

Matthew 5:10

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Have you ever been *persecuted for righteousness' sake*, or were you being persecuted because you were misrepresenting Jesus and being a jerk?

There are a lot of people who get harassed and made fun of for being a Christian. But on the other hand there are those Christians who are being harassed and made fun of, not because they are Christians, but because they are overbearing, bible thumping, Jesus pushing, obnoxious people. For those of you who do this, you need to know that being righteous does not mean that you shove Jesus down everyone's throat, or does it mean that every other word that you say has to be "Jesus". No, when you do those things, it just means that you are irritating.

You want an example, how about what Jesus talked about. He didn't go around saying "God" every other word. No, He talked about all sorts of everyday things, like money, marriage, taking care of others, crops, birds, flowers, taxes, etc...

- † **Luke 12:24 & 27** *Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?*
Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Or do you remember this story in the book of John?

- † **John 2:1-2** *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.*

I don't read anywhere where Jesus was cramming God down everyone's throats. Also notice that Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine, not persecuting those who were drunk, and telling them that they are going to hell because they are drunk.

Jesus was not persecuted because He forced God or the truth on anyone. No Jesus spoke the truth and lived the truth, and that's why He was persecuted. The religious leaders knew Jesus was right in the things that He said and the way He lived, but they didn't want to admit it. Also, they liked the lifestyle they were living, and they thought that they were right with the way that they were living, so they persecuted Jesus for not following their rules.

If you go to other countries and talk to Christians there, they will tell you that they expect to be persecuted, because the bible says that we all will. And the reason they are persecuted is not because they force Jesus on their family and friends, but because they

have turned from the false religion they were brought up to believe, and they now believe in Jesus Christ.

So once again, ask yourself, are you being persecuted for what you believe in, or because you are obnoxious with what you believe in?

† **Revelation 2:19-20 (MSG)** *I see everything you're doing for me. Impressive! The love and the faith, the service and persistence. Yes, very impressive! You get better at it every day. But why do you let that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet mislead my dear servants into Cross-denying, self-indulging religion?*