

Matthew 5.10-12 – Blessed are those who suffer for the sake of Righteousness

*“For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven” Colossians 1.19-20*

The key phrase in v.10 is **for the sake**. Really, the last part of the Beatitudes centers around this idea, and we must be careful, for often we suffer not for the sake of righteousness, but for other things – even “good” things. Suffering in our lives as believers is also caused one of two ways – **internally** or **externally**. This too is something that needs careful consideration while suffering, because we often pin our suffering on others (even God), when we are at fault. When we suffer, we must ask the question – “for the sake of what am I suffering?” Far too often it is because of our *unrighteousness* or *false* righteousness that we suffer. 1 Peter 4.12-19 is a great place to get a good look on just how those are different.

The suffering described here is **external** and **for righteousness’ sake**. This suffering comes because we live a life that reflects the preceding 9 verses. It comes because we are the sons of God, and in John 15.18-21 Jesus talks about the root of that suffering, “*but all these things they will do to you for **My name’s sake**, because they do not know the one who sent Me*”. We are peacemakers whose very calling will put us in the front line of conflict. We seek to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations – but the nations and the people we are called to are often in all-out war in their hearts with God. This is both because of the internal sin nature and because of the external influences that reinforce that nature all around us. Paul struggled with these very issues in 2 Corinthians 11.

So we are called to a work that will most likely lead to division and suffering. This passage assumes that, because living righteously means more than just internal holiness. It means living in such a way that the **Light shines before all men**, which comes through the inward refinement and outward fruit-bearing of the work of God in our lives (Phil. 2.12-18). To remain inwardly focused misses that whole point of the Beatitudes, and Jesus is seeking to hammer that truth home. This is the call of Christ - **He bids us to come and die**. And not to die in our homes, hidden away, but out doing His great work.

Honestly, these last verses are the definers of how all of the previous verses have been planted, nurtured, and lived out in our lives. If we do not suffer in some way for our faith, then we have to ask, “**for whose sake am I living?**” If we are, as v.11 says, living for Him, then we will suffer. If there was one common theme of men and women of faith throughout the Old and New Testaments it is suffering for the sake of righteousness. This does not mean there will not be time of peace and blessedness, but those things should not dominate us. We should not look to those times as deserved, but as they are, gifts from God in the midst of a raging storm.

Finally, we are not only called **to suffer**, but also to **rejoice in suffering**. The only way that is possible however is to **see the present world and it’s comforts as passing away**. Hebrews 11.14-12.3 paints us an unbelievable picture of what it means to really live in that way.

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### Contact Us:

P.O. Box 5533  
Bremerton, WA 98312  
360.373.1483

[info@seasidechurch.com](mailto:info@seasidechurch.com)