

## Audio Transcript of Sermon

September 20, 2025

### Blessed are They Which are Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Even in a country like the United States there are many who feel Christians are under attack. There is a fear that without vigilance the religious freedoms enjoyed by Christians will be taken away. There are those who look at Christians as the source of pain and suffering, and seem to be just fine with reducing the impact of Christianity within the country. It's never good when religious freedoms are attacked, and when it seems like the religious freedoms of your faith are attacked, it stings a bit more.

In response to attacks on religious freedoms, although we say it is in God we trust, it seems like houses of worship look to politicians to alleviate their concerns more than God. Though Christians feel their faith is under attack in the United States, the attack on faith is different than the attacks felt by Christians in other parts of the world. We think of these attacks on faith as persecution, and the Bible forewarned us that persecutions would come to the faithful.

A search on recent persecutions of Christians yields some alarming numbers. Open Doors US, a non-profit which keeps track of persecution of Christians, is one source of information to look at. They report about three hundred eighty million people worldwide who call themselves Christians routinely suffer persecution. Typically what they report is that countries typically considered to have a higher Christians population are safest, but not always, and that countries with a higher population of a religion other than Christian are more dangerous, but not always. Those who live in the Western Hemisphere might think that persecution doesn't happen on this side of the planet, but it does. In the Western Hemisphere, it seems like political ideology and drug cartels can bring challenges to Christians.

Jesus taught that His followers would face persecution, and He also taught that when we face persecution we should try our best to get away from the persecution. I live in Texas, a state where we are fiercely independent and self-reliant. One of the elements of state law is a stand your ground provision

within our criminal laws, where if a person wanted to stay and defend themselves, pursuant to the law, they would have the right to do so. If you would like the legal specifics on how stand your ground works in Texas, that would be a question for you to ask a criminal defense attorney, and I am not attorney. I am a retired educator. While we have the right to stand your ground in Texas, what Jesus taught was to flee. Jesus taught as much as is possible, to get away and put a good deal of distance between you and those who persecute you. Jesus taught that as strange as it may seem, that persecution and fleeing by Christians is used by Jesus to spread the message of the gospel. Matthew ten verse twenty-two.

### **Matthew 10:22-23**

**22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**

**23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.**

When persecution comes, it is never an occasion to abandon the faith. Jesus taught that truth would come to many different types of people in this lifetime, but that truth would germinate as devote faith in only a select few. In the parable of the sower, He taught that a farmer went to plant a field and some of the seed fell just outside of the field, and birds quickly ate it up. Other seed fell on an area of the field where underneath there were lots of stones, and the stones prevented roots from developing. These withered and died in the heat. Other seeds were planted where weeds would grow, and those weeds choked out the crop. It was only the seed sown on good ground where the crop grew. Mark four verse one.

### **Mark 4:1-20**

**1. And he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.**

**2. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,**

**3. Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:**

- 4. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.**
- 5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:**
- 6. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.**
- 7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.**
- 8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.**
- 9. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

When Jesus taught this, not even His disciples fully understood what Jesus was teaching, and one of them asked about it. They quickly learned that they were chosen to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but that others would not understand. Jesus taught that within the parable, the seed is the Word, the truth of God. He added that the birds that ate the seed cast just outside of the field represent Satan, who seeks to devour whoever he can. The seed planted on stony ground that withers in heat represents those who abandon the faith when persecution comes. The seed planted among weeds are those of the faith who become more concerned with worldly concerns than spiritual. For these folks, things like politics and social services become more important than faith, and eventually they become defined by politics and social services more than their faith. Finally, the seed planted on good ground is about all who are called who remain faithful, and who spiritually grow. Verse ten.

- 10. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.**
- 11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:**
- 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.**

**13. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?**

**14. The sower soweth the word.**

**15. And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.**

**16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;**

**17. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.**

**18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,**

**19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.**

**20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.**

It's important for us to remember we cannot abandon the faith because we live in a time when all who choose to live a godly lifestyle will suffer persecution. The faith we have is not aligned to the values of this world. We live in a world where people are focused on themselves and are greedy. People make claims that are not true, and they feel very good about who they are. They do not value the truth and seek to demean it. Among these people, what parents say means very little to their children. There is no gratitude suggesting a sense of entitlement. There is no focus for these people on becoming more and more like God. They lack concern and compassion for other people. They disregard and excuse themselves from agreements they have made. To save themselves, they will lie about another person. Deep down they lack self-control. They are quick to attack others and look down on anyone who is trying to do what is right. There is no loyalty, they make rash decisions, and think very highly of themselves. They will choose their own pleasures over God even though they like to have an outward appearance of being godly, today what would be called virtue signaling. Paul made it clear

those who live a godly lifestyle will face persecution. Second Timothy three verse one.

## **2 Timothy 3:1-13**

- 1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**
- 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,**
- 3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,**
- 4. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**
- 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**
- 6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,**
- 7. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**
- 8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.**
- 9. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.**
- 10. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,**
- 11. Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.**
- 12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**
- 13. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.**

From Revelation we can see that persecution was a message to some but not to all of the churches. For instance the church in Smyrna was told that they would suffer persecution ten days, and that if they were faithful to death, they would receive eternal life, showing that for some persecution does end in death. Revelation two verse eight.

### **Revelation 2:8-11**

**8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;**

**9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.**

**10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.**

**11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**

From other passages in Revelation, we can see persecution is implied for the faithful. When the fifth seal is opened, the souls of those who died for the faith are seen, and they collectively cry out with a loud voice to be avenged for their death. Revelation six verse nine.

### **Revelation 6:9-11**

**9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:**

**10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?**

**11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.**

Later in Revelation, we see the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters. The casual reader might think this references a madam of a brothel, and while the term whore is used to describe people and the people of Israel were told not to marry a whore, the term also has a spiritual application for those who dabble in the true faith and also borrow from other religious faiths. When Ezekiel prophesied of Jerusalem, he warned them of whoredoms. Ezekiel sixteen verse twenty-two.

## **Ezekiel 16:22**

**22. And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood.**

Going back to the great whore of Revelation, we see this is a whore that sits on many waters showing that this whore represents a religious faith that has perverted Christianity by blending various non-Biblical religious practices from around the world. When it comes to religion, this great whore is a global player who exerts influence over leaders and common people alike. She is described as a woman clothed in scarlet and purple sitting upon a scarlet colored beast that embodies everything about blasphemy, and she was drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ. This great whore that blends blasphemy with the faith is responsible for so many deaths and she is described as drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs, suggesting she sees herself as justified in doing what she does. Revelation seventeen verse one.

## **Revelation 17:1-6**

**1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**

**2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.**

**3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.**

**4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:**

**5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

**6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.**

Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, explaining they will inherit the Kingdom of God. Matthew five verse ten.

### **Matthew 5:10**

**10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

At another time, Jesus showed that it would be next to impossible for a rich person to enter into the Kingdom of God. When the disciples began to wonder if anyone could be saved, they were told that with God anything is possible. It was then Jesus explained that those who suffer loss and persecutions during this time will have eternal life in the world to come, beyond however God will bless them during this life. Mark ten verse twenty-three.

### **Mark 10:23-31**

**23. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!**

**24. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!**

**25. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.**

**26. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?**

**27. And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.**

**28. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.**

**29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,**

**30. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.**

**31. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.**



At the end of His human life, Jesus shared a few parting thoughts on persecution with the disciples. First, He explained that if the world hated Him, that they would also hate the disciples, because the disciples then and the faithful now represent the Kingdom of God, a kingdom that is not of this world. He shared that He was persecuted and that they would also be persecuted. John fifteen verse eighteen.

#### **John 15:18-21**

**18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.**

**19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.**

**20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.**

**21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.**

He went on to show that persecutions would become so intense that people who killed the faithful would think they were doing God a favor. John sixteen verse one.

#### **John 16:1-3**

**1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.**

**2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.**

**3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.**

Paul shared the journey of the struggle of faith with the Corinthians in his second letter to them, showing how God has given us the Holy Spirit while still mortal so that what is excellent within us is of God and not of us. He added that we are surrounded by worries and troubles to the point where we feel like we are almost overwhelmed, and yet we do not lose hope or faith. Even when we are persecuted, we know we are not forsaken. When life kicks us to the curb we survive another day. This comes to us through faith knowing Jesus died for us, and was resurrected so we can have eternal life. We know God

can and will use what are seen as the bad situations in life to bring us to eternal life. Second Corinthians four verse seven.

## **2 Corinthians 4:7-15**

**7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**

**8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;**

**9. Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;**

**10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.**

**11. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.**

**12. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.**

**13. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;**

**14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.**

**15. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.**

Paul was called after the early apostles and after he himself had thoroughly persecuted the church when he was named Saul. It was almost like Saul's persecutions were so much that it was decided by God and Jesus that Saul would play for team Jesus. The intensity that Saul had for persecuting the church became the intensity with which he shared the gospel of the Kingdom of God as Paul, and through his ministry as he was led by the Holy Spirit, today we have a good deal of the New Testament books. Paul was inspired to preach and to write to the congregations. To counter that spiritual abundance, God also gave Paul a thorn in the flesh, which is not clearly identified for us through the pages of the Bible. Paul identified that thorn in the flesh as the messenger of Satan that kept him in check lest he think highly of himself through his writings and ministry. Paul was showing that even an attempt by Satan to bring us down can be used to deliver us in a better position to the Kingdom of God. With that, Paul took pleasure in his illnesses, when he was looked down upon, when he struggled to provide his basic needs. While never pleasant, he found a way to take pleasure when he was

persecuted and at wits end for his role in preaching the gospel, not because he was deranged but because he realized what others see as weakness can be a source of spiritual strength for us. Second Corinthians twelve verse seven.

## **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

**7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.**

**8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.**

**9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

**10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

He reminded the Philippians that our life today should be defined by our faith in Jesus Christ and that what others look at as the finality of death is for us just a beginning. Knowing we have a shared hope of much better things to come in the Kingdom of God when Jesus Christ returns, it's normal for us to desire the world to come more than the world in which we live and that can leave us feeling conflicted. While we have this hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God, while we live on this side of eternity we must be determined to live on this side of eternity for the sake of others, some of whom may be of the household of faith, and for others who are not yet of the family of faith.

Knowing we have this hope of things to come while we live in this present world, it is good for us to be mindful of the Kingdom of God in everything we do. Whatever we do on this side of eternity needs to be building up to our place in the Kingdom of God. We can live our lives without any sense of terror. We know there will be those who seek to bring us down, but we know God seeks to build us up to the place where we have eternal life in His kingdom. We know we will suffer during this life we have, and we know we will inherit eternal life. Philippians one verse twenty-one.

### **Philippians 1:21-30**

**21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

**22. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.**

**23. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:**

**24. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.**

**25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;**

**26. That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.**

**27. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;**

**28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.**

**29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;**

**30. Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.**

Peter also reminded us of this concept in his first letter. He reminds us that if we are followers of good that those who can harm us are few and far between. He also shared that if we find ourselves suffering for righteousness' sake, we do not need to worry about it. Now, if we suffer because we did something stupid or inadvisable, that's on us, but if we suffer for righteousness's sake, we do not need to worry. He adds that we must keep God as Holy within our thoughts. We cannot relegate God as some goofy character we might find in a movie or television show. God is Holy and we must regard God as Holy at all times. Peter advises us to use meekness and respect when sharing our faith with others. We should never be accusatory in our approach and should always use meekness and respect. There should never be anything about what we say or do that can ever give any person confirmation of anything they negatively believe about us. If they will hate us, let them hate us without giving them any cause to do so. First Peter three verse thirteen.

### **1 Peter 3:13-17**

**13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?**

**14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;**

**15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

**16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.**

**17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.**

Peter also tells us not to think it strange when difficulties come our way. If we suffer as a Christian, that should give us reason to glorify God. First Peter four verse twelve.

### **1 Peter 4:12-19**

**12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:**

**13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.**

**14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.**

**15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.**

**16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.**

**17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**

**18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?**

**19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.**

In his first letter, John writes we should not be amazed if people hate us because of the faith. First John three verse thirteen.

### **1 John 3:13-18**

**13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.**

**14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.**

**15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.**

**16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

**17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?**

**18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but indeed and in truth.**

In the psalms we see prayers to deliver us from the hands of those who persecute us, and we also see confidence that this is exactly what will happen. Psalm thirty-one verse one.

### **Psalm 31:1-15**

**1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.**

**2. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.**

**3. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.**

**4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.**

**5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.**

**6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.**

**7. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;**

**8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.**

**9. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.**

**10. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.**

**11. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.**

**12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.**

**13. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.**

**14. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.**

**15. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.**

In another psalm, we read of prayers where it is asked of God to persecute those who persecute us. Psalm thirty-five verse one.

#### **Psalm 35:1-6**

**1. Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.**

**2. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.**

**3. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.**

**4. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.**

**5. Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.**

**6. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.**

Amos reminds us of evil times, how those who speak the truth will be hated. He reminds us of the need to bite our tongue during these times of evil lest we hasten the onslaught of persecutions against us. Amos five verse seven.

#### **Amos 5:7-13**

**7. Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,**

- 8. Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name:**
- 9. That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.**
- 10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.**
- 11. Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.**
- 12. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.**
- 13. Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.**

Paul reminded the Romans that nothing, not even tribulation or persecution can separate us from the love of Christ. Romans eight verse thirty-one.

#### **Romans 8:31-39**

- 31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**
- 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**
- 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.**
- 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**
- 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**
- 36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.**
- 37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.**



**38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

He also reminded the Romans to never repay evil for evil. When we are persecuted, we cannot persecute in return. Like the psalm mentioned earlier, we can bring it to God and give God discretion how to respond. Romans twelve verse fourteen.

#### **Romans 12:14-21**

**14. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.  
15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.  
16. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.  
17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.  
18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.  
19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.  
20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.  
21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Finally, we are reminded to love our enemies and to pray for those that curse us, that hate us, who despitefully use us, and who persecute us. Matthew five verse forty-three.

#### **Matthew 5:43-48**

**43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.  
44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;  
45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?**

**47. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?**

**48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**

Living a godly lifestyle, we will suffer persecution, because not all people are part of the household of faith. When others persecute us, we can never retaliate. We can take our concerns to God and give God the opportunity to respond. We are called to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Jesus was persecuted and hated, and when persecution comes our way, we should glorify God because Jesus told his disciples if He was persecuted and hated, we would be persecuted and hated.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.