

Jesus made an amazing statement in John 15:18, he said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you." In today's message we will be studying the final beatitude that introduces the Sermon on the Mount. **Jesus declared that persecution is not incidental to faithful Christian living but is certain evidence of it.** Persecution may take different forms depending on where you live in the world, but its reality is the evidence that you are truly a follower of Jesus Christ.

### I. The reality of persecution. *John 15:20*

- A. Physical persecution
- B. Verbal insult- reviling, upbraiding
- C. False accusation - abusive words used behind one's back

### II. The reasons for persecution.

- A. Righteousness is confrontational *2 Timothy 3:12*
- B. Rejection of Jesus Christ - "on account of me" *1 Corinthians 1:23; John 14:6*

### III. The response to persecution.

- A. Rejoice *James 1:2-3*
- B. Pray *1 Timothy 2:1-4*
- C. Submit *Romans 13:1-3*
- D. Recognize the true enemy *Ephesians 6:12*
- E. Love *Matthew 5:44*
- F. Stand *1 Corinthians 16:13*

### IV. The reward for persecution.

- A. Eternal
- B. Great