

## BLESSING UNDER FIRE

June 29, 2014 Matthew 5:10-12 by Bob Branch  
The Truly Liberated Life, Part 6

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**MAIN IDEA:** Taking flack for being a Christian is part of the normal Christian life, and God is near and active when we're going through it.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **Matthew 5:10-12**

*If you're being persecuted for what is right with God you're unexpectedly graced, because God and his kingdom are yours.*

*If you are insulted, pursued with hatred and falsely slandered because you're with me, you're surprisingly fortunate. Let your heart be glad and your mouth shout aloud because a great reward awaits you when this life is through, for it's what happened to most of the heroes of faith!*

### **2 Legitimate Reasons to take heat for being a Christian:**

#### **1. Because you are standing for/in what is RIGHT WITH GOD.**

"Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also." **John 15:20**

#### ***Why was Jesus persecuted?***

- Perfect righteousness is either a threat or a blessing to the unrighteous.
- The Kingdom of God *always* messes with idols.
- The Kingdom of God *always* rocks the boat of pluralism. (Acts 4:12; Mt. 16:23b)

**Whenever what is right with God and what is right by people collides, trouble will follow.**

#### **2. Because you obviously belong to him and REPRESENT him.**

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you." **John 15:18–19** (17:14)

#### **3. God is present, close and active when you are persecuted and his activity spans both the NOW, and what comes AFTER THIS LIFE.**

"When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But **Stephen**, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."... While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep." **Acts 7:54-56, 59-60**

#### **4. Persecution is a GUARANTEE.**

"Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you." **1 John 3:13** (Luke 21:17; Mt. 10:22; 24:9)

"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." **2 Timothy 3:12**