

**“Blessed are Those Who Are Persecuted for Righteousness’ Sake”**  
**by Rev. John C. Tittle**

**Matthew 5: 10-12 NRSVue**

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**1 Peter 4: 12-16 GNB**

<sup>12</sup> My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you. <sup>15</sup> If you suffer, it must not be because you are a murderer or a thief or a criminal or a meddler in other people's affairs. <sup>16</sup> However, if you suffer because you are a Christian, don't be ashamed of it, but thank God that you bear Christ's name.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What do you think of this eighth and final beatitude? Do you think the American church reflects it well? Why or why not?
2. There are two kinds of trouble: good trouble (persecution for righteousness and Christ) and bad trouble (lousy unChristian behavior). How would you define in your own words each of these very different kinds of trouble? What are some examples of both?
3. Jesus promises the kingdom of heaven in the first beatitude and the last beatitude. Why is this blessing repeated? How is the kingdom of heaven a blessing on earth? How will it be a blessing in the future in heaven? How can both of these aspects of the same kingdom of heaven help us now in our pain?
4. What of the eight beatitudes do you want to work most on? (poor in spirit, mourners, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, meekness, merciful, pure of heart, peacemaker, or persecuted for righteousness’ sake)
5. How do we balance accepting suffering with joy and working for justice and change so that persecution doesn’t happen?
6. How can Christ help us cultivate joy in the midst of our suffering for righteousness and Christ?