

Matt 5:10

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

I remember one time about 15 years ago I was called into the supervisor's office. The reason was, that I had several gospels of John on a table in my office with a little note saying "*Free, take one*". I was not asked to remove the gospels, but to just take down the note, and if someone asked for one I could give it to them.

But the thing was that someone was offended because I had these gospels of John in my office and I was offering them to people. I wasn't mad at the person (I don't even know who it was) and all I can do is pray for him or her.

Yet a lot of times when we think of persecution, we think of beatings and people getting hurt physically. But there are other ways of being persecuted as believers. One is what I just shared with you. It could also be verbal abuse where others make fun of you because you are a Christian. It could be that they just treat you bad and ignore you because of your belief in Jesus. People can even draw your friends away from you convincing them that you are no good or fun to be around.

So what are we to do? Jesus tells us what to do.

† **Matt 5:11-12** *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

You don't have to suffer physical abuse to be persecuted, verbal (*say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake*) and mental abuse can happen as well. But when we do suffer, Jesus says to *Rejoice*

Why rejoice? The reason we rejoice is that it shows others that we belong to Jesus and that others do see Jesus in our lives. And when we do endure these persecutions then: *great is your reward in heaven*

Jesus was the ultimate example of being persecuted for righteousness sake, and we know how great His reward is. But as we share in Jesus' persecution, we will also share in His reward.

† **Rev 22:12-13** *And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.*