



The Teaching of Jesus Christ - The Blesseds (Part 3)

Matthew 5:10-12

The food you will eat will enjoy is some of the best that Rockford has to offer. It is for dinner tonight. You have to use it tonight. It sounds good right?

In envelope #2, the certificate reads, ...

You are entitled to

*The title deed of
a 14,000 ft² mansion
on a private cove in Hawaii,
with an annual personal stipend of \$150,000.
(All upkeep expenses are included).*

***Just fulfill this one condition:
You must clean the toilets at a truck stop for 30
days.***

You don't get this mansion now. But after you clean the toilets at a truck stop for 30 days, it is all yours. Which would you choose? Envelope #1 or Envelope #2? You can either have a little now or you can have everything you ever need in a month, if you endure. Even the children know the proper answer to this decision.

This is the perspective of a Christian. The apostle Peter wrote to a persecuted group of Christians. He told them of the glories of salvation in Christ. Your salvation has given you "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). You are suffering today, but

just think of the glories that await you. Your inheritance is unlike any inheritance upon earth (even the Hawaii mansion). It is ...

1. Imperishable
2. undefiled
3. Unfading.

He said, "in this, you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:6-7). In other words, the glories of your salvation, far exceed any difficulties which you might encounter here upon the earth. You ought to have eyes which look forward to your inheritance than to your difficulties. Looking forward to the reward ought to give you great joy.

Comparing your present persecutions to the reward which will come to you is impossible. It is like comparing the beauty of a flower to a dirt-clod. It is like comparing these spring days we have enjoyed, to an Alaskan blizzard. Paul said, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are **not worthy to be compared** with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).

Christians have their focus upon the reward that is to be brought to them. As such, they have willingly endured the sufferings of this life for the hope of the one to come. This has always been the hope of the people of God. Moses chose "to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, [rather] than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward" (Heb. 11:25-26).

Finally, **Jesus ends the blessed with an encouragement**, "for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (verse 12).

Those who stand and say, "Thus saith the LORD," aren't normally the most popular folks in the land. Zechariah, the son of Jehoida the priest was stoned for preaching to others that they have forsaken the LORD (2 Chron.24:20-21). Jeremiah was thrown into a pit (Jer. 18:19-23) and was placed in stocks for his preaching (Jer. 20:2). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refused to worship the image and were thrown in the fire (Daniel 3). We might add, "for so they

persecuted Jesus." We might add, "for so they persecuted the apostles." We might add, "for so they persecuted church until today." If you live godly in Christ Jesus, it will be just the same for you and for me.

Reading about the persecution of others has a way of strengthening you in your times of persecution. There is a book called Fox's Book of Martyrs, which gives the details of many of God's people who have given their lives for the sake of the gospel of Christ. They are tremendously encouraging. Charles Spurgeon was encouraged by this fact. When he was experiencing particularly great tribulation, His wife, Susannah, framed the words of Matt. 5:11-12 and hung them in his study (Faith Cook, Singing in the Fire, pp. 39-40). They constantly bore witness to encourage her husband's heart.

At times of persecution, remember that you are walking down a path others have walked before you. May these words of Jesus give you great comfort in the persecution you face as a representative of Jesus Christ.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 21, 2002 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.