

Blessed are Those Who are
Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

Act 12:1-2 ESV About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 **He killed James the brother of John with the sword,**

Mat 5:10-12 ESV "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

4 Things Jesus Taught About Persecution

- 1) Jesus knows something we don't
- 2) Persecution comes in various forms
- 3) Life here is NOT all there is
- 4) If persecuted you are in good company

God is Sovereign

Act 4:23-30 ESV When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "**Sovereign Lord**, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,

Persecution was Predicted

25 who **through the mouth of our father David, your servant**, said by the Holy Spirit, "'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain?

26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'--

Powerful Men Can Only Do What the Lord Allows

27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

28 **to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.**

29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all **boldness**, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and continued to speak the word of God with **boldness**.

Act 9:13-16 ESV But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how **much evil he has done** to your saints at Jerusalem.

14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for **he is a chosen instrument of mine** to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

Act 8:1 ESV And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they **were all scattered** throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Act 8:4-5 ESV Now those who were scattered went about **preaching the word**. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.

Act 11:19-21 ESV Now those who were **scattered because of the persecution** that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

2Co 4:7-12 ESV But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 **persecuted, but not forsaken;** struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that **the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.** 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.