

Four Truths about Persecution and the Christian:

I. True followers of Jesus will experience persecution in this world.

Supporting texts:

- 2 Tim 3:12, Acts 14:22, John 15:18-21, John 16:33

Not all true followers of Jesus will suffer in the same way.

- Some will suffer extreme, physical hardship, even death
- Some will suffer social and relational scorn
- Some will suffer division within their own families (Matthew 10:16-39)

We should not pretend to know all of God's purposes in what he allows when and where.

- Acts 17:26-27

2. It is possible to be persecuted for the wrong reason.

Peter's exhortation about suffering

- 1 Peter 4:12-16

Reasons we should NOT be persecuted: being grumpy and cynical towards the world around us.

- When we act like this, we are demonstrating that we do not fully understand the gospel.
- Titus 3:3-7
- J. Edwards resolution #8 – *“Resolved, to act, in all respects, both speaking and doing as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God.”*
- To the degree that we are frustrated with the world around us simply because it threatens our Christian Utopia, we demonstrate that our hopes are misplaced, and our perspective is far too small. We have shrunk the promises of the gospel down to mere cultural terms.

3. We are to be persecuted for righteousness' sake, on the account of Jesus.

What does “for righteousness” mean?

- What it *cannot* mean: righteousness does mean merely our innate righteousness....
- Romans 1:16-17, Romans 3:19-26

This is the gospel

- God is righteous, we are not, we need to be, we can't make ourselves righteous, and, we stand under God's just judgment. Jesus comes and lives the righteous life that is required. He then lays down that perfect life as a sacrifice and takes the Father's punishment for his people. But not only does he take the punishment, he reverses the curse of death by rising from the grave! And, now, he commands all people everywhere to be made right with God—not by trusting in their own good works, but by placing their hope and trust in what He has done.

The world hates Jesus-focused grace and will persecute messengers and models of it!

- Since the garden, mankind has been shouting at the top of its lung: *“I got this! I don't need God!”*
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

4. We are to endure persecution by rejoicing in the hope of heaven.

Our ultimate reward is heaven—to be with the King

- Hebrews 10:32-39