peace. Why? Simply because we live in a world whose unseen ruler is Satan. The written history of mankind over the past 6,000 years is a history of countless wars and rumours of war, with very little peace. Without God, living in this present evil world, is there any peace to be found? No way, man. Under God's protective wing, being one of his, yes, then you can have peace. But unsaved mankind is also at enmity with God through Satan's unseen spiritual broadcast. **Romans 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."** I'm a sinner in my natural unsanctified state (even in my sanctified state, but Christ reconciles that, brings about that peace). He's a Holy God. Unsaved, I'm under the judgment of God, and the wages of sin is death. But as Romans indicates, as unsaved, we live in a kind of spiritual death, enmity against God, no understanding of the things of God. **"But God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."** (John 3:16) Well I receive this righteousness, I have this heavenly work of God going on inside of me. Now there's this heart within me, I've now become merciful, have this compassion, this pity there, the heart of God. **'Blessed are the pure in heart,'** I now have this purity, this work of the Spirit, this cleansing of my heart and mind, and I see things differently. And then, **'Blessed are the peacemakers,'** I have the peace of God in me, and now I have a whole new outlook on life, I see men differently, I see the world differently, I see things in a whole new way. So now, with this peace in my heart, I now through the Spirit have peace and want others to experience peace. Of course, Galatians chapter 5, verse 22, the Spirit of God when the Holy Spirit comes into my life, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace, peace.** So having peace with God leads to the peace of God in my life.

*You Cannot Be A Peacemaker Without Being At Peace  
With God First*

You cannot fulfill verse 9, and this is important to note, you cannot fulfill it without having peace with God first, you cannot fulfill it. I cannot be a peacemaker apart from having the peace of God myself. You know, somebody can go and resolved hostility between two groups of people [as Mikhail Gorbachev did on numerous occasions in amazing ways], and bring a sense of peace, and certainly that is a worthy deed. But it's not

fulfilling this verse. I mean, he says **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.”** And just because you’re out there being nice to people doesn’t make you a son of God. There’s much more that’s here, it’s much deeper. When somebody has the peace of God, because that’s how it’s so transforming, this work of the Spirit, I’m a new creation, now when there’s hostility and strife, I seek to bring peace to people and peace between people, I come from a certain place, I come with a certain attitude, I desire it in a certain context. I become a peacemaker. The pastor who originally gave this said, *“My wife and I will have a little disagreement sometimes. We’ve been married for 13 years, and there’s been a few times along the way where it’s been a little hotter than at other times, and there’s been those couple times or so or whatever where the day’s now ending, it’s quiet in the house, but it’s not peaceful in the house [chuckles]. The temptation is to sit on the couch and stay there all night, she’s off in another room. But then, there’s this peace of God in me, there’s this work of the Spirit, that says I can’t let the day end this way, so I get up off the couch, and I humble myself, it doesn’t matter whose right or wrong, and I talk to my wife---or vice versa---she’ll come to me.”* Blessed are the peacemakers. I come at it from a different place than before I was saved. It’s the work of the Holy Spirit in me. It’s what puts me in my car and causes me to drive over to my relatives house, somebody I haven’t talked to in ten years, and last time we talked there were some real hostile words and bitterness, and man they said some stuff that was really hurtful to me, but now I’m in my car and driving over there, because of the peace of God that’s in me, and I want peace with my relative. Doesn’t matter what they said anymore, doesn’t matter how bitter they’ve been towards me, doesn’t matter. I’m a peacemaker because I have the peace of God within me, I want peace. It’s just this work going on within my heart. A really interesting example of both individual and group peacemaking has shown up between Messianic Jewish believers in Jesus and their Arab Christian counterparts within the nation of Israel, where both Israeli and Arab believers embrace each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, and are at genuine peace with one another, and actually help each other out. This must be a common occurrence that positively freaks out their non-believing Israeli and Arab neighbours. But both Messianic Jewish and Arab Christians living in Israel are walking, talking ambassadors of peace toward each other, an example of true Middle Eastern peace as it should be and will be after Yeshua, Jesus returns to earth.

*The Burden On My Heart For Those Who Don't Know  
Jesus---A Higher Level Of Peacemaker*

It's what especially begins to take place in me, this burden on my heart, now for others that don't know Jesus, especially that's there. I have peace with God now, and I so much want others to also have peace with God. Now I find myself on my knees praying for people and in some instances even praying for people who've never known me and I don't even know, but just heard about. Or I look at a map on my wall, and I'm praying for a country of people, and I'm longing for them to have peace with God. It's because I have the peace of God in my life, and this work of the Spirit, and now I've become this peacemaker. One of the greatest ways, as so often noted, to be a peacemaker, is indeed leading others to be at peace with God. In **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 5, verse 20**, Paul says, **"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."** It's as if God himself was pleading through me, and here I am imploring you, imploring you, crying out to you to ***be reconciled to God, make peace with God.*** So blessed are those, blessed are the peacemakers. So a true peacemaker is somebody who leads others to Christ, he's an evangelist, we're all evangelists, we're called to be evangelists. We go out and we find people that are at war with God, at war with one another, and we say *'Here's the deal, let me tell you about Jesus.'* Peacemakers bring unity between God and man, and they also are used to bring unity between men and men. It's amazing what happens when people receive Christ, you know, as I've noted. I mean, there's this hostility in a family, but suddenly with Jesus it ends. A peacemaker is somebody whose just reflecting the peace of God to a world without peace. So, **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."** I like Weymouth's New Testament rendering of this, **"For it is they who will be recognized as sons of God."** So, you can't be any more like God than when you're a peacemaker. The Bible tells us, Jesus himself is the great peacemaker, he is the Prince of Peace, Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6. Before he even showed up there were prophecies, an angel showing up, **Luke chapter 1, verse 79**, speaking as he was about to come, **"That he would give light to those who sit in darkness in the shadow of death, to guide out feet in the way of peace."** ***Philippians 4, 'Don't be anxious, don't worry, pray and be thankful, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will come upon you.'***

*The Peace Of God (or lack thereof) Can Guide Us In Our  
Decisions---How The Holy Spirit Leads*

Then we're told in **Colossians chapter 3**, "**Let the peace of God rule in your heart,**" there's measures of peace that God even gives me to lead me in my decisions. And when I don't have peace about something, it can just be the Holy Spirit telling me that something is not right, a decision I'm going to make, a situation I'm in, a lifestyle I'm living in, or something that's come my way. "**Let the peace of God rule in your heart.**" i.e Let it umpire, to tell you you're in, or you're out, you're on track or off track.

*In closing*

But the very next words of Jesus are, "**Blessed are you when people persecute you, blessed are you when they revile you, blessed are you when they say all kinds of evil about you.**" Blessed are the peacemakers, that's what I am but then Jesus says in **Matthew 10, verse 22**, "**And you will be hated of all men.**" Peacemaker, filled with the peace of God, leading others to peace, yet the response of darkness, the response of those that are apart from God is '*Ugh, you bug me, man, don't be so nice, you know, I like this hostility, don't try to make it any better, I don't want to hear that Jesus stuff.*' Peacemakers, you'd think you'd go into the parades and accolades of the world. No you don't, you go into '*The world is really going to be bugged by it.*' Even look at a man in the world, not a believer, who strove to bring peace into the Soviet Union, and then between the Soviet Union and the world, Mikhail Gorbachev. Accolades? No, a forgotten man, history has swept him aside. And that is the meaning of verses 10-12 of Matthew 5, which we'll look over next week.

***Matthew 5:10-12***

**"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."**

## *All Who Live Godly In Christ Shall Suffer Persecution*

How can we be happy or blessed when we're persecuted? The Lord's Jewish audience surely thought this was a strange thing to be saying. Because according to the Jewish mindset, to be persecuted was actually to be under a curse of God. It showed God's displeasure rather than God's favour. Here's a Rabbi teaching **'No, rather be happy when you're persecuted, when you're reviled, when people make fun of you. Instead of thinking it's the curse of God, it may be that you are being blessed by God.'** The idea anyway you look at it had to be revolutionary to Jesus' audience. And I think it still is today. Maybe you're thinking *'I don't want to study about persecution. I don't want to think about it, I live in America where I am safe.'* Well, I don't know about that, how safe you may be now or in the future. But if I read **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:12** right it says, **"And indeed, all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."** In **John 16:33**, Jesus says, **"I give you my peace, but in this world you shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."** We shall have persecution, we shall have trouble, we shall have tribulation in this world. You know, if you get outside of the borders of our country, you realize that it's very common for a believer to be persecuted. Look at **1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 4, verses 12 and 13**, **"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you which comes upon you for your testing as though some strange thing were happening to you. But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of his glory, you may rejoice with exultation."** *'Beloved, don't be surprised.'* The Greek means, *'Don't keep on being bewildered,'* actually is what it says. *'Don't keep on being bewildered by the fiery ordeal among you.'* You know, at this time they were burning some Christians. Nero was beginning his persecution of believers, and he would wrap them in pitch and he would light Christians on fire in his patios and burn them at night during his awful parties. He would sew them into animal skins and let the wild beasts in the arena tear them apart. There was a horrific persecution that the recipients of this letter here would understand. Jesus said, **'Blessed are you, happy are you when you're persecuted for righteousness' sake.'** I'd like to look at three stipulations the Lord gives in order for our persecution to be blessed. You never know, you might be persecuted someday. I grew up in a home (the pastor whose giving this is saying) where the home environment was not

conducive really to my following after Christ at all. And I remember just being a little boy, I mean very young boy, six years old, and having to make decisions for Jesus that would make my parents mad at me. And, I mean, it was difficult, it was no fun. But I can look back on those times now, and I'm really glad, because I know what it's like to take a stand for the Lord, and I can also see now those little building blocks that the Lord was working into my life at age six, seven, eight, nine, ten, they helped me when I was 22 years old to say no to a whole way of life and to follow Christ another step.

## ***The Three Stipulations For Persecution To Be Blessed***

### ***Number 1: It's got to be for the sake of righteousness***

In order for persecution to be blessed there are three stipulations. Jesus said **"Blessed are you when you suffer for the sake of righteousness."** Don't bring trouble on yourself by being obnoxious. Look at 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15. Have you ever met the obnoxious Christian? I've met quite a few, and before I grew in the Lord, I was one, but as a babe in Christ.

### ***Number 2: And secondly if you're really being persecuted, the reviling must be falsely based***

If you're being reviled, the report has to be false. It's got to be something that isn't true. When they arrested Jesus, they began looking for what?---false witnesses---that they might have something against him. You see, he was living a good life, he had obviously been living a perfect life, and there was nobody there to come up with charges against the Lord. So they had to hire people, *'Let's find false witnesses.'* The cool thing was they couldn't even find three witnesses that agreed on their false charges. The following false report was published by the Communist government of Vietnam in a controlled newspaper, I quote, *"The enemies have made up a story about some king, and tell people of the king's appearance. They also order them to gather money, to leave productive work, to go find and receive the king. Of course, there is no substance to Vang Chu"*---that's Vietnamese for God---*"but foreign radio stations that are broadcasting in the Hmong dialect to convince people that Vang Chu [God] is in fact the real king of the Vietnamese*

people. This is causing a lot of serious damage against the security of the country, and many Vietnamese are suffering.” Praise God, Praise God, there’s a false report. I mean, Jesus never told us to go and gather money and leave productive work, and to go wait for him someplace. That’s not what the Lord has ever taught us to do. In fact, to the contrary, Christians end up being the hardest workers, Christians end up in these countries being model citizens, the ones that everybody can look to for support and encouragement. And that’s why persecution always boomerangs on these governments. And that’s why people finally begin to realize, ‘*What are we doing to these nice people?*’ But don’t tell me you’re being persecuted, if at work you’re not putting in forty hours a week, you’re not putting in your eight hours a day, instead you’re gabbing about Jesus, two hours or an hour a day, on the clock. Look, your employer pays you to work. You don’t want your witness to be looked upon by your employer as something that brings shame and reproach upon Jesus. I’m not saying not to witness. Witness. But don’t use it as a constant coffee-break. You ought to be the one that’s the hardest worker, you’ve got the reputation for being the one that has the great attendance record... Persecution almost always contains falsehoods. **1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 3, verses 14 through 16, “But even if you should suffer as a Christian for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”** And **verse 16** now, **“Keep a good conscience, so that in the things in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”** I don’t know how many times I’ve been slandered. After awhile you just, you become like a duck and it just rolls off you, you know, like water rolls off a duck, and you’re not out there trying to clear it all up, put out all the fires the enemy’s lighting around you. But your behavior ought to be such that Jesus, Yeshua is glorified. And the people who slander you will be put to shame.

***Number 3: And thirdly, the persecution must be for Christ’s sake, Matthew 5:12 says***

***‘When you’re persecuted for my name’s sake,’*** Jesus said, ***‘you’ll be happy, or blessed.’*** The persecution arises out of our unwavering loyalty to our Master and King, and it’s joyful,

in that we're willing to suffer for Christ. **Hebrews 13:12-13**, says, **"Therefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered outside the gate, hence let us go to him outside the camp, bearing the reproach."** There is shame sometimes in following Christ. Not any shame because Jesus is shameful, but because the world will try to shame you and say that you're something that you're not. Don't worry. Jesus was shamed as well. Pastor Gayle Feng, Chinese pastor, was arrested in China and sent to prison without a trial. His home and his possessions were all confiscated. His crime was that he tried to legally register a Protestant church in China. This is very recent. While in prison he went on a hunger strike to try to get his Bible back which had been confiscated. He stopped eating because he so desired the Bread of Life, the Word of God. Isn't that incredible? I mean, how many times do we take the Word of God for granted? To try to break his hunger strike seven Chinese guards tied him in a chair. You know, this is the way bullies work. It took seven of them to tie this, I've got a picture, he's a little guy. Seven of these guys tied him in a chair, and then they began torturing him with cattle prods, electrocuting him. He said the pain was so intense he thought he was going to die, but he wouldn't cave in. He eventually got his Bible. He served the rest of his sentence in a northern Chinese "re-education" camp, but when at last he was released---you know what his words to fellow believers where?---he told them it was worth it all, that he would happily go to prison all over again, and this is what he says, I quote, *"I would prefer to be in prison for two years than do nothing for God."* Corey ten Boom, you know she was talking to her father about persecution and death [her family was hiding Jews during the early part of Nazi occupation of Holland, and they got caught, as they knew they would] and she says, *"Father, I don't know if I'm going to be able to go through this."* And her father wisely said to her, *"Little Corey"* he said, *"You know when we go to the train station, when do I give you the ticket to get onboard the train?"* She says, *"Father, when we're just about ready to get onboard."* And he says, *"Exactly, that's when God will give you the grace that you need, just before you step into that trouble."* And God will, and God has, and God always will continue to do so.

## ***Three encouragements in persecution***

***First encouragement, the kingdom of heaven is yours, you've gained admission***

Let's go back to Matthew 5, verse 10, we can be happy because we're going to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, as resurrected immortal beings (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:49-56), Matthew 5, verse 10. The very fact that you're persecuted, here's some encouragements, if you end up being persecuted, and you will for righteousness sake, you can be happy because you're going to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, **verse 10, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Psalm 16:10-11, "For you will not leave my soul in Sheol [Hebrew "the grave"], nor will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."** This is talking about eternal life. David sets the context of this statement in the realm of eternal life, after his resurrection to immortality (verse 10). We will be with God wherever he is, and there will be **"pleasures forevermore."** We're going to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven as immortal spirit beings, the resurrected saints of God.

***Second encouragement, your rewards within that kingdom will be great***

Secondly, we can be happy in persecution because we have a heavenly reward, **verse 12, 'Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.'** As I see our Sudanese brothers and sisters in Christ dying and being mowed down by machineguns and dying of starvation, and you hear of other atrocities that are perpetrated against believers across the world, all those poor people, they don't have anything. You know what? Great is their reward in heaven, great is their reward. They have an exceeding eternal weight of glory that's going to be given to them by our righteous Lord Jesus Christ. It says, **"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you," verse 11, "and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of me. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."** You know what? You're in good company.

***Third encouragement, you're being confirmed as a child of God***

Thirdly, you're being confirmed as being a child of God. If you never get any persecution in your life, maybe you'd better check your spiritual pulse. Maybe you're not really alive in Christ. Maybe you're not really a believer, **"because all those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."** It might not all be being burned at the stake, it might not be that any of you will ever be called to give your life for Jesus Christ, but it may be in other ways, people hurt you, slander you, abuse you, misuse you, there's all sorts of ways you can be persecuted, not getting the raise, being passed over. Even in the spiritual realm and with spiritual warfare, the enemy can just begin to barrage you and shoot you and hit you. I've encountered that running this website. If you are doing a work for Jesus Christ, even a small work, you are on Satan's threat list, his hit list. You've become a threat to his evil empire. Spiritual warfare isn't pleasant, but rejoice (<http://www.unityinchrist.com/memphisbelle.htm>). And you're being persecuted, yes, but you know what, you're in good company, realize *'I'm a child of God.'*

### *Persecution To The Church*

When persecution occurs to the Church, Body of Christ, it's really good for the Church, because a lot of people that really aren't Christians leave. And I've often wondered, if real persecution broke out in America, what would a church like ours boil down to? Would we go from, what, nearly 5,000 down to what? I hope it'd stay right where it is, but I don't know what would happen. [To answer the pastor's question, one, there's not way he can see into every member's heart, but two, how many that are believers remaining strong and steadfast depends on ***'how he builds on the foundation, which is Christ.'*** **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:10-15**, **"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If a man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If a man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."** The

pastor can't be responsible for every person's personal spiritual life, but he can be held accountable by Christ for the overall health of the congregation entrusted to him, or the overall health of the ministry entrusted to him.] As far as persecution goes, I do know the pressure that we can get from other people can keep us from making the right decisions.

[Notes taken from a sermon covering Matthew 5:10-12, given by Pastor J. Mark Martin of Calvary Community Church, 12612 N. Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix, AZ 85029]

related links:

For those of you who just accepted Jesus into your life, how do you choose a church? See,

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/history2/choosingachurch.htm>

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[http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming\\_4.htm](http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm) and

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Where these troubled times are leading, *The World to Come*:

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/kingdomofgod/mkg1.htm>