

This Way to Happiness: When You Aren't Wanted

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Matthew 5:10-12.

B. A brand of Christianity is being developed about success and fulfillment without pain and suffering. We have to pay a price.

C. Good Christians should expect persecution.

II. Reasons for persecution.

A. For righteousness.

1. Persecution is not suffering for the wrong that we do.

2. When we live the beatitudes we start living against the current.

3. Righteousness means to be different.

4. The presence of righteousness in a godless world makes sin look worse.

B. For the sake of Jesus' name. If we are truly living for Christ, they will see Christ whom they are persecuting.

III. Our response to persecution.

A. Our natural response is retaliation.

B. We are to have a spiritual attitude toward suffering. (1 Peter 4:1)

1. We should reign. Kings do not act with retaliation.

2. We should rejoice.

a. Persecution is a compliment.

b. Persecution becomes an opportunity for witness.

c. Persecution is an opportunity for growth.

C. We should love our enemies. Love them, pray for them and do good to them.

IV. The rewards of persecution.

A. We keep company with famous people as part of our reward. (Philippians 3:10)

B. We reign with Christ in heaven.

C. We will have a crown on the other side.

V. Persecution is a test and a testimony.

Application questions:

1. What are some examples of suffering that are not persecution?

2. When have you experienced persecution? What did you learn or can you learn from your response?

3. How can we prepare for a life of persecution? If there is no persecution, what might that suggest of our lives? Explain.
