

Intro.

- A. When you parents 1st laid you in you bed, wonder what dreams they had for you?
1. As you grew & matured into a young man/woman, what were their hopes?
 2. When you finished school, how many of their expectations were your aspirations?
 3. Parents know yg. people need to mature & make uyp own minds about their lives.
 4. At same time we realize that appropriate parental expectations & hopes can serve our children well.
- B. In beatitudes, a strong sp. appli. of this principle is evident for the... *sons of God*.
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| 1. Beati. = picture of God's desires/expecta.
for His children | 2. Descript. of anticipat. results of living
up to the Father's expectations. |
| a. humble (p-n-sp) | a. kgdm. citizens |
| b. penitent (mourn) | b. comforted |
| c. meek | c. beneficiaries of the earth |
| d. students (hgry & trsty) | d. full (of knowledge) |
| e. merciful | e. paroned |
| f. pure | f. people of vision (will see God) |
| g. peacemankers | g. distinguished by family name |
| h. persecuted | h. happy (& in good company) |
- C. Tonight, we conclude our study of the beatitudes (God's plan for the pursuit of ultimate happiness).

Discuss.**I. SUFFERING AS GOD'S CHILDREN IS NOT NEW!**

- A. Persecution has long been a common lot of God's people.
1. When attachment to Jesus is fully developed, the Christian will say: *Christ shall be magnified in my body, either by life or by death.* **Phil. 1:20**
 2. Listen to the thinking of a mature Christian being persecuted: *it has been granted in behalf of Christ Not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf,* **Phil. 1:29.**
 3. Some people have enjoyed such deep & close affection for Jesus that after they were beaten for His sake, they rejoiced in *that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name,* **Ac. 5:41.**
 4. Try to imagine: having been beaten with rods, jailed for years, stoned & left for dead, & still have the desire to *fill up...that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ* (**Co. 1:24**)
- B. Can you recall the apostles affirming their ability to *drink the cup of death,* **Mt. 20:22.**
1. In his Book of Martyrs, John Fox tells of the likely fates of the twelve apostles.
 2. Wm. Tyndale said he "*would cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than*" the pope. In Germany in 1525, he published the 1st English Testament.
 - a. Roman bishop of London bought all he could & burned them.
 - b. At Augsburg, Tyndale was tied to the stake, crying: *Lord! Open the king of England's eyes.*—burned

II. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER SEEMS TO PROVOKE OPPOSITION.

- A. Being different from the world = to be daring, & resented. **Jn. 15:18-21**
1. Christ \geq come to make life easy, but to make men righteous via purifying fires of suffering (**Mt. 10:34**)
 2. The pure life of a faithful Christian, in principle, becomes the condemnation of the world & all that's evil
- B. Persecutions come due to the exclusive nature of godly living. **2 Tim. 3:12**
1. ...because we are trying to be patient & longsuffering with all men, **1 Thes. 5:14**
 2. & because we must be completely intollerant of false teaching & evil, **Gal. 1:8-9**
 3. 1st Cent. Christians refused to mingle freely in temples of the Roman gods.
 4. Also, persecution results when wicked influences are confronted with truth (**Eph. 6:12**)

III. BLESSINGS FOLLOW PRESECUTIONS WHENEVER PROPERLY MOTIVATED.

- A. (Not to justify a *PERSECUTION COMPLEX*, stems f/ being difficult unnecessarily, or being foolish.
- B. There is a comfort (happy contentment) when we hurt if according to **Jn. 15:18-20**

C. Among the blessings of hurting for heaven's sake are:

1. being identified with God's faithful followers
2. having patience cultivated in our lives, **Jas. 1:2-4**
3. anticipating gt. treasures in heaven (**Mt. 5:12**)
4. promise of **Rom. 8:17**, *if we suffer w/ Him, we shall also be glorified w/ Him in heavenly rest!* **vs. 18**

Concl.

- A. Each of us long for happiness in this life, & it will only be really satisfying if we can anticipate heaven with confidence.
- B. That is why God has given us His formula for happiness.
 1. Life w/o God is futile & hopeless.
 2. **2 Cor. 4:17-18**
 3. True test of Ch. character is not faithfulness unchallenged, but faithfulness in the face of fierce persecution.
 4. If you have been hurting, but have not found any hope or happiness in the process, it may well be because you are not living up God's expectations of your life.