

MONDAY 1.13.25- Matthew 5:10-12

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

What a blessing it is to live in a country where we can worship the Lord freely and openly without the threat of persecution. At the same time, I wonder if living in such a place we don't miss out on the blessings and the rewards that come from standing strong in the presence of being persecuted for Christ. Further, does a Christian life that really does not cost us much foster a life of somewhat superficial Christianity. We are quick to say, "have a blessed new year", but what if the real blessings come from having to go through things that drive us to our knees crying out to God, causing us to experience Christ in new ways, and bringing us to a closer walk with Him. So, this new year I would like to wish you blessings that transform you and bring you closer to Christ regardless of the cost.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

TUESDAY 1.14.25 - Peter 3:13-17

Today's verses have a grand scheme for us to ponder. While suffering is common to all people, we may be called to suffer in a persecution sense for doing good, that prompted by our own Christian witness in our local communities. Our jobs may be on the line or our reputation. It may be that the tide of culture change reaches us, and we are asked to stand among those numbered as the ones whose position or stance sounds discriminatory, or accusatory, or harsh. Then we must decide if we can stand firmly on what we have learned, and our spirits tell us are true. When culture turns against us, if and when it happens, Scripture remembers us and reminds

us to be prepared to give our defense for our hope, with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience for doing a good thing. May we always remain firm.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

WEDNESDAY 1.15.25 - John 16:5-15

In evangelism, we never "go it alone." The Holy Spirit is within us, with us, empowering us, using us, speaking through us. The Greek verb translated "convict" in John 16:8 appears seventeen times in the New Testament. It conveys ideas such as to "expose, convince, reprove, and disciple." John listed three key truths that the Holy Spirit convicts the non-Christian: sin, righteousness, and judgment. First, the Spirit communicates to them that they are sinners. They miss the mark of God's standard and rebel against Him. Second, the Holy Spirit reveals the standard of Christ's righteousness. To be accepted by God, one must measure up to Christ which sinful people cannot accomplish by themselves. Third, the Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever of judgment. When Jesus died on the cross, God won the victory and Satan met defeat. The good news is that sinners can be pardoned by placing their faith in Christ for eternal life.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

THURSDAY 1.16.25- Isaiah 11:2-5

What great comfort we have in our passage today! Here we find the fullness of the Spirit that is richly endowed upon our Savior! **Wisdom and understanding** - for leadership. **Counsel and might** - to carry out His wise plans.

Knowledge and fear of the Lord - for holiness.

How weak we find ourselves so often but here, in our Savior, we find all we need, and more. Are you confused, looking for answers? In Him we find wisdom and understanding to help guide the way. Unsure of what path to take when overwhelmed by choices? In Him we find a Mighty Counsellor to be with us.

Do you wrestle with temptation and the evil One? In Him we find the knowledge and fear of the Lord!

This is the Spirit that indwells every believer. May God be pleased to empower us more and more through that Spirit!

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

FRIDAY 1.17.25 - Psalm 143:10

When the "path" I am walking becomes rocky and I am faced with choosing the right "direction" I find myself crying out to God for Him to "show" me His will, which direction I should go. David in Psalm 143:10 makes a better request of God. He asks God to teach him His will, not show him His will. Teaching implies action from both the teacher and the student. Once the student begins learning, he can then start doing. Praise God, as believers we have the Holy Spirit who helps us with that learning. I believe that learning or discerning God's will begins with scripture. The more we know of God through His word, the easier it becomes to recognize His "voice" when our path gets rocky. With the Holy Spirit as our guide we can trust that our footing is stable, and our way forward is secure.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

E2 GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY MORNINGS - 9:40am

- Kids** CHILDREN'S CHURCH (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level
NURSERY (through Age 3) *9:40AM ONLY
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level
- Youth** E2 CLASS (5th – 12th Grade)
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
- Adults** **WINTER QUARTER** - began December 1st
LOCATION: B8-10 - Gene Steinruck - began Dec.1st.
EXPLORE THE BIBLE - Exodus and Leviticus
remind us that imperfect people can depend on a perfect God to lead them through whatever wilderness they face.
LOCATION: B11 - Teacher: TBA - began Dec.1st.
BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE
Looking Forward to Christmas Be reminded that Christmas is, first and foremost, a celebration of Christ's coming to earth.
LOCATION: B11 - Shawn Devlin - begins Jan. 19th
THE HEART OF WORSHIP - Learn how Scripture tells us God is the One we are to worship, and it shows us the ways we are to engage in worship, so we are drawn into a deeper walk with Him.

SUNDAY EVENINGS - 6:00pm

- Kids** MESSIAH KIDS (Kindergarten – 4th Grade)
LOCATION: Camp Shiloh on the Lower Level
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
- Adults** LOCATION: Worship Center

WINTER E2 SMALL GROUPS

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS: Join us for 11 weeks of food, fellowship, and Bible Study! Titled End Times & Spiritual Warfare, this group will study What Happens Next? By Max Lucado and Spiritual Warfare is Real by Jim Cymbala. Study begins Wednesday January 15th. The meal begins at 6:00pm followed by the study at 7:00 pm. Sign up at the information table, connect card, or call the office!

TO SIGN UP OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION FOR ANY OF THESE GROUPS OR CLASSES, USE THE CONNECTION CARD IN THE BULLETIN. THANK YOU.

John 15:17-16:4 **Hatred for No Cause**

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."
~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1. Who will persecute? (15:17-18; 16:2)

Jesus is speaking of the world system that is opposed to God. It can be found in culture, education, politics, and religion!

2. What can be expected? (15:19-20; 16:2)

The world will cause:

- _____ (15:19)
- _____ (15:20)
- _____ (16:2)

3. Why will it occur? (15:19-25)

Because of the world's:


- _____ (15:19)
- _____ (15:21)
- _____ (15:22-24)

4. How should you respond? (15:26-16:4)

Four ways:

- _____ (16:4)
- _____ (15:26)
- _____ (15:27)
- _____ (16:1)

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." ~ Jesus

 Edifying and Equipping Every Day

TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



January 13 – January 17

INTRODUCTION:

Part of our purpose and strategy as a church is to Edify and Equip (E2) every believer. We desire to see every person take their next step with God, both individually as well as with families and small groups (E2 Communities). This devotional is to aid us in just that. We invite you to join us in daily devotion.

OVERVIEW:

Monday's and Tuesday's readings will be a follow up on Sunday's message from January 12th, "Hatred for No Cause", with Pastor Doug Lyon. Wednesday's through Friday's devotions will help prepare us for the message on January 19th, "The Work of the Spirit", with Pastor Doug Lyon.

KEY/MEMORY VERSE:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
John 15:12