

Devotional 8: Those Who Are Persecuted

Boldness and Suffering

Foundational Text

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

— Matthew 5:10–12

What the Text Reveals

Jesus closes the Beatitudes with the longest declaration, expanding from one verse to three, shifting from third person (“those who are persecuted”) to second person (“you”). He makes it personal. He makes it inevitable. And He makes it the only beatitude that shares the same promise as the first: “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

This creates an inclusion—a literary bracket. The Beatitudes begin and end with the same promise, forming a complete cycle. Poor in spirit and persecuted for righteousness both receive the kingdom. The journey from desperate need (Beatitude 1) to costly witness (Beatitude 8) is the arc of revival itself: it begins in bankruptcy and culminates in bold proclamation that invites opposition.

Two qualifiers demand attention. First, “because of righteousness.” Not because of foolishness, arrogance, or unnecessary provocation. Persecution for being obnoxious is not blessed; persecution for faithfully reflecting God’s character is. Second, “because of me.” Jesus identifies Himself as the reason for the opposition. The persecuted are blessed not because suffering is inherently redemptive but because their suffering identifies them with Christ.

Biblical Architecture

Acts 5:41 records the apostles’ response to being beaten by the Sanhedrin: “The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.” Not merely enduring—rejoicing. They interpreted persecution not as failure but as validation. The opposition confirmed they were doing exactly what Jesus had predicted.

2 Timothy 3:12 establishes the universal principle: “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Paul does not say “might be” or “could be.” He says “will be.”

Persecution is not an anomaly in the Christian life; its absence may be the anomaly. A faith that produces no friction with a fallen world may not be the faith Jesus described.

1 Peter 4:12–14 reframes the experience entirely: “Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” Persecution is participation in Christ’s own experience. Those who suffer for the Name share in the Savior’s story.

Core Thesis

***True revival produces bold witness that invites opposition.
“Brokenhearted boldness” captures this paradox—compassionate urgency that speaks truth regardless of cost. Jesus promises persecution for righteousness, not popularity for performance.
Revival spreads through believers willing to suffer for the Name.***

Revival Connection: Week 4 — Evangelism with Brokenhearted Boldness

Week 4 of Revival 2026 calls believers to evangelism that accepts the cost. “Brokenhearted boldness” is the eighth beatitude lived out: hearts broken for the lost (mercy, Beatitude 5), purified by God’s holiness (Beatitude 6), committed to reconciliation (peacemaking, Beatitude 7), and willing to suffer opposition for faithful witness (Beatitude 8).

The historical pattern is unmistakable: revival always produces both conversion and opposition. The First Great Awakening produced thousands of conversions and a fierce backlash from institutional religion. The Reformation produced spiritual freedom and centuries of persecution. The early church exploded in growth precisely because believers refused to soften their witness even under threat of death.

The salvation prayer lists, the accountability structures, the training in evangelistic conversation—all of these Week 4 tools prepare believers for the eighth beatitude reality. We step into conversations knowing that faithfulness may cost us relationships, reputation, comfort, or safety. We step in anyway—not seeking martyrdom, but refusing to let the fear of opposition silence the message that reconciles humanity to God.

Strategic Question

Am I softening my witness to avoid opposition? What would change if I believed that persecution for righteousness is evidence of kingdom citizenship rather than a sign of failure?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You promised persecution for those who follow You faithfully. Give us courage to witness boldly, knowing opposition may come. Let us rejoice when counted worthy to suffer for Your Name. Prepare us for the cost of revival—not to seek suffering, but to accept it as evidence that Your kingdom is advancing through us. Place Your words in our mouths. Plant Your compassion in our hearts. And give us the brokenhearted boldness that refuses to be silenced by the fear of what faithfulness may cost. Amen.

Scripture Treasury

“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”

— Acts 5:41

“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

— 2 Timothy 3:12

“Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ.”

— 1 Peter 4:12–13

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”

— Matthew 10:28

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

— Romans 1:16