



## Blessed are the Persecuted

**Date:** Sunday 21st June

**Speaker:** Becky Stamps

**Key Verses:** Matthew 5:1-12

### Talk Summary:

The beatitudes are a summary of God's Kingdom manifesto, Jesus saying these are the people God wants to bless and the world God wants to make.

At the end of the Beatitudes he turns to his disciples and addressed them directly with an invitation, a warning and a promise

#### **1. Invitation - to live differently**

- In these verse he puts his disciples and us in the category of prophet – messengers of God.
- If his disciples are the prophets, and he is the one who gives the rewards, then he is setting himself us as the king but also as the God who sends the prophets. – Jesus is God and king of this Kingdome of heaven
- Being a prophet is a bit like being a light (salt, city on hill)
- Light reveals what's going on in the world and points the way to change – Prophets do the same.
- We are currently in the middle of learning that the world is more unjust than we thought
- A prophet not only reveals the symptoms but God's insight into what is at the root of that problem

#### **2. Warning – You will be persecuted**

- This is often not easy stuff to talk about
- Some people will be attracted
- Some people will be repulsed by the light
- If we live for Jesus, then we will experience some kind of discomfort
- 3,000 Christian died for their faith last year
- 73 countries where there is significant persecution (death, imprisonment and more)
- What Jesus is calling us to is more than a comfortable, moral, middle class life, sprinkled with a bit of Jesus.
- All of us belongs to Jesus – lives, bodies, finances - This is costly, this is sacrificial, this is uncomfortable

### 3. Promise

- Persecution
- Fruit – faith and freedom – There is nothing more amazing and exciting than seeing people come to faith and have their lives totally transformed by Jesus.

Forever blessings of God – We will inherit His eternal kingdom

## Worship

- Why not start your time together with a centring prayer exercise, or some musical worship?
  - More ideas at [bvc.so/sgworship](http://bvc.so/sgworship) or [bvc.so/sgprayer](http://bvc.so/sgprayer)

## Word

- How do you find it easy to share your faith? To live differently than those around you? If so why/why not?
- Have you experienced any push back, difficulties or persecution as a result of following Jesus? How did you deal with it?
- What does our passage say our response to persecution should be? That is a pretty odd response? What about the Christian life should help us respond in this way?
- Jesus talks about our heavenly rewards. What do you think that looks like? How should it shape our thinking now?

## Witness

- Reflect on your friends and those you know who don't know Jesus yet. Where can you see Jesus at work in their life? Take some time to pray for them.
- <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/> you may want to have a look at this website and use their resources to pray for our fellow Jesus followers around the world who are experiencing persecution.

## Prophetic words that were shared on Sunday:

You may want to share these with your group and see if any of them resonate with anyone. Then take time to pray for each other.

- Someone had the sense that a few people have been wondered if what they have been through, after saying Yes to Jesus, has really been worth it, did they do the right thing in saying yes to him. They are coming under quite severe temptation and other difficulties. They felt that God really want to come alongside them, meet with them and free them.
- Just think prayerfully about Matthew 7 v9-11 this morning. At a time when we're thinking about what gifts we can give our fathers/Father this morning, knowing the best gift for any father is seeing their children thrive and grow into their full potential. This is our greatest gift for God - thriving in all the gifts He has given us!
- Expect the unexpected - God is going to show up today and this week in unexpected ways, raise our eyes and expectation levels to see God's love in a new way
- Some might be feeling like the faithful son in the story of the Prodigal Son story, a bit upset and jealous that the returning son is being lavished upon. God is saying your faithfulness has not gone unnoticed - you are blessed and will continue to be my beloved child. Trust me your Father, continue to walk with me and know you are loved.