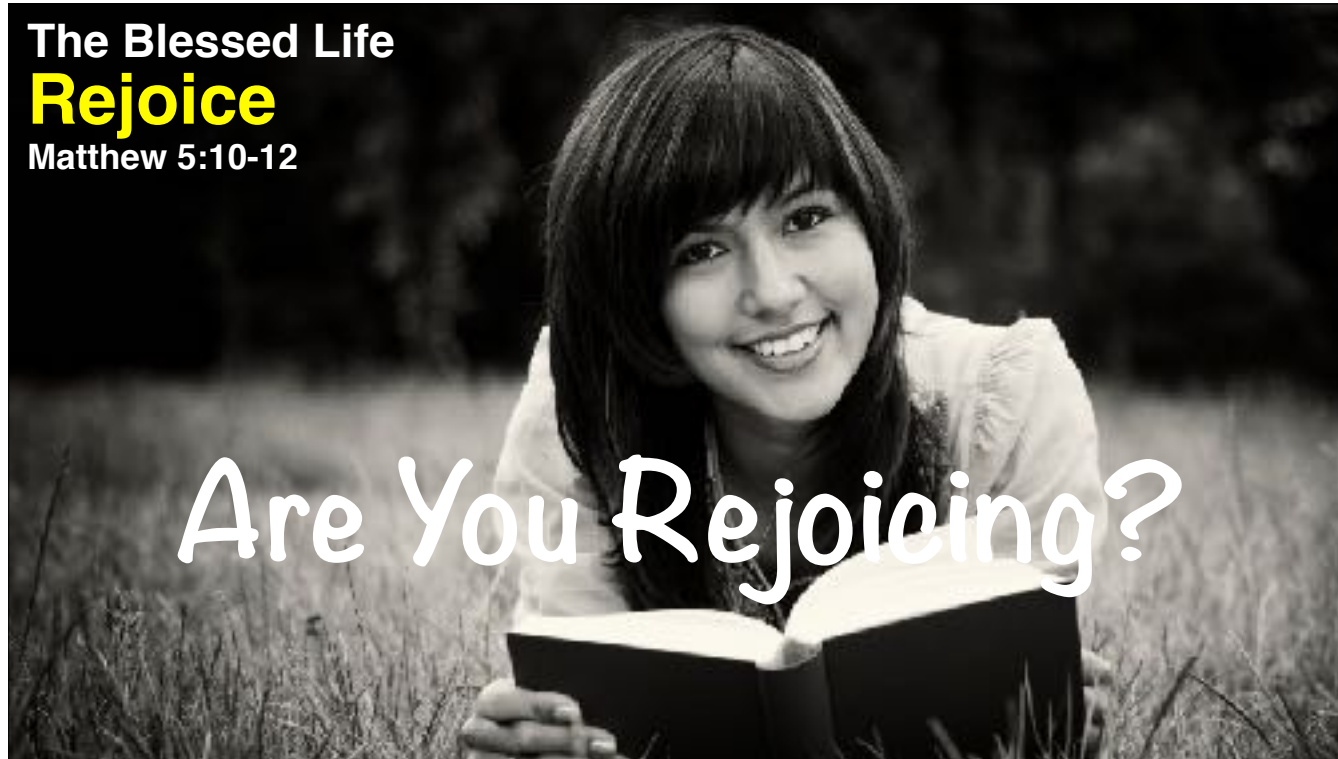
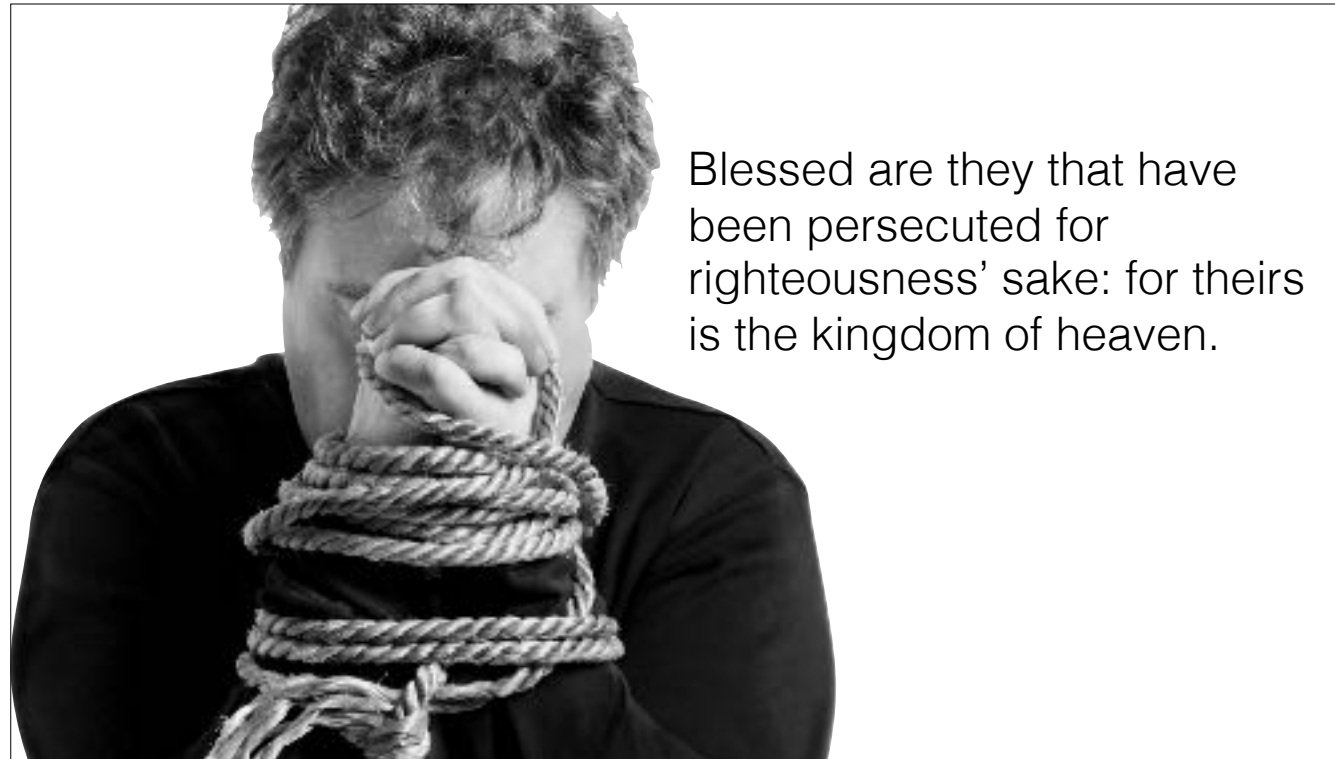


The Blessed Life  
**Rejoice**  
Matthew 5:10-12



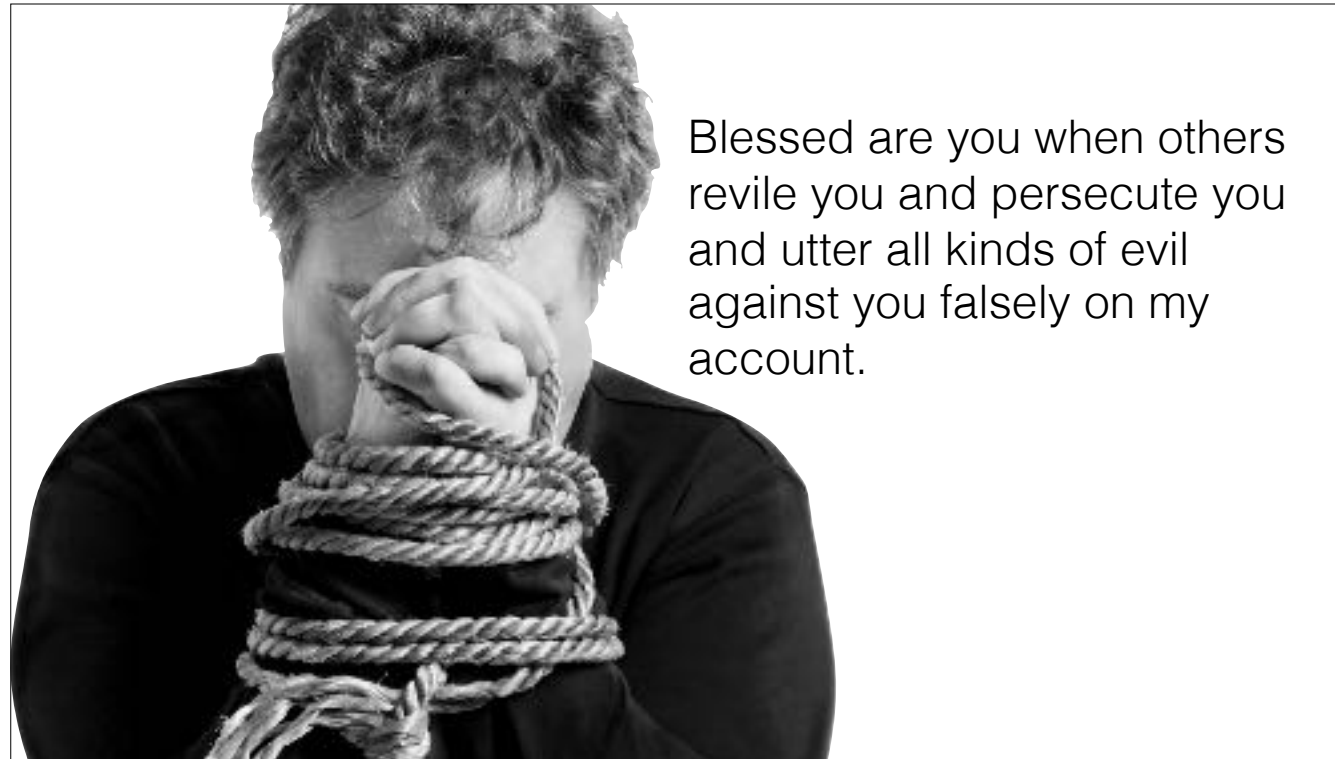
Are You Rejoicing?

Matthew 5:10-12



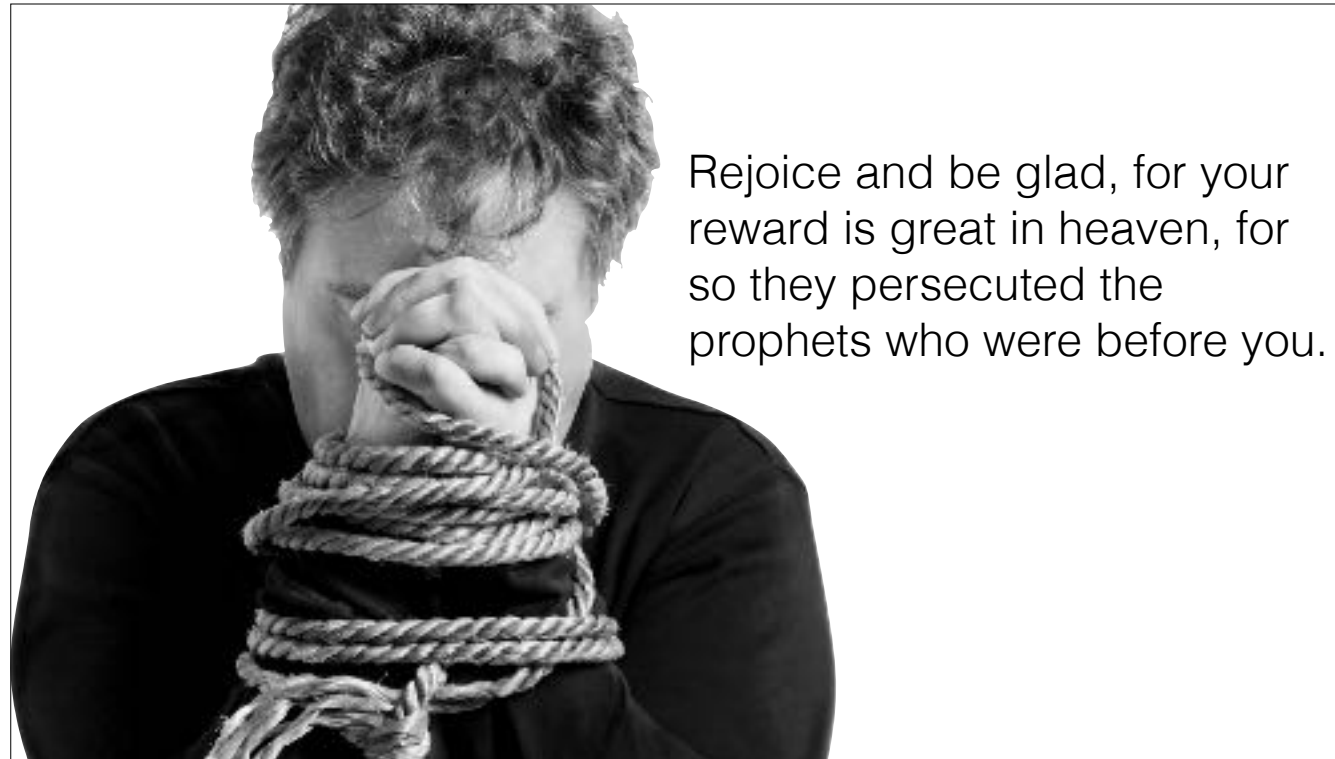
Blessed are they that have  
been persecuted for  
righteousness' sake: for theirs  
is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:10-12 (ESV) 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



Blessed are you when others  
revile you and persecute you  
and utter all kinds of evil  
against you falsely on my  
account.

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.



12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

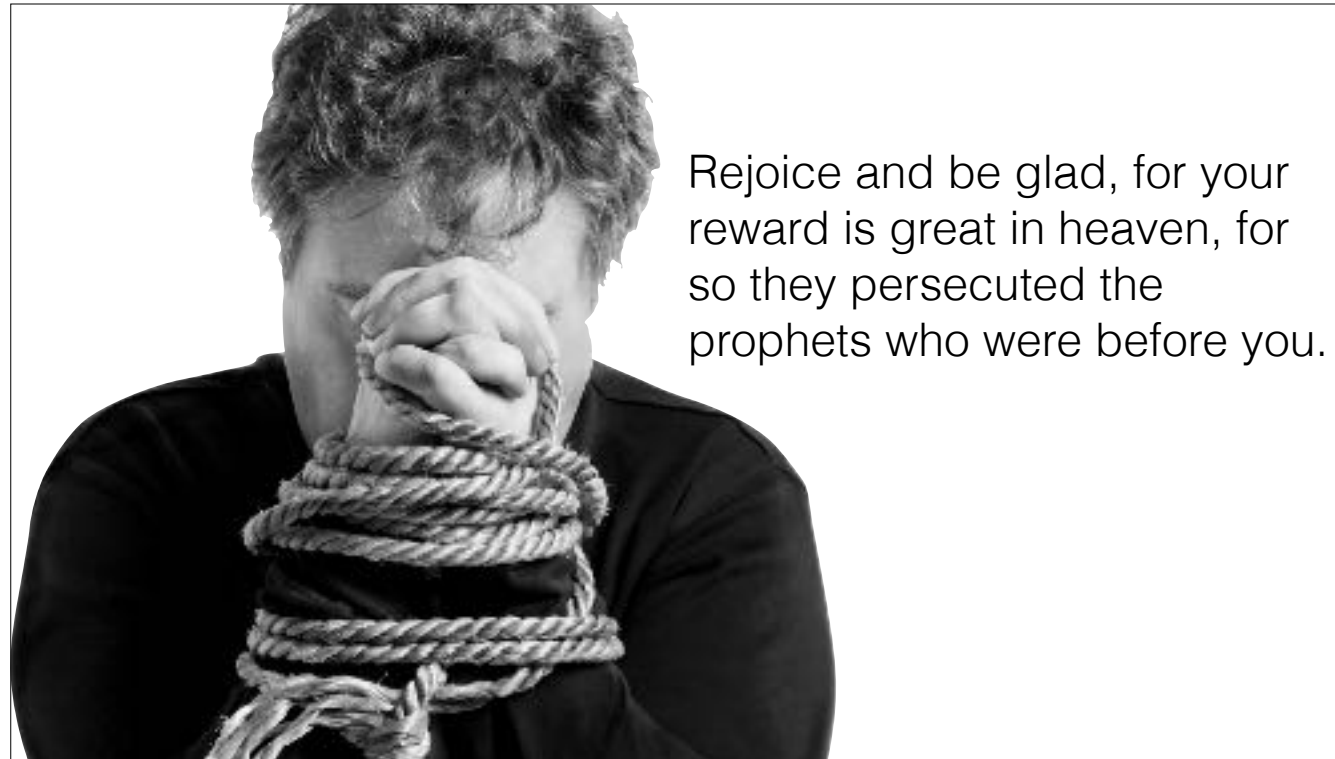
**"blessed"**

> Happy

**= Approved by God**

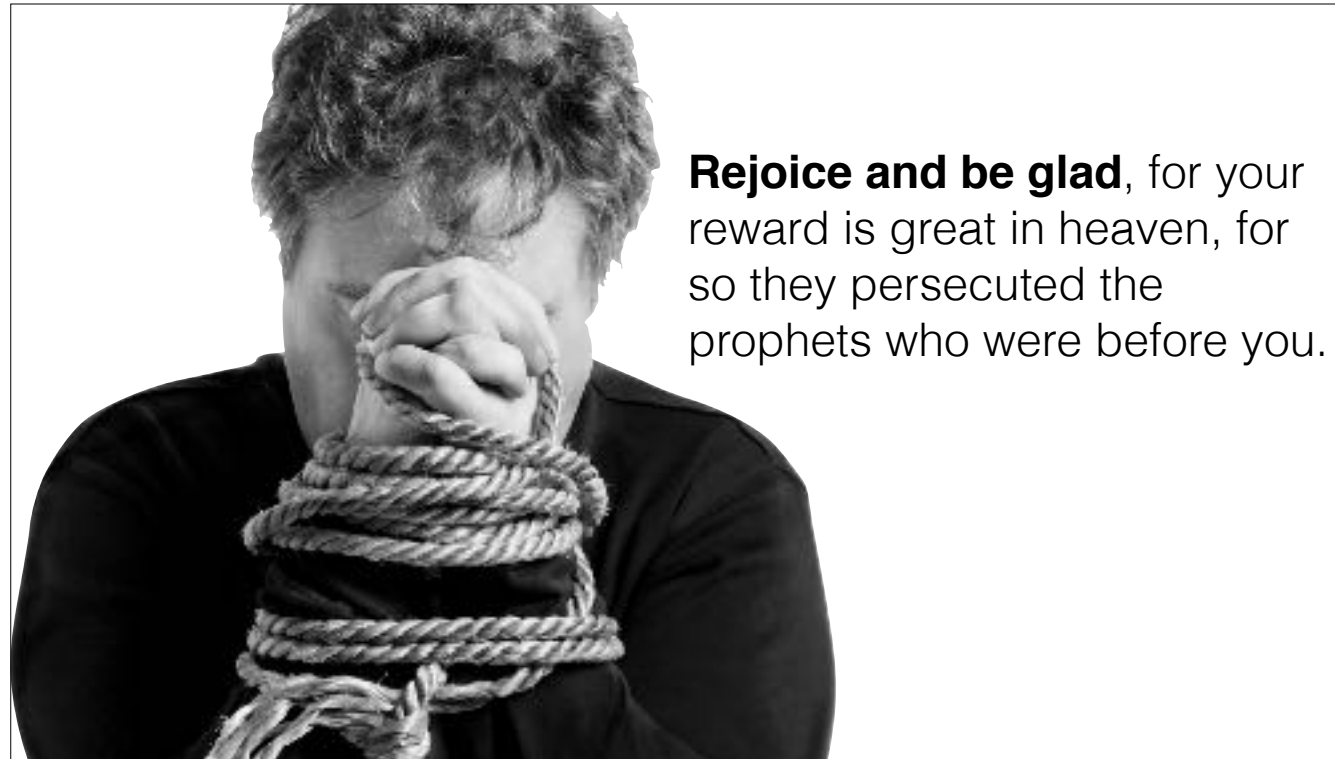


Much deeper meaning: approved by God and therefore favored by God; we are to be congratulated. Applause of heaven (Lucado)



Persecuted...

What is the attitude? Character?

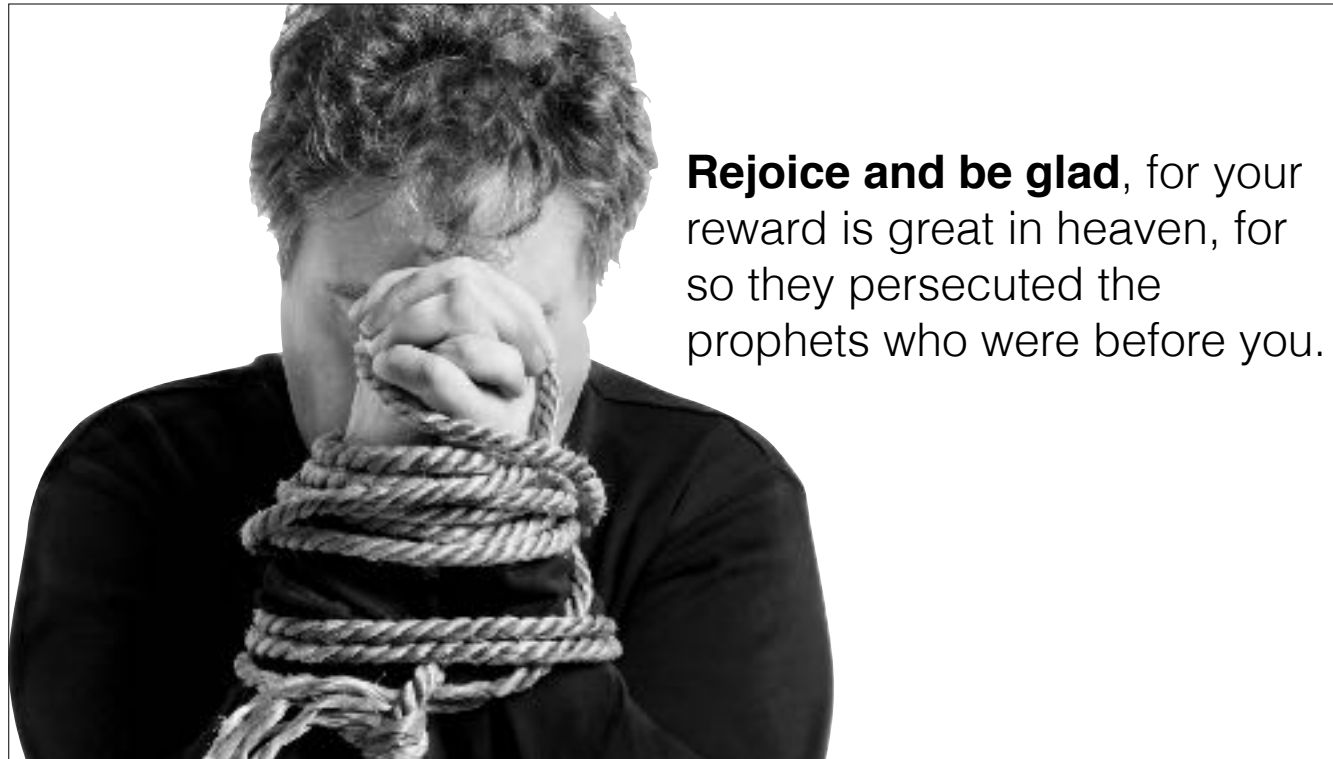


12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

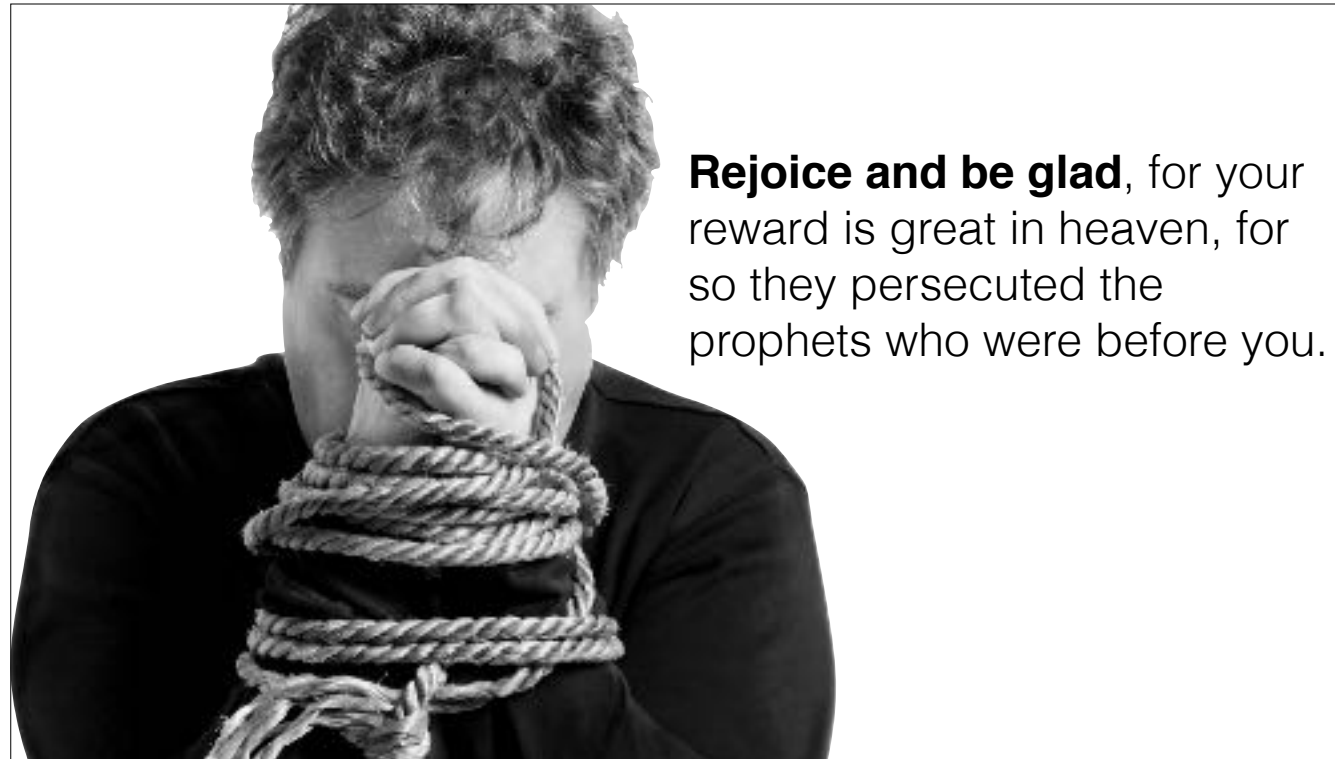


- The last of the blessings stands apart in at least three ways.
- The first is that it's expansive compared to the others.
  - Jesus' elaborate explanation is intended to help us understand the trials we will face as His disciples.





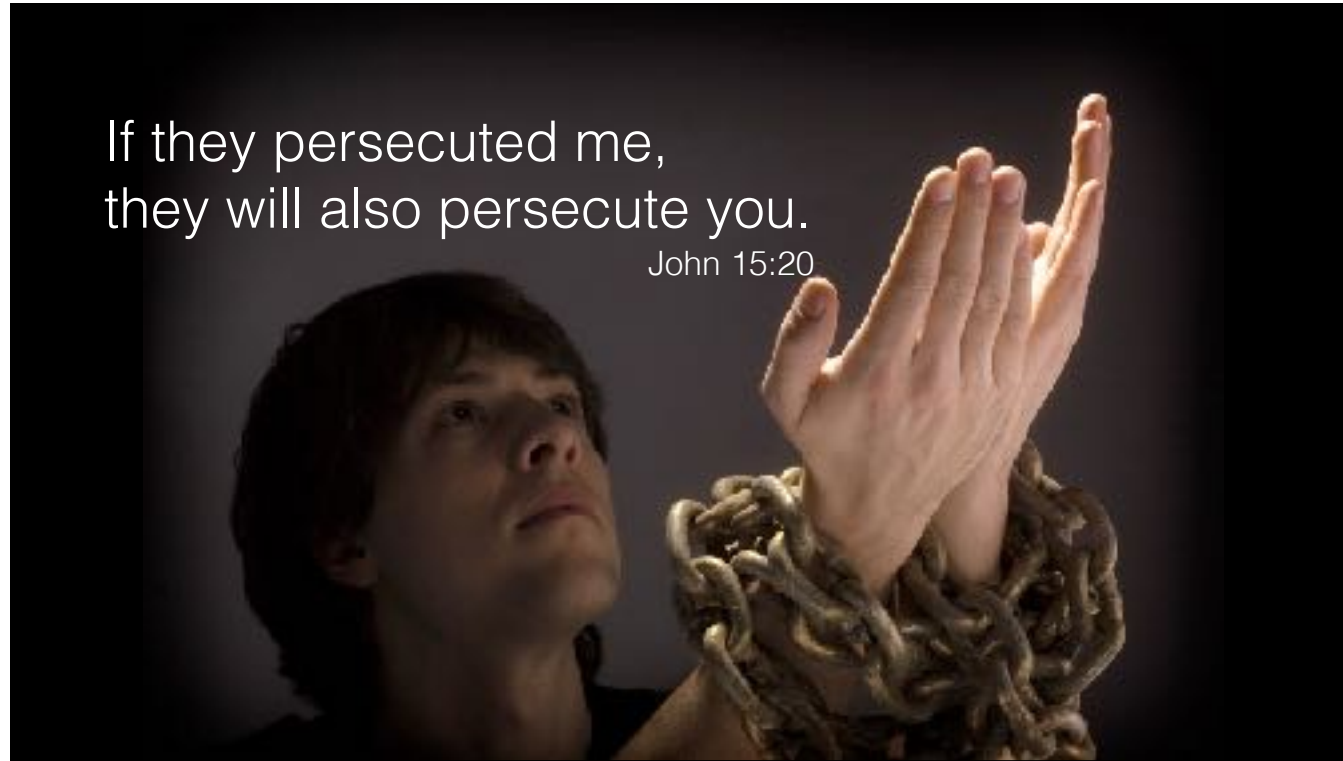
- Second, persecution is something that happens to us.
  - It's really beyond our control.
  - In the previous beatitudes the focus has been on teaching us about the kind of character that is approved of by our Father.
  - So what attitude is Jesus admonishing us to have?
  - Clearly, we are to rejoice and be glad.



- Third, we blessed for what happens to us, not because we adopt the godly attitude.
  - Nervously, and carefully, I'm suggesting that to some extent our Lord is letting us know that we will be blessed when we are faithful through that persecution.
  - In a very important and impressive way our Lord is helping us to cope with the difficulties we will be encountering, and find comfort and strength to continue walking in faithfulness before him.

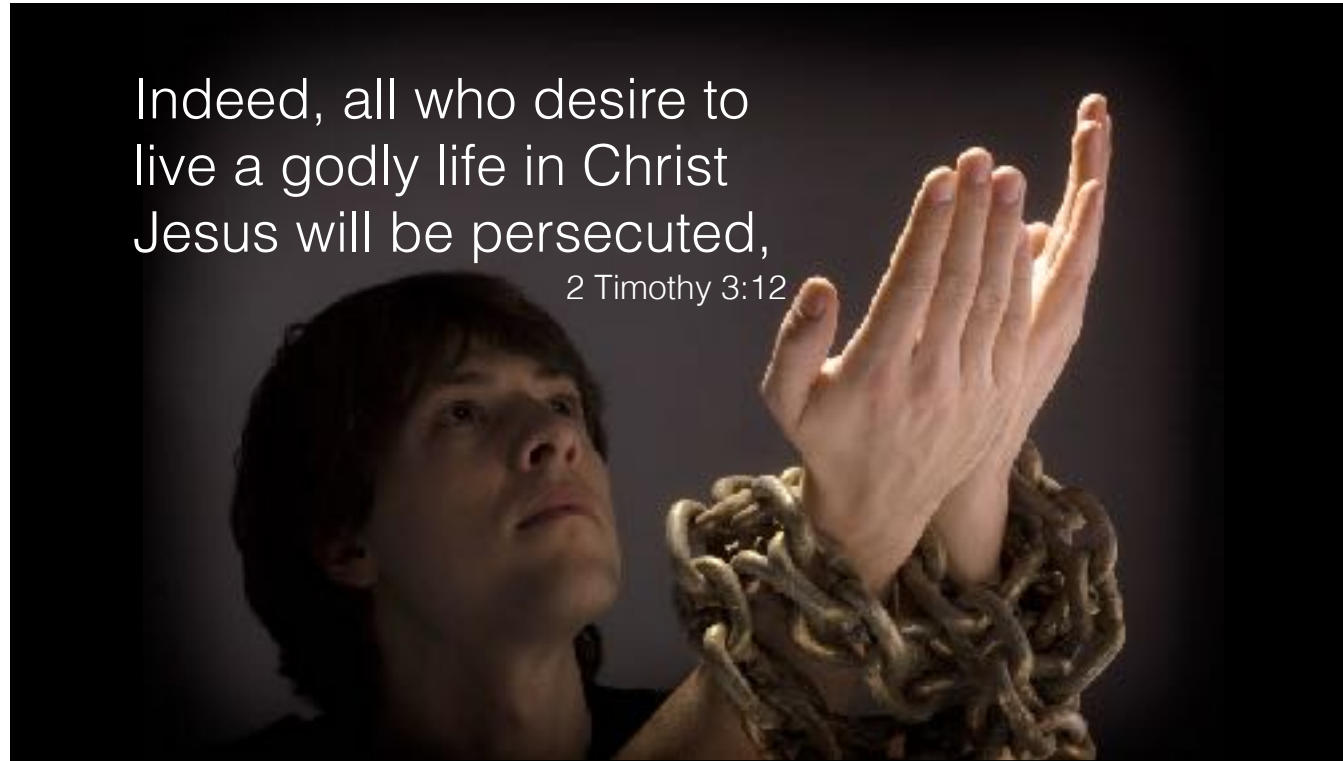
If they persecuted me,  
they will also persecute you.

John 15:20



- One thing that the Spirit has made clear is that disciples of Jesus will face persecution.
- Jesus was betrayed by Judas, and persecuted by both the Jews and the Romans
- John 15:20: Remember the word that I said to you: A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

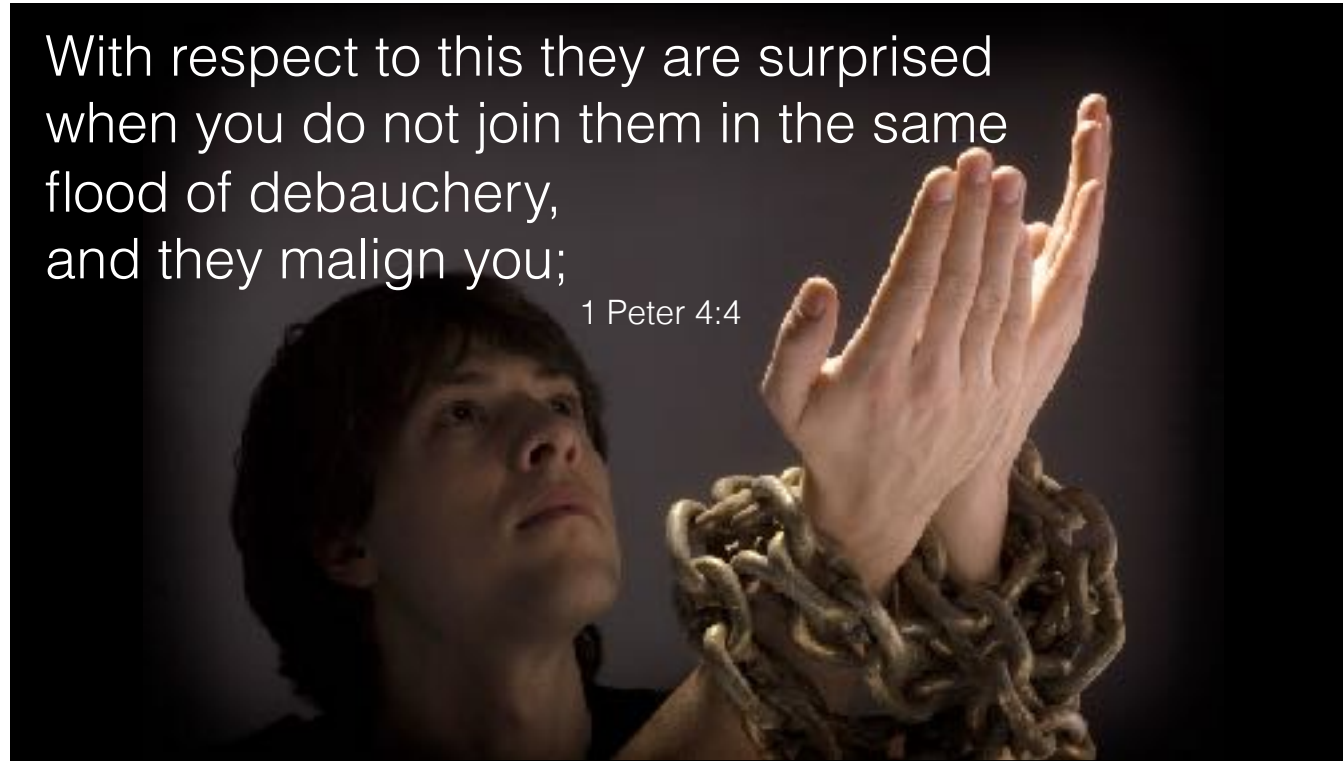
Indeed, all who desire to  
live a godly life in Christ  
Jesus will be persecuted,  
2 Timothy 3:12



- And Paul boldly declared "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).

With respect to this they are surprised  
when you do not join them in the same  
flood of debauchery,  
and they malign you;

1 Peter 4:4



- We may be persecuted because we live differently from the worldly people (1 Peter 4:4).
- 1 Peter 4:4: With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;

when tribulation or persecution arises on  
account of the word, immediately he falls away.

Matthew 13:21



- Since we know we'll be persecuted, the struggle we face will be how do we react to the trials?
- In the parable of the sower, Jesus warns that when faced with persecution, some will fall away from the faith (Matthew 13:20-21).
- Matthew 13:20-21 (ESV) 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

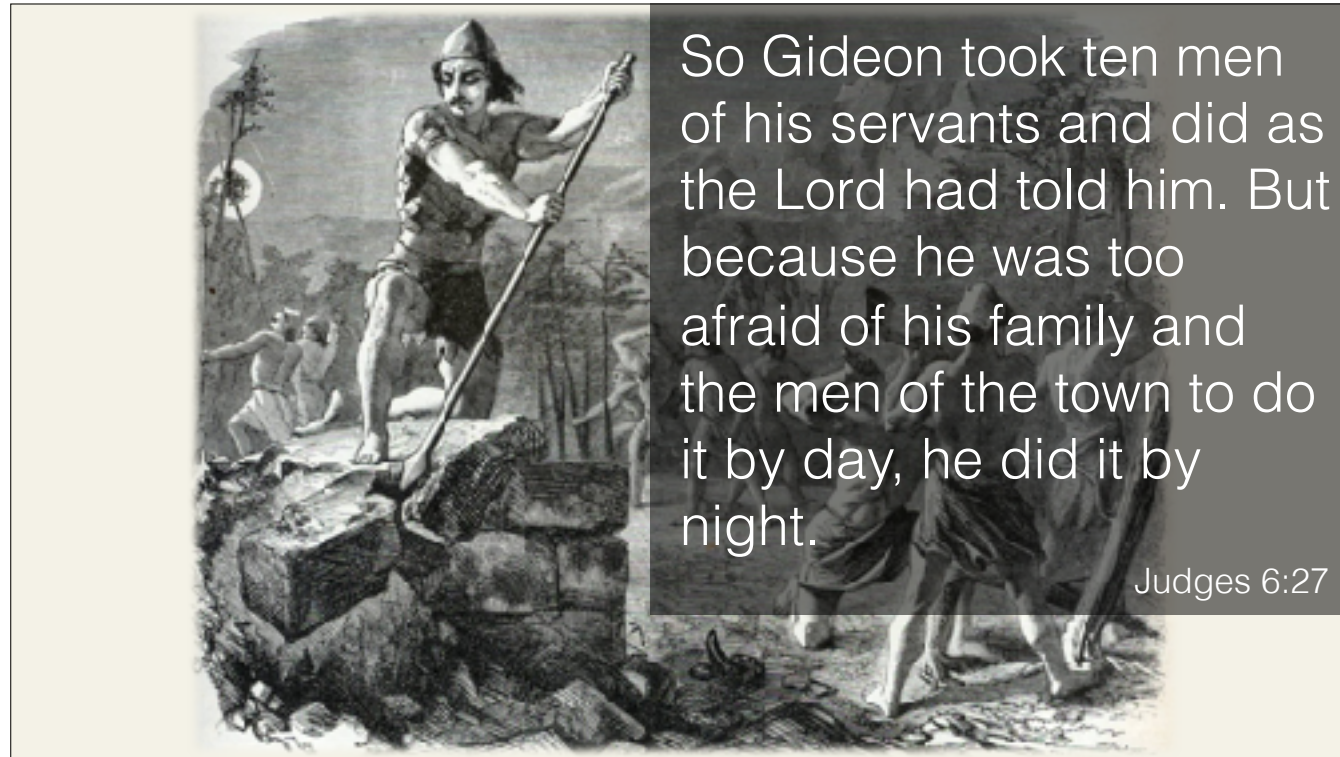


Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”

Job 2:9

- Infamously, Job's wife when facing trials lashed out against God, and her husband, exclaiming "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die" (Job 2:9).
- Job 2:9: Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.”





- For fear of persecution Gideon tore down the idol at night (Judges 6:27), hiding his actions from the people of his town and his own family.
- Judges 6:27: So Gideon took ten men of his servants and did as the Lord had told him. But because he was too afraid of his family and the men of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.



Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

1 Kings 19:3

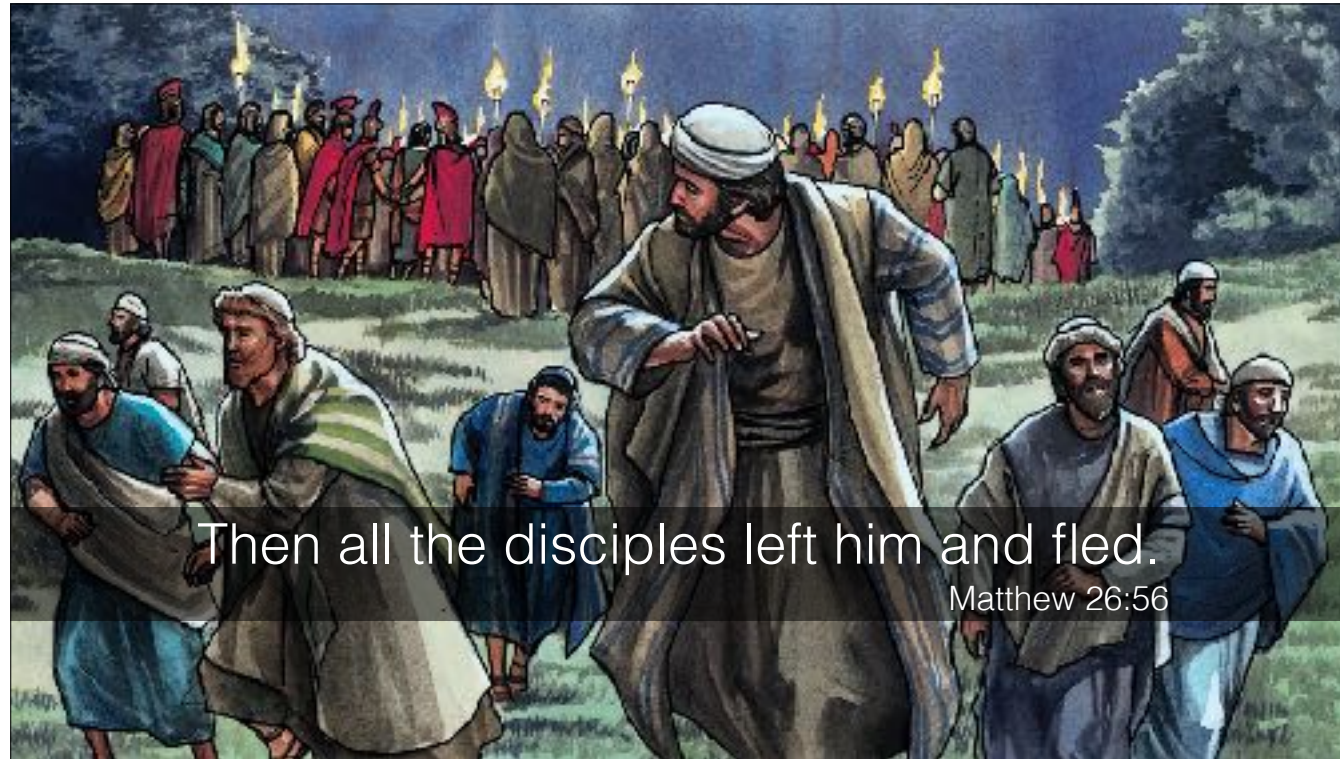


- Elijah ran for his life from the anger of Jezebel (1 Kings 19:3), and even gave in to despair, telling Jehovah that he was ready to die and was no better than his fathers (1 Kings 19:4).
- 1 Kings 19:1-4 (ESV) 1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.
- 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.”



- Elisha's servant seems to have panicked when he awoke to see that they were surrounded by the Syrian army (2 Kings 6:15).
- 2 Kings 6:15-16 (ESV) 15 When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, **"Alas, my master! What shall we do?"** 16 He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."





Then all the disciples left him and fled.  
Matthew 26:56

- The disciples of Jesus scattered from Him when Judas betrayed Him and He was arrested (Matthew 26:56).
- Matthew 26:56: But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.



- We'd be foolish to think that these are not just common, but very natural reactions, to persecution: fear, anger, despair, panic, and fleeing.
- In some of these cases, we find such actions understandable, yet others reprehensible (Why didn't they trust in Jehovah?)





- Since persecution is something that happens to us, we must consider more deeply what Jesus is instructing in these verses.
- What attitude does Jesus instruct us to strive for?
- What is the character quality which is the appropriate response to persecution for the sake of righteousness?



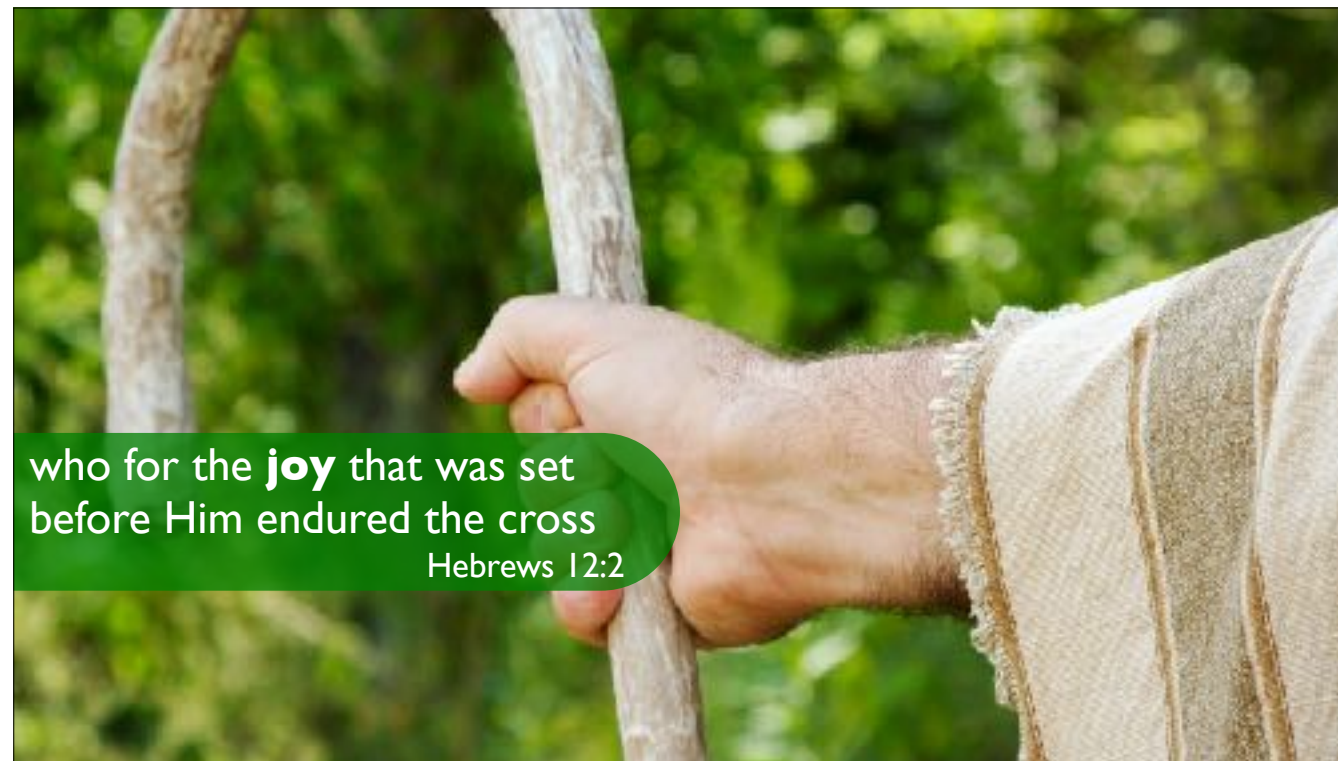
- Rejoice and be glad!
- How in the world could one rejoice in the midst of suffering unjustly?
- "In the world", of course, is the wrong view point.
- In the world's view, suffering in any way is almost always considered bad, or even evil.



# Rejoice & Be Glad

- The Stoic philosophers would tell us that we just must learn to endure the suffering, without reaction.
- The Buddha would tell us that the suffering is just an illusion.
- In contrast, Jesus teaches us to rejoice.
- Our joy looks beyond the persecution itself and to the One who suffered so that we may have eternal life.





who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

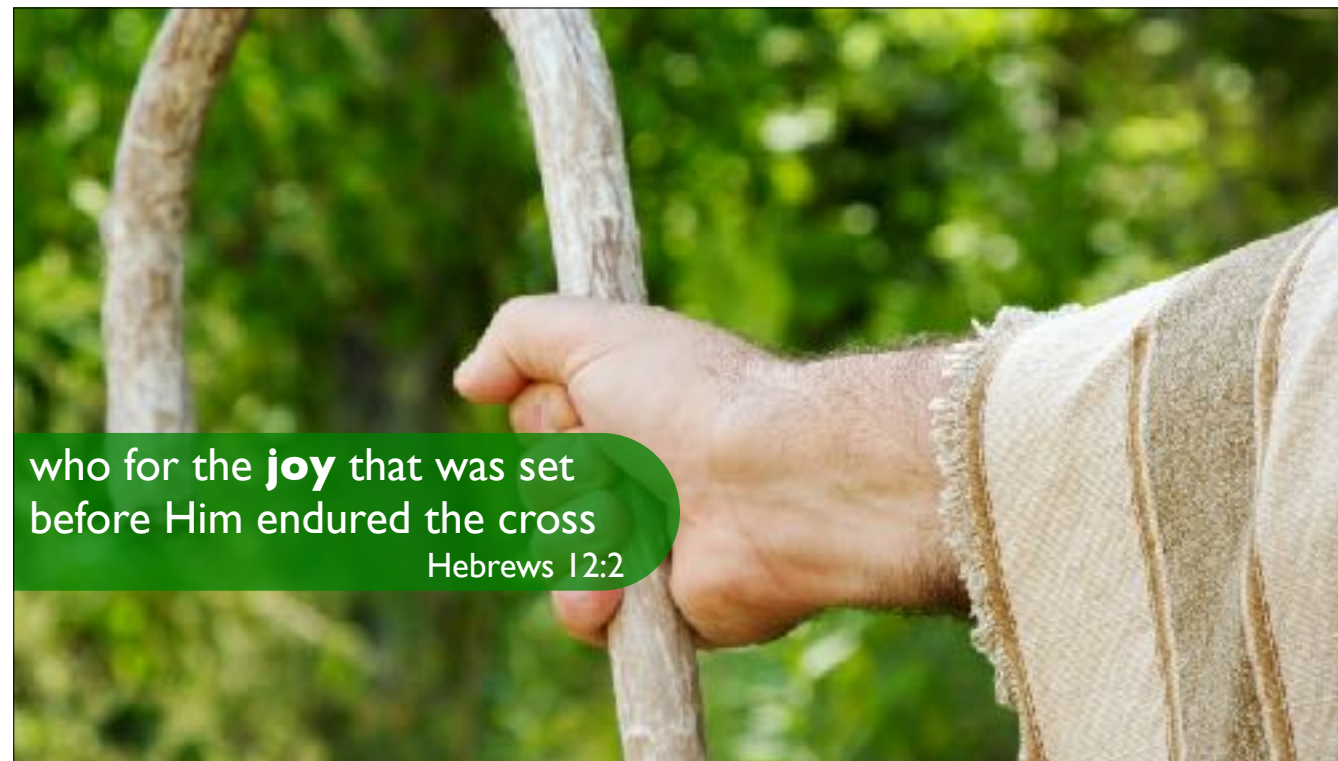
Hebrews 12:2: looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.





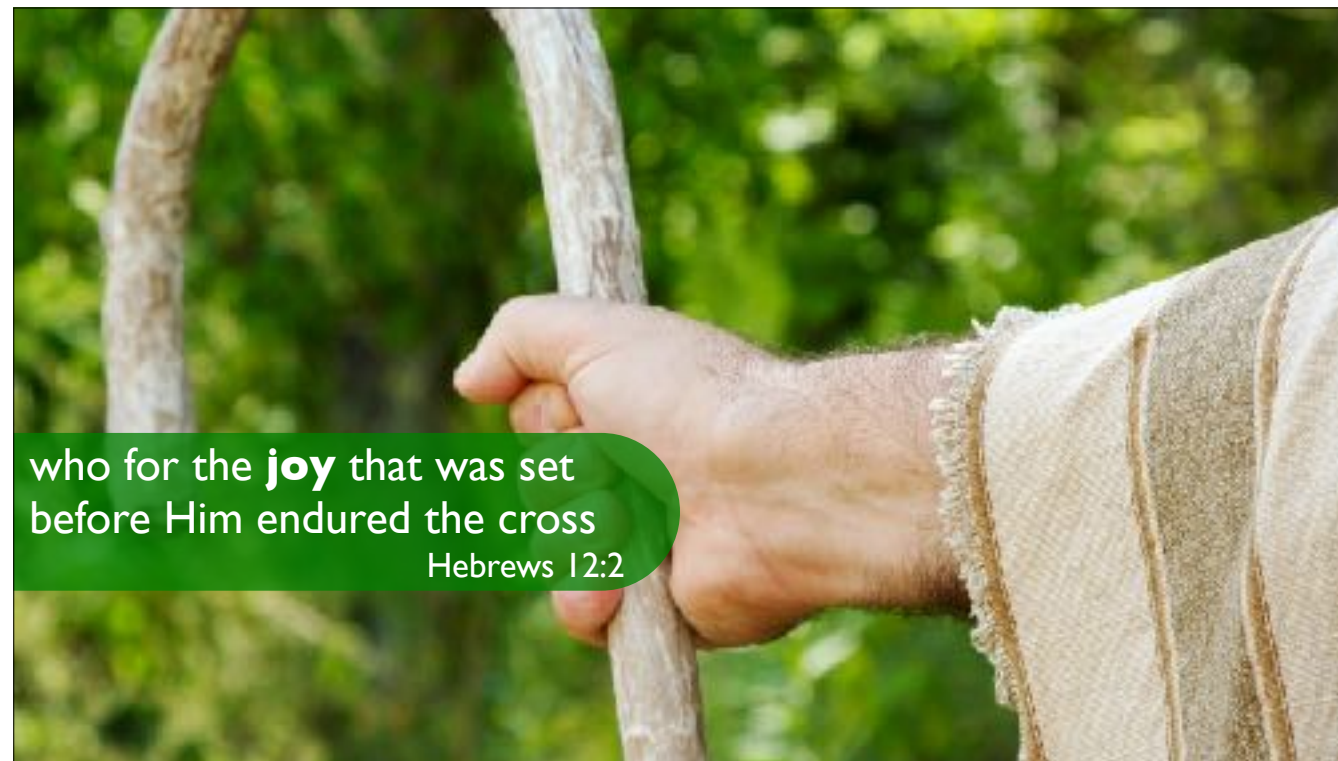
continued entrusting Himself  
to Him who judges justly  
1 Peter 2:23

1 Peter 2:21-23: For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.



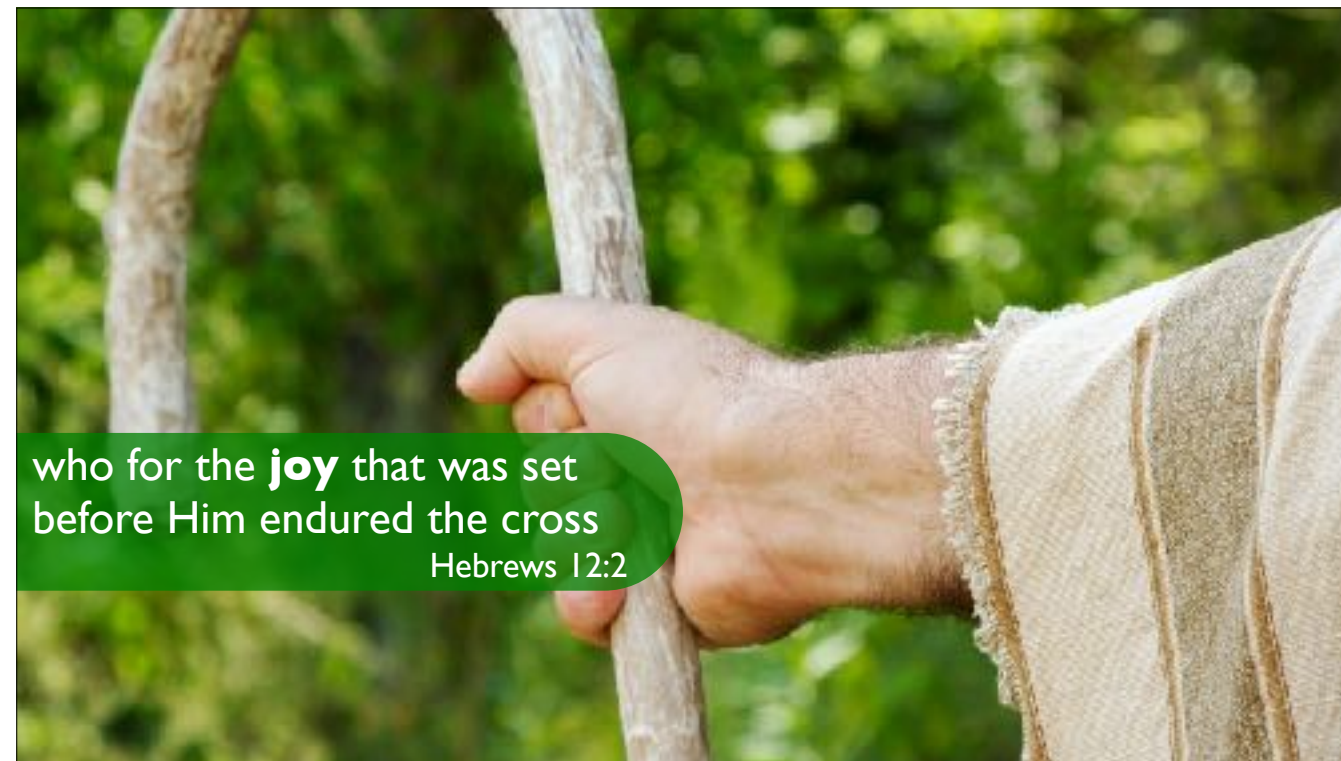
who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

- Now we can begin to see the joyful attitude that is possible while suffering.
- It probably doesn't need to be said, but in all this suffering we must not think that our Father desires us to seek out suffering,
  - as if that is a signal of righteousness;
  - nor are we to "enjoy" the suffering in and of itself.
- Jesus was able to endure the suffering and shame of the cross because he focused on the joy that was set before him.



who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

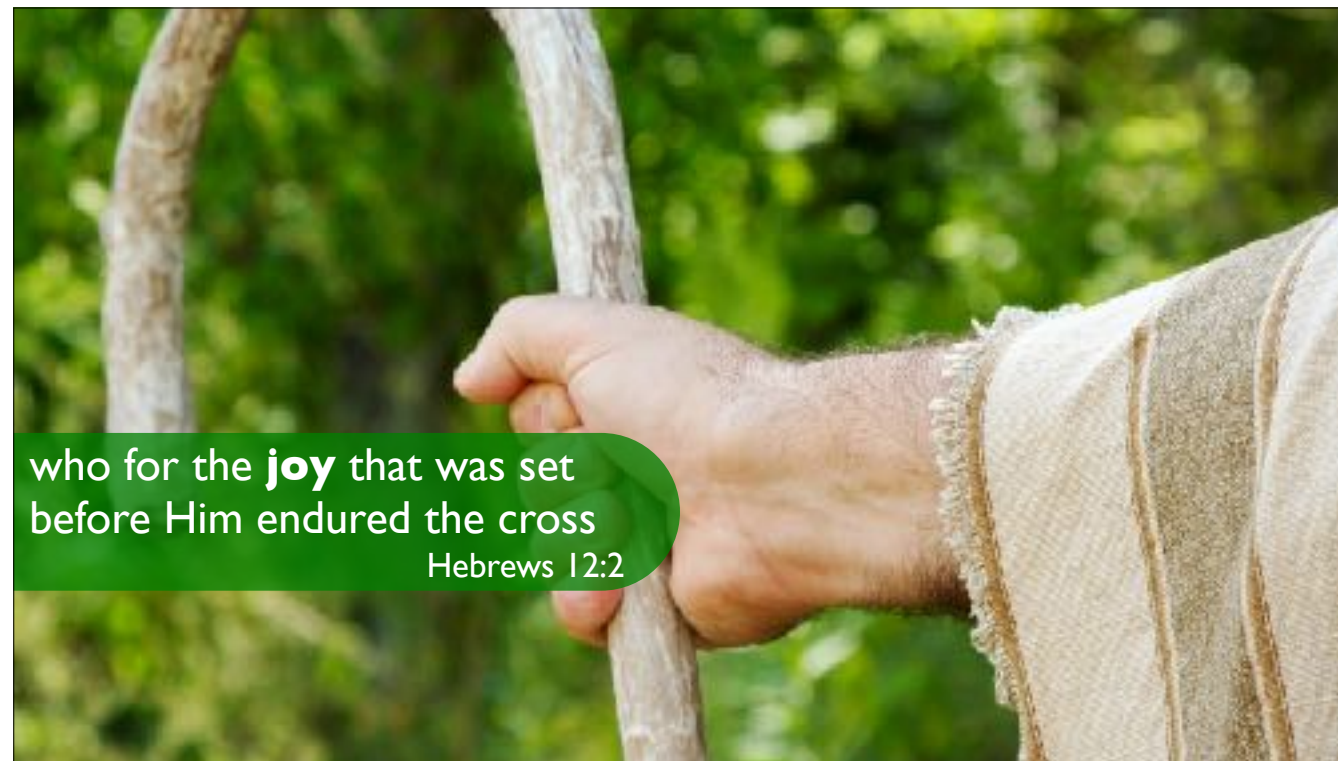
- What was the joy "that was set before him"? And is that joy something that's can be true for us too?
- Peter told the Jewish counsel that although they had killed Jesus, “God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).



who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

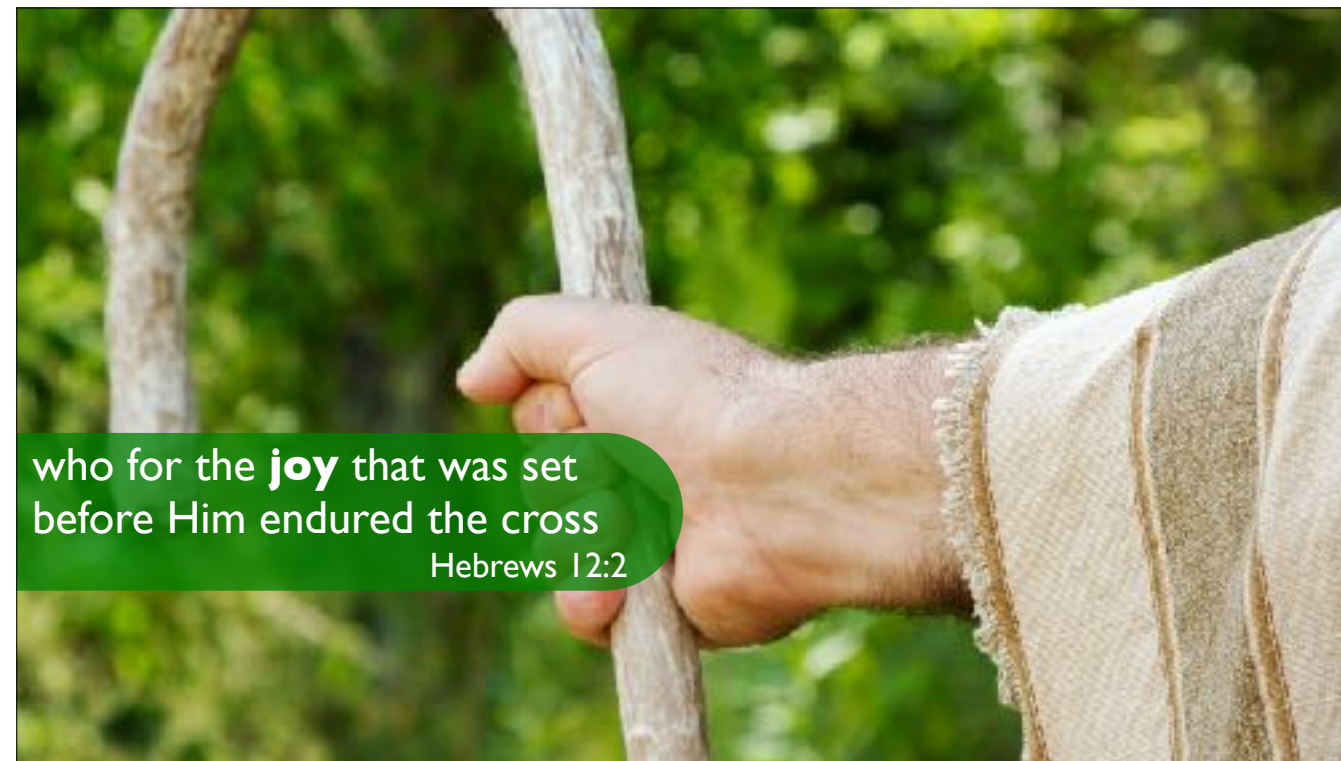
- And the writer of the Hebrew letter indicated that Jesus sat down at the right hand of God after "making purification for sins" (Hebrews 1:3).
- And later he wrote of Jesus having "offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins" by which "he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).





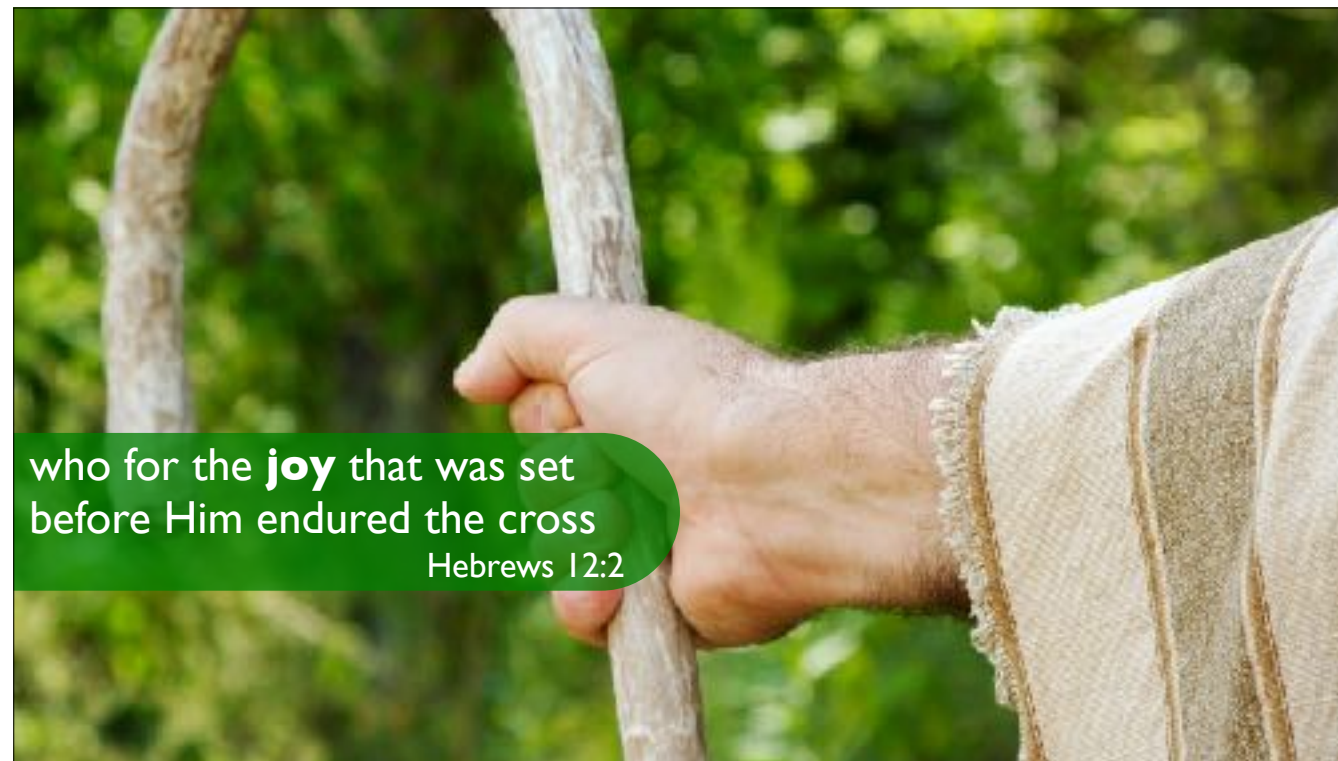
who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

- To me, all of these indicate that although Jesus as a part of the joy set before Him was thinking of His exaltation to the right hand of His Father,
- he was also very aware that through this sacrifice He was providing redemption for each of us who believes in Him.
- The joy is that God's plan is accomplished, as He said triumphantly from the cross "It is finished" (John 19:30).



who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

- He was not merely thinking of himself and that his suffering would soon be over and he would return to the Father,
- but that we could be made glorious as God had always planned (Romans 9:23; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 3:11).



who for the **joy** that was set  
before Him endured the cross  
Hebrews 12:2

- None have suffered more unjustly than our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- If you are unfamiliar with the various persecutions that Jesus faced, turn to the last few chapters of any of the gospels and you'll find that his suffering was great indeed.
- Our purpose is not to focus on how he suffered, rather let us examine his attitude while he was suffering.
- Chances are high that your first thoughts of Jesus' suffering turn to visions of Him on the cross.





- Consider with me one particularly instructive event when Jesus was betrayed.
  - Following Judas' kiss, Peter draws his sword and attacks with a little success, removing the ear of one of the servants of the high priest.
  - Have you ever wanted to cheer on Peter's courageous willingness to defend his Master?





- Peter was ready to respond to this unjust persecution by fighting back.
- Peter's quick action is a very worldly reaction that we not only find understandable but often applaud as being the right thing to do.



- In contrast to Peter, three of the gospels help us to see Jesus' response.
  - Luke tells us that Jesus exclaimed "No more of this!"





- Jesus tells Peter to put his sword away.



- Jesus asking Peter "shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"
  - This is not a statement of resigned stoicism.
  - Jesus is making it clear that he is willing to endure so that he may accomplish the will of his Father.





- And Matthew adds this, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels."
  - Jesus had the power to exact vengeance on his persecutors.
    - Or to escape their clutches.
  - But Jesus did not demand justice, nor did he demand his rights or use his authority and power.
    - And then, Jesus used his power to restore the ear.



- As I consider this incident, I'm amazed at how many of the attitudes we've studied already are demonstrated by Jesus during this trial.
  - He is poor in spirit submitting to His Father's will even to the death.
  - He is meek, displaying strength under control to accomplish God's righteousness.
  - He is merciful to the servant who was wounded.
  - And a peacemaker as he tells Peter to put away the sword.





- Even in these most difficult of circumstances Jesus demonstrates for us the precise character that he would have us emulate in our lives each day, whether we are facing persecution or not.
  - Truly he was tempted as we are, but without sin (Hebrews 4:15).
    - Often BEYOND what we are tempted!
  - Thanks to God for such a Savior!



- Jesus' example doesn't stop there, of course.
- One of his most well known sayings on the cross seems to be directed toward the soldiers who had viciously nailed Him to the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

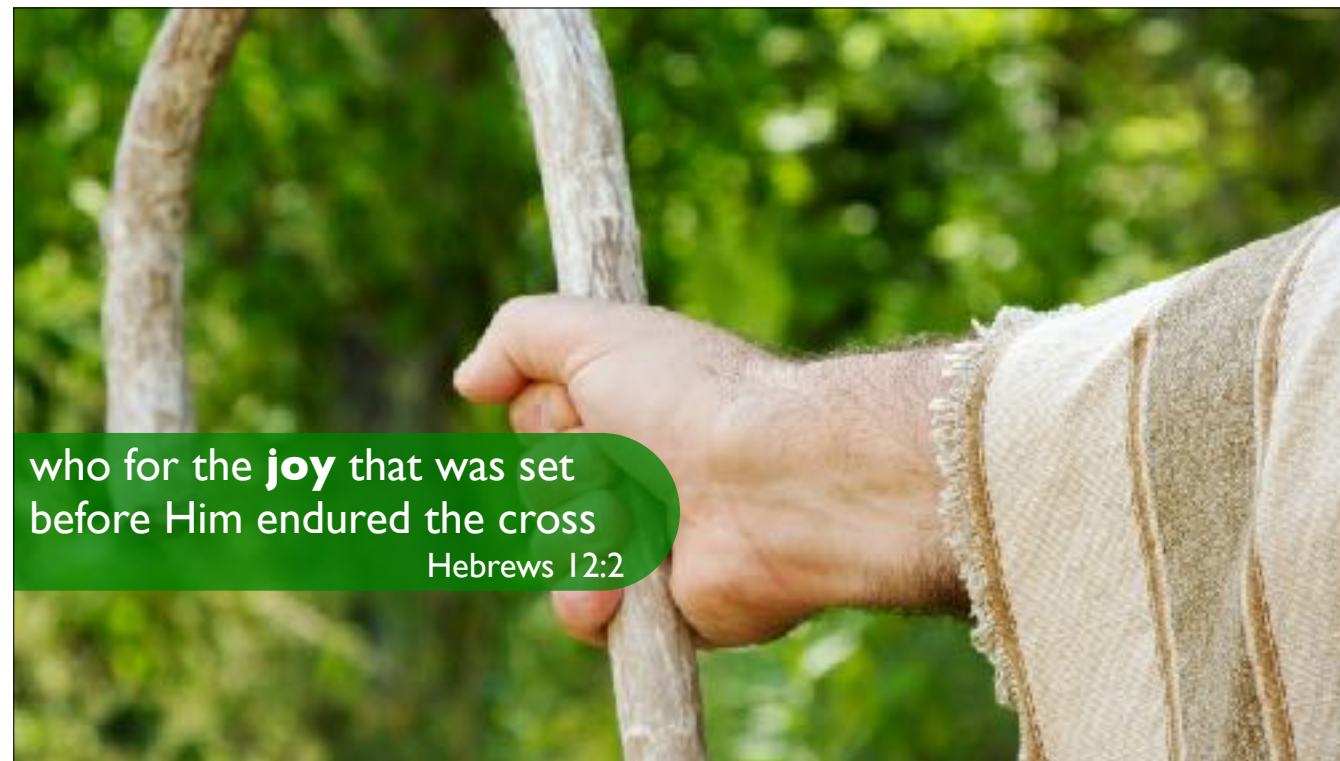




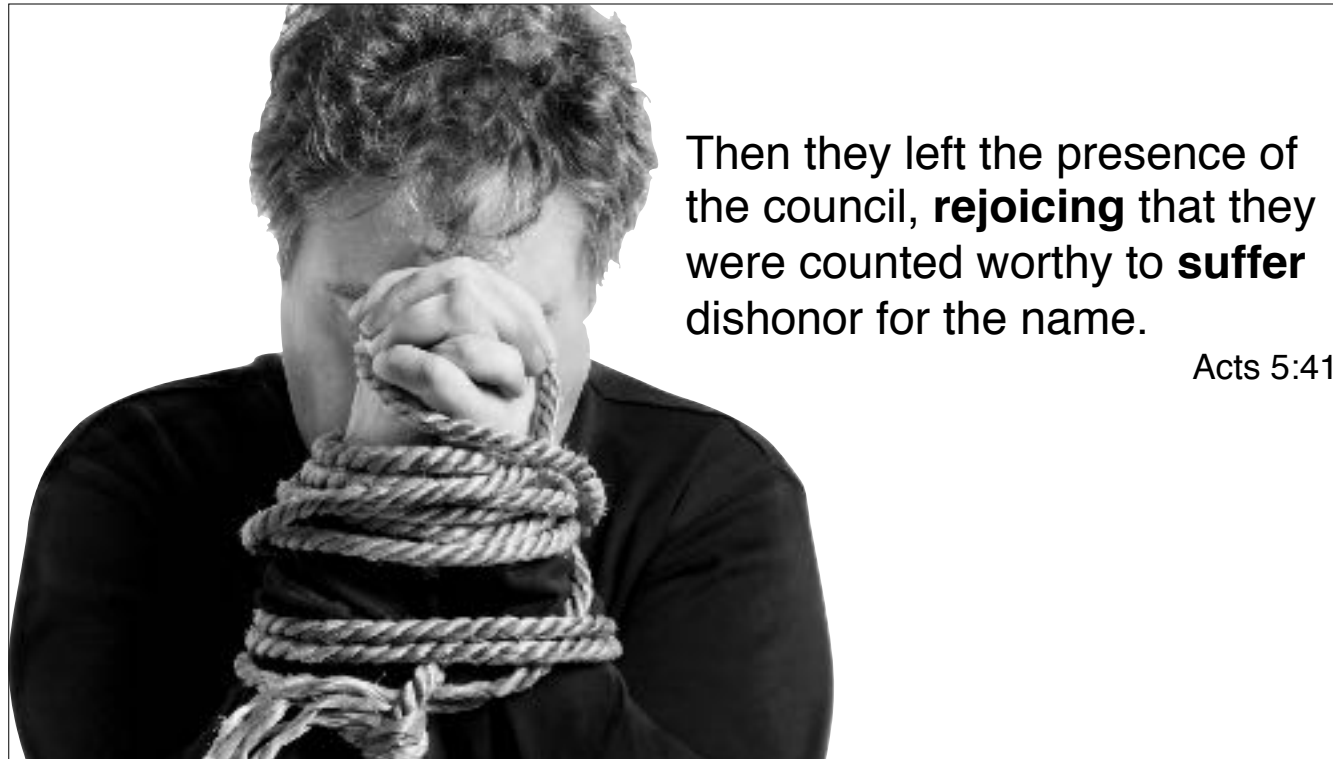
- We can debate if Jesus is casting a wider net with this prayer, yet to me it would clearly include these Roman soldiers who were just doing the job that they were given to do, following their orders.
- At this time, they probably had no idea of who Jesus really was (though later the Centurion recognized that He was the Son of God (Mark 15:39)).



- For all the anguish they caused Jesus, He didn't threat, or retaliate, in any way.
- He did just as he had taught us, that we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44).
- In spite of all Jesus suffering, he not only considered their ignorance but prayed that they be forgiven.
- Jesus was not thinking of himself, rather he considered the eternal welfare of those who hurt him.

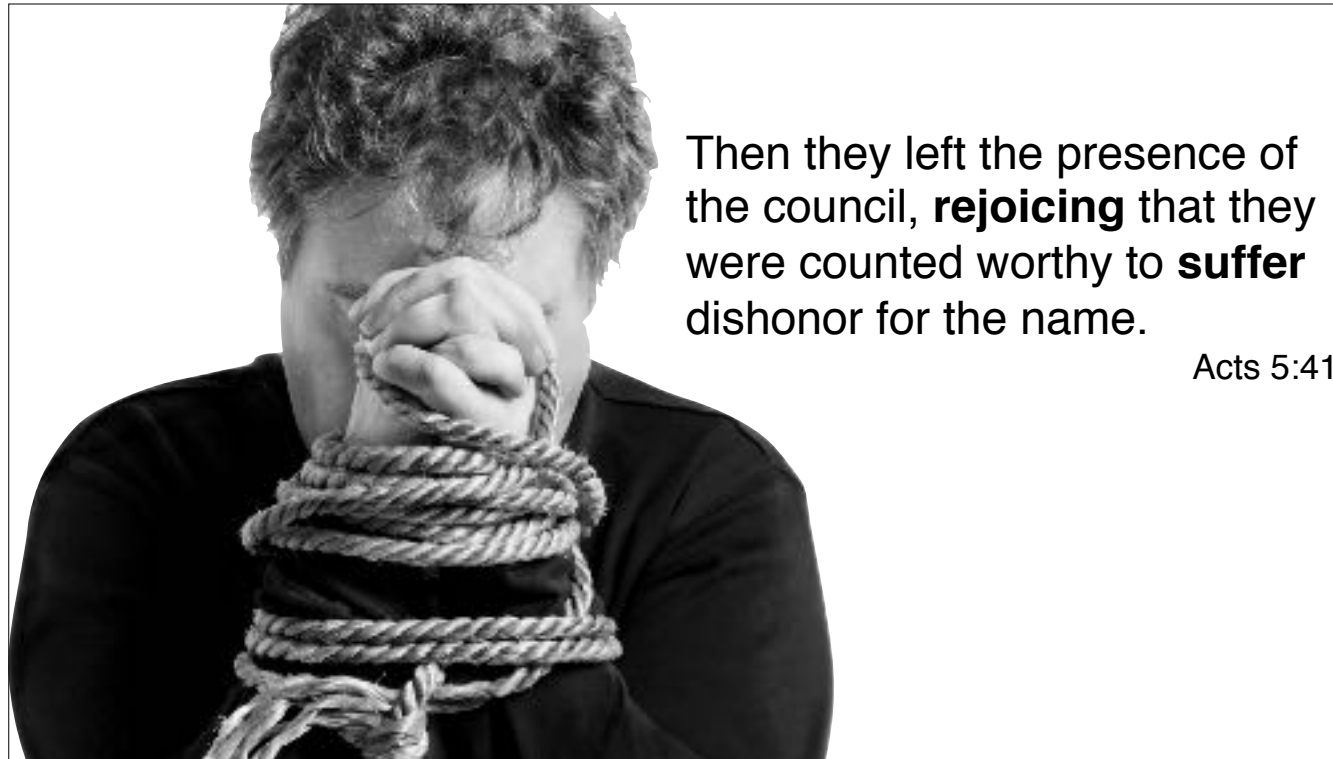


- For the JOY set before Him
  - Exaltation
  - Example for us
  - Our Redemption.



Acts 5:40-41: and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

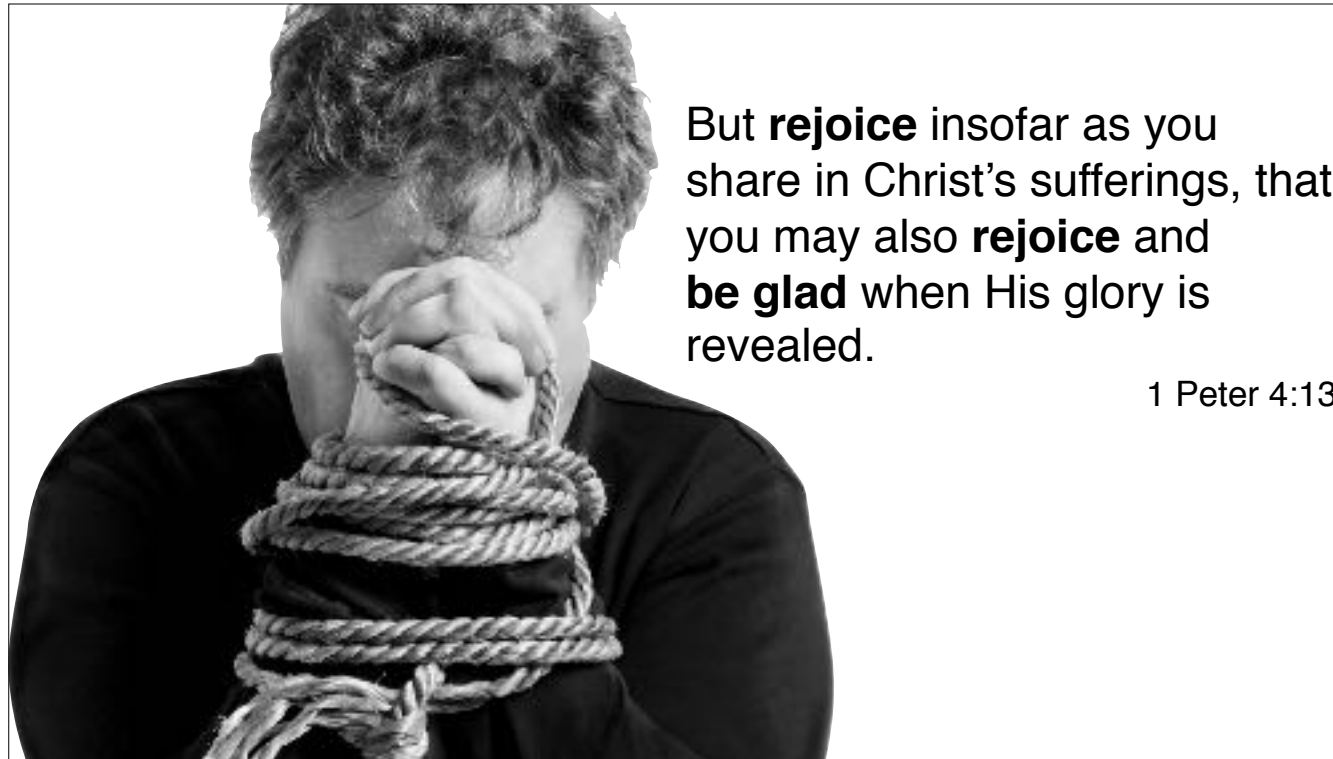




Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were counted worthy to **suffer** dishonor for the name.

Acts 5:41

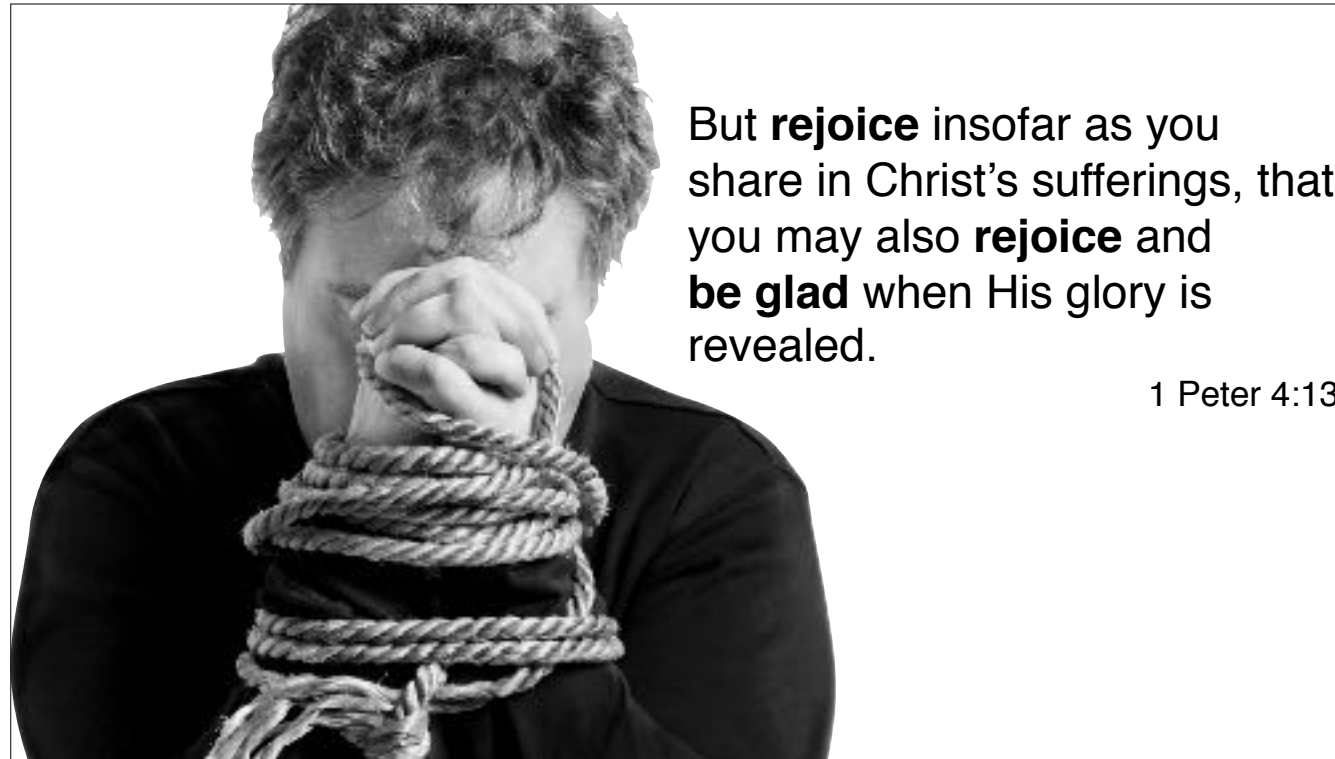
- Our joy is not just in the distant future, but also in recognizing that there is actually honor in suffering because we follow our Savior faithfully.
- Just as Jesus had warned that the world hated Him, so those who follow him would be hated (John 15:18; 17:14).
- In a very real sense then we are joining together with Jesus when persecuted for righteousness sake.



But **rejoice** insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings, that you may also **rejoice** and **be glad** when His glory is revealed.

1 Peter 4:13

1 Peter 4:12-19: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.



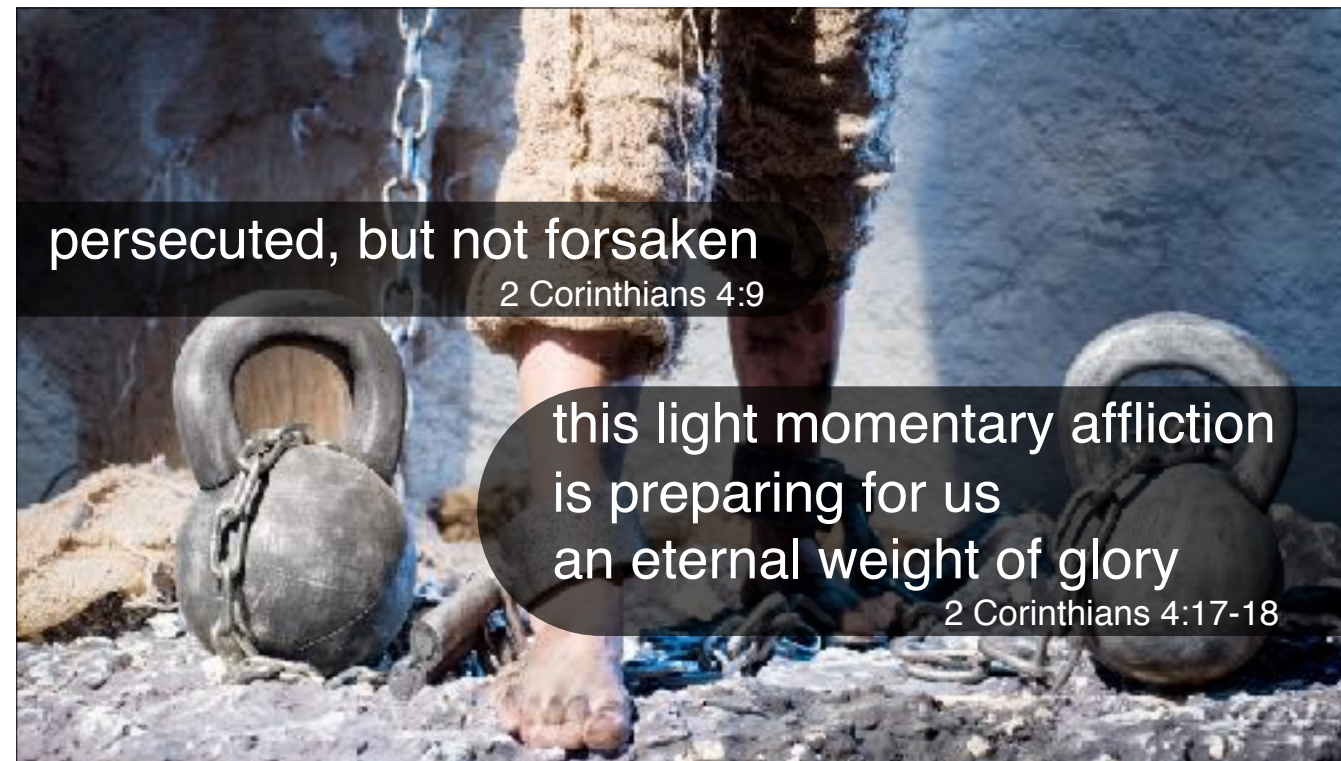
- Peter then adds a long-view even to this thought: "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed" (1 Peter 4:13),
- and reminds us to entrust our souls to the Creator of our souls who is faithful to us (1 Peter 4:19).



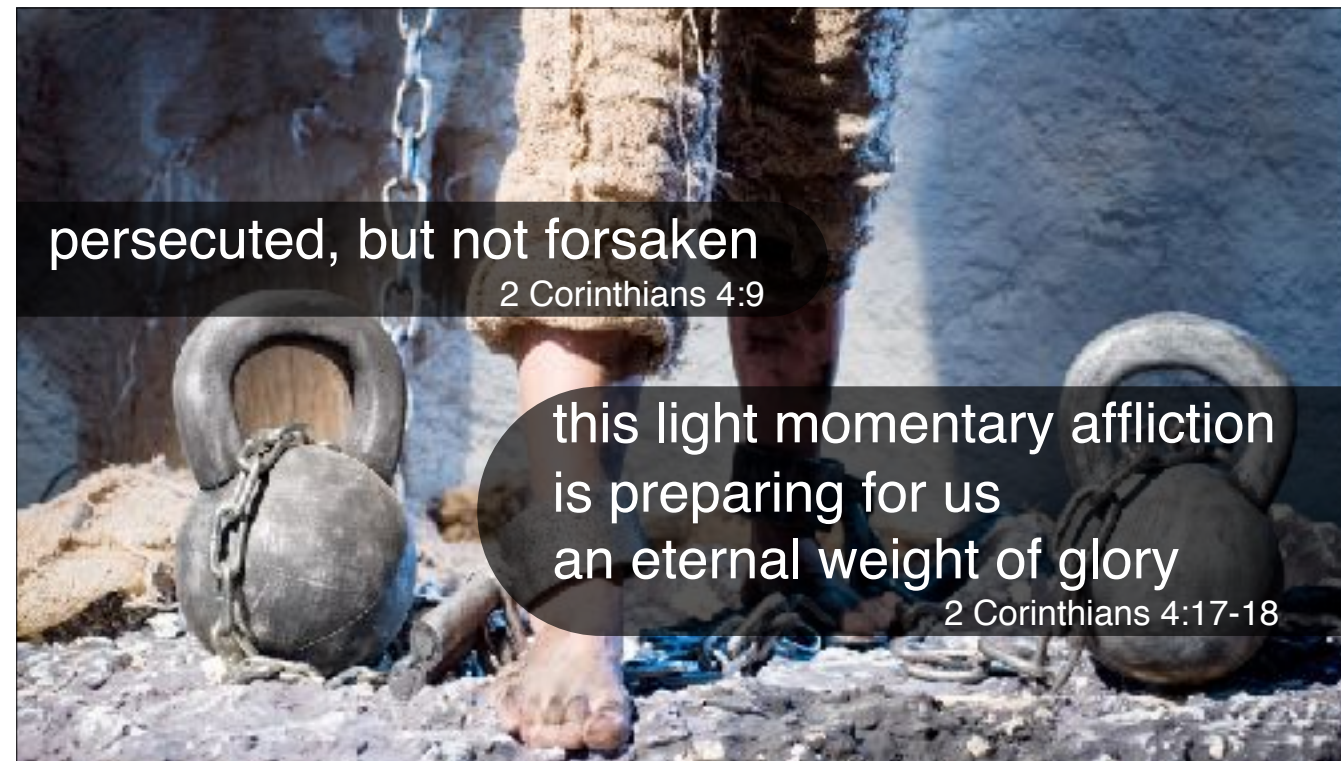
persecuted, but not forsaken  
2 Corinthians 4:9

- The apostle Paul, who was no stranger to being persecuted, said it this way to the Corinthian saints: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; **persecuted, but not forsaken**; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9),





- "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this **light momentary affliction** is **preparing** for us an **eternal weight of glory** beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are **eternal**" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).



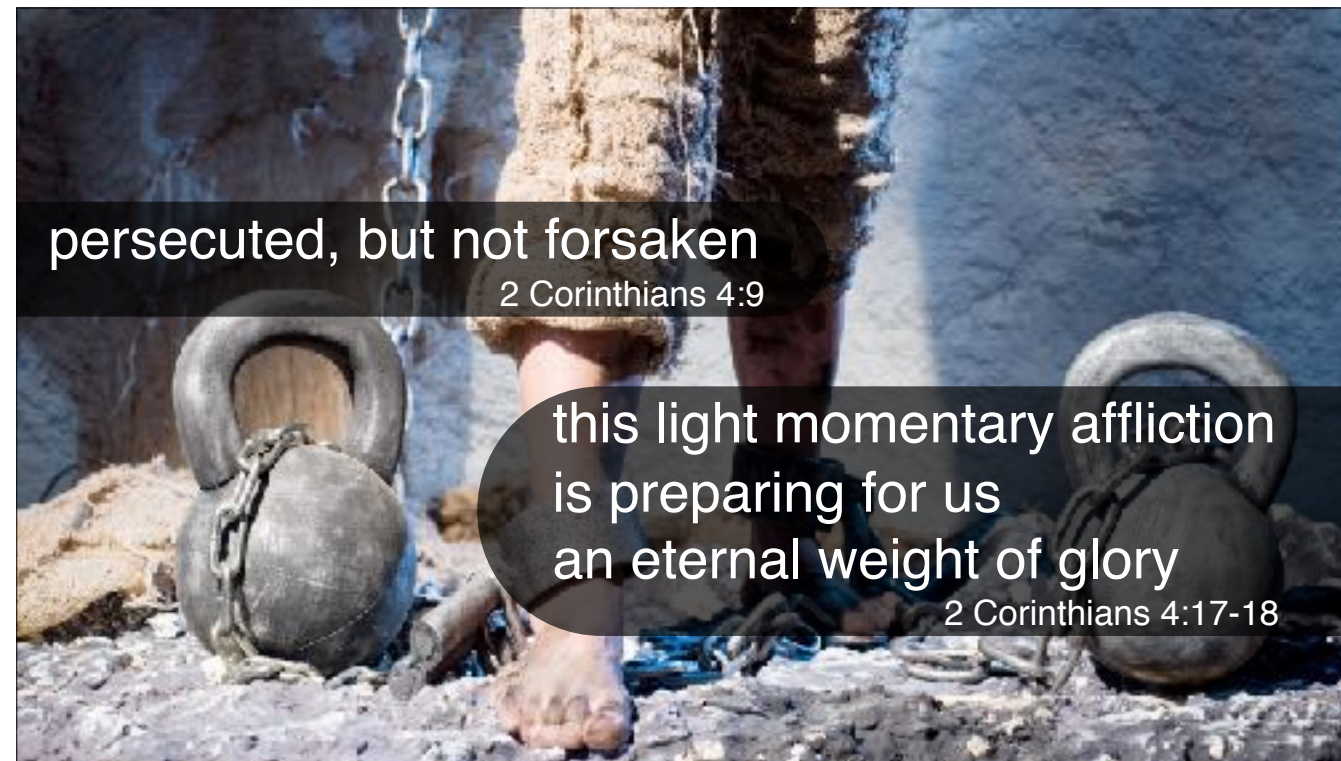
persecuted, but not forsaken

2 Corinthians 4:9

this light momentary affliction  
is preparing for us  
an eternal weight of glory

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

- I'm amazed at Paul's attitude that looks at all the struggles of this life as preparing us for something so great that we cannot even understand it.



persecuted, but not forsaken

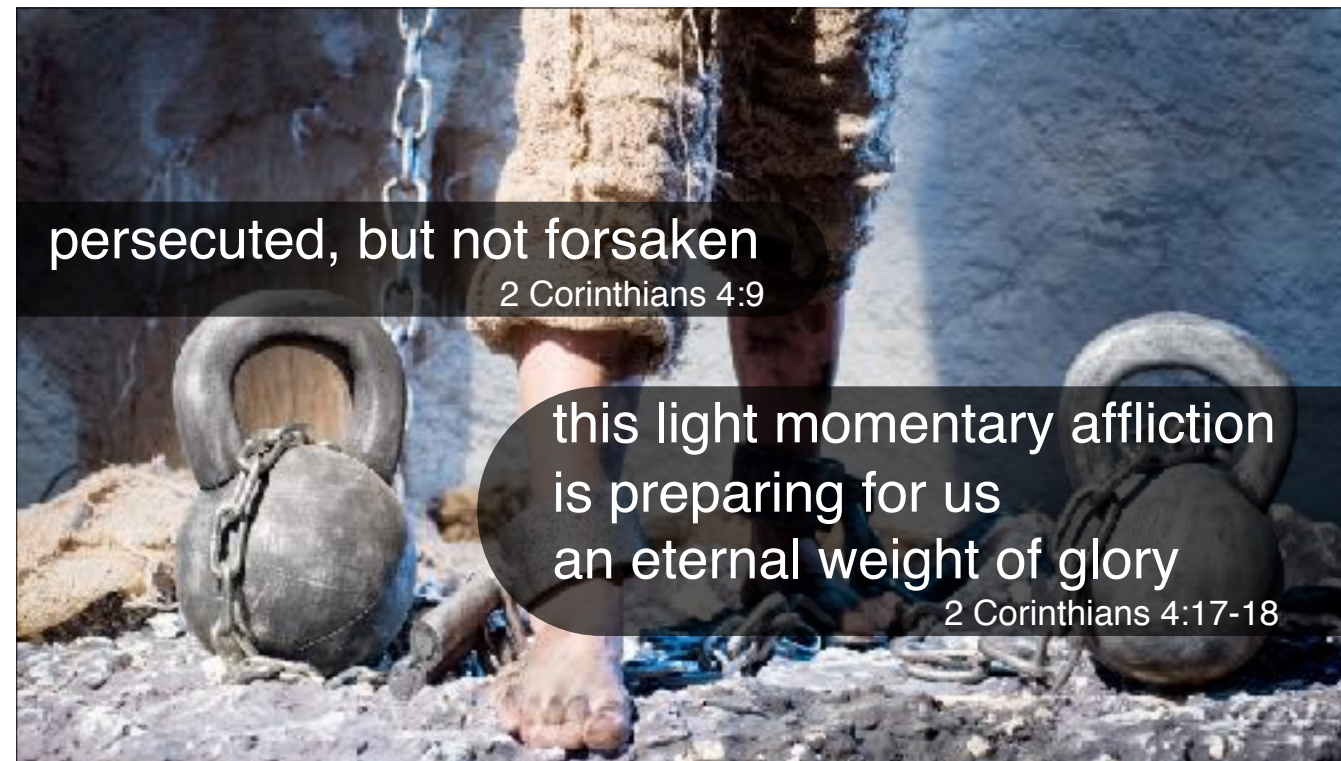
2 Corinthians 4:9

this light momentary affliction  
is preparing for us  
an eternal weight of glory

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

- He goes on to explain that although we groan in these fleshly bodies, we long to put on our heavenly dwelling that God has prepared for us (2 Corinthians 5:1-5).
- Just as Jesus, whatever we are suffering we must look to look beyond the moment (which is easier said than done) to the glory that our Father has prepared for us, which is greater than our hearts' imagination (1 Corinthians 2:9).





persecuted, but not forsaken

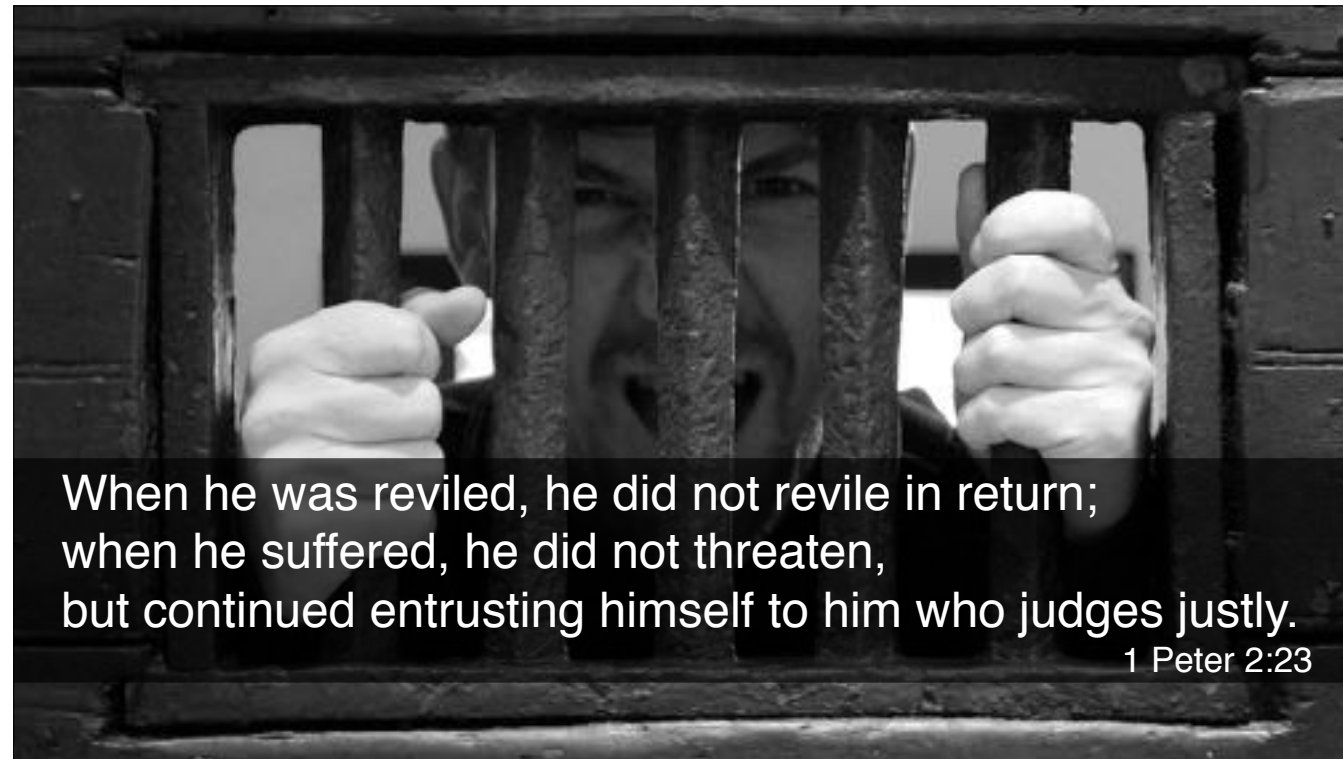
2 Corinthians 4:9

this light momentary affliction  
is preparing for us  
an eternal weight of glory

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

- So we look forward to that crown of life that we will receive when we have stood the test (James 1:12).
- Our joy is in the certainty that we have been saved by grace through faith for eternal salvation. Whatever we may suffer in this life is not to be compared to what waits for us.

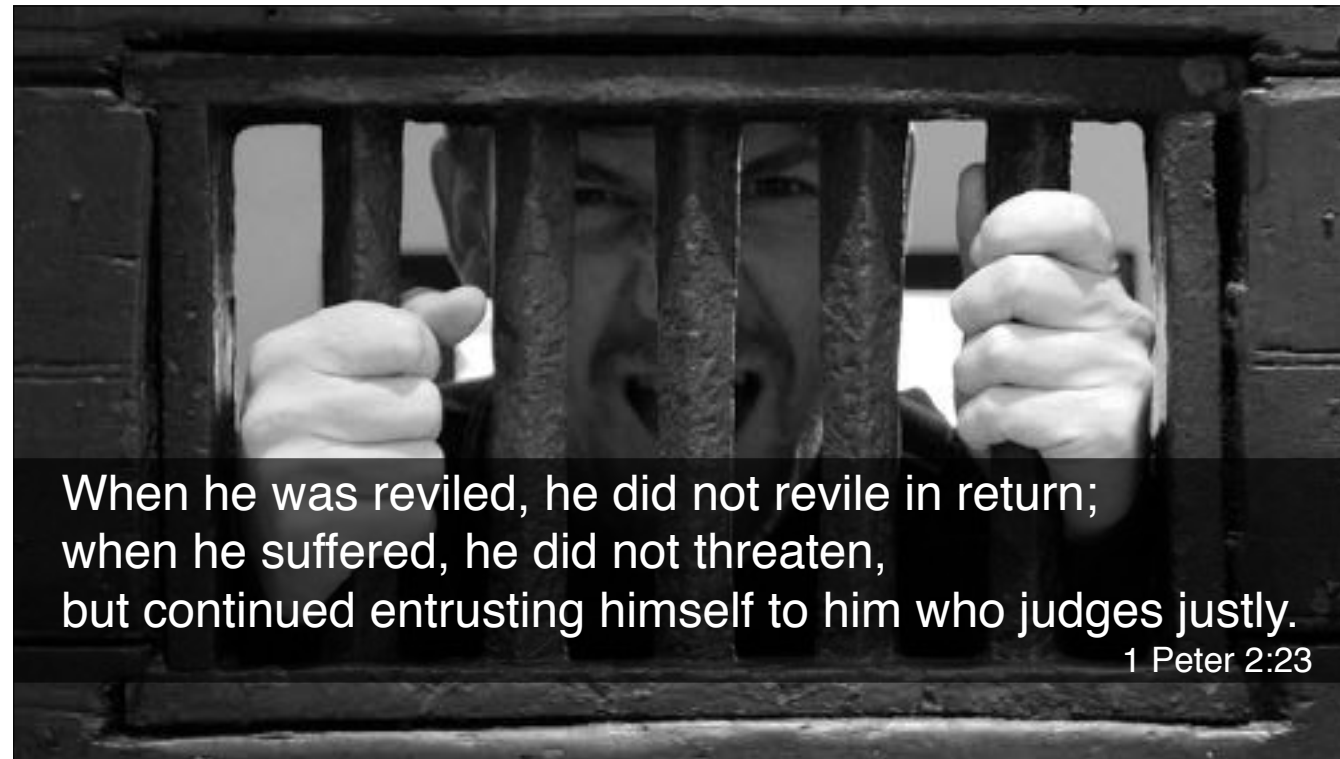




When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten,  
but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:23

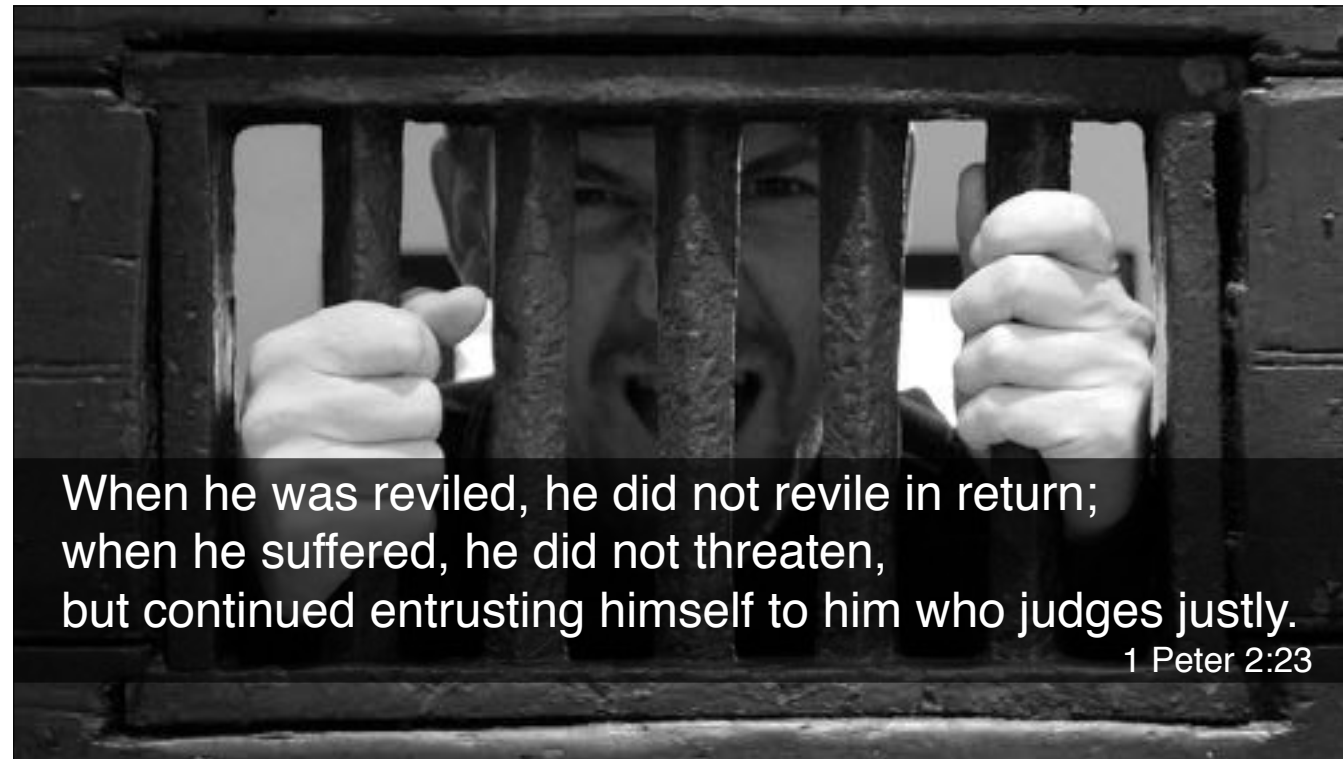
- Peter actually uses Jesus' example of enduring suffering to teach us how to cope with suffering correctly, instructing us to follow in his footsteps.
- "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:23).



When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten,  
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1 Peter 2:23

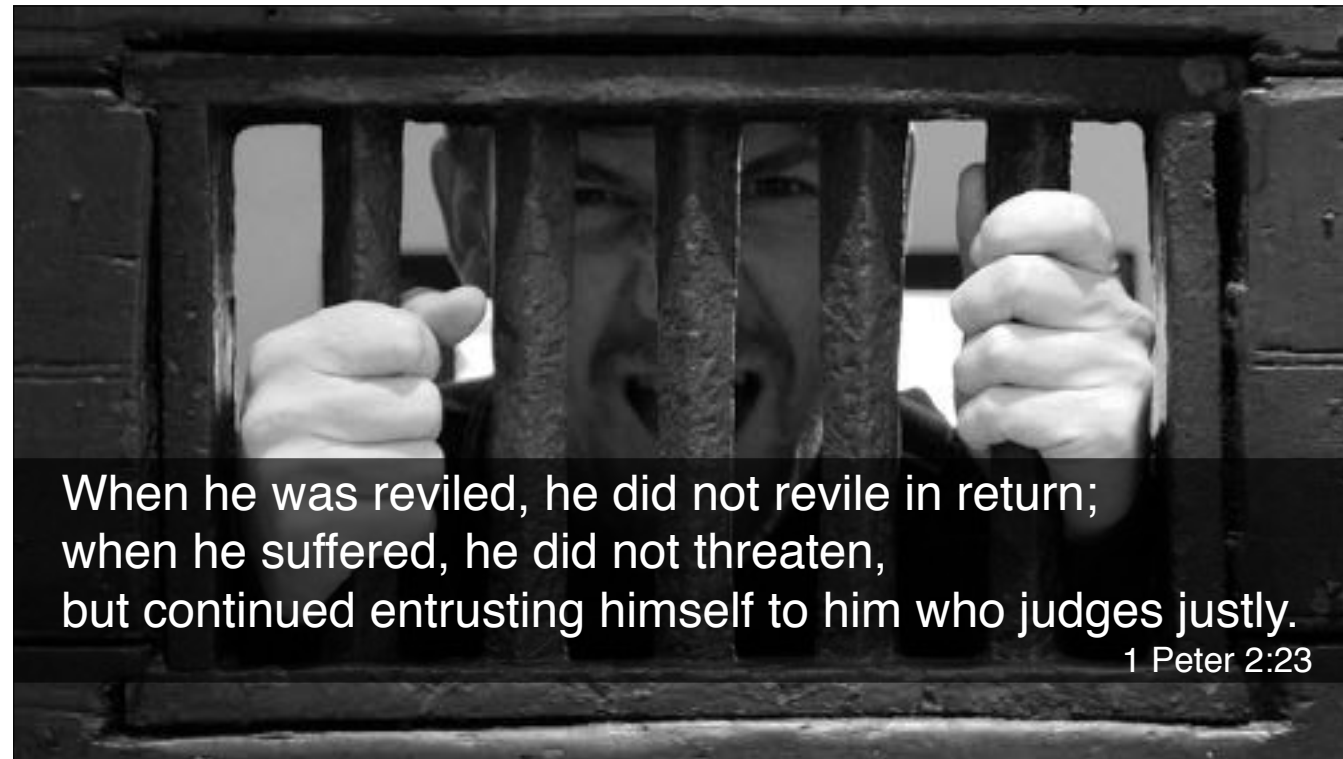
- There is to be no talking badly about those who persecute us, no insulting or cursing of them.
- There is to be no threatening.
- Jesus could have called the legions of angels, yet He never even threatened to harm those who harmed him.
- The key that Peter points us to is how Jesus looked beyond the immediate suffering and trusted that Jehovah, who knows the hearts of men, would justly judge.



When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten,  
but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:23

- How difficult it is to justly judge those who are causing us to suffer.
- Our tendency is to look at them through the pain that we've suffered and extrapolate that they are only evil in mind and deed.
- We tend to make no allowances for any reason, and justify our hard hearted thoughts of them.
- They certainly don't deserve our forgiveness, nor our kindness, nor our patience.



When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten,  
but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:23

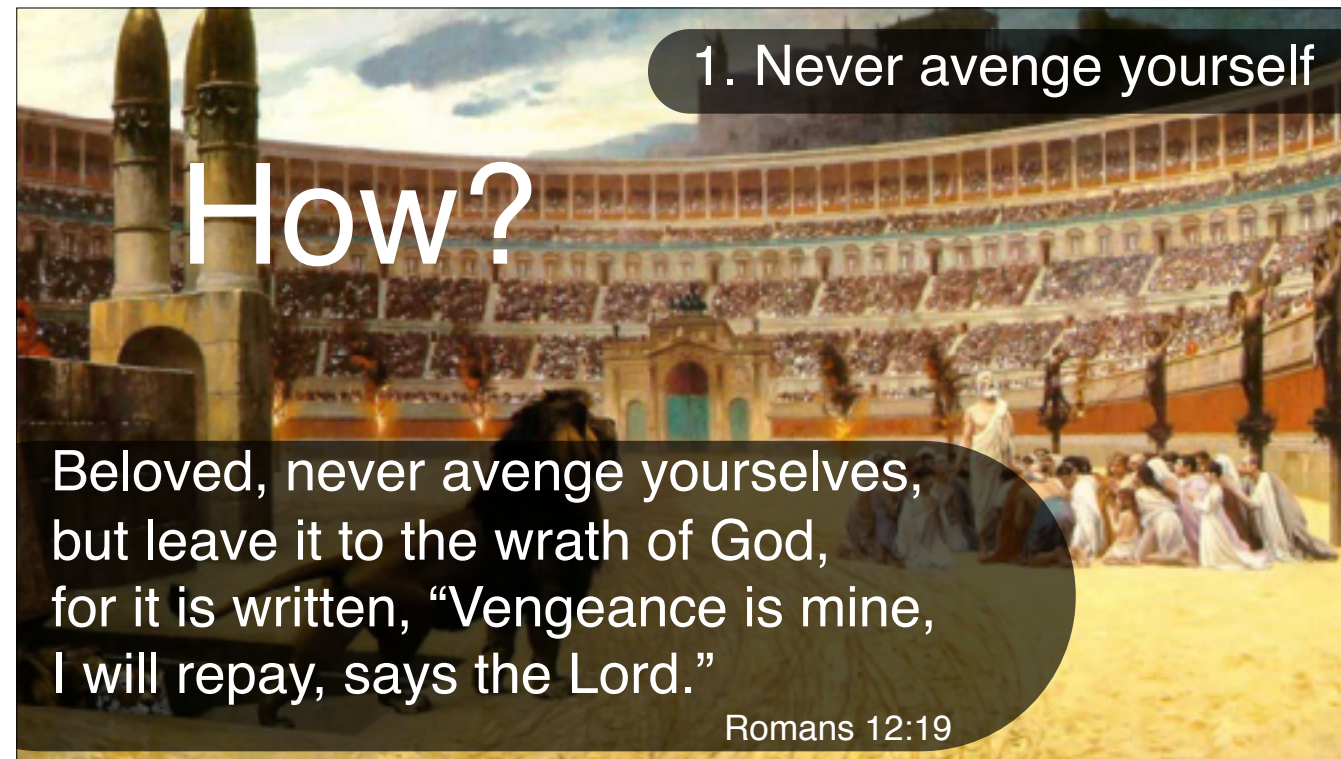
- In contrast, Jesus demonstrated that by trusting ourselves to the One just judge we can actually love our enemies and even pray that they be forgiven.
- What a joy to remove that burden of judgment from our minds!
- What a joy that we know who will judge and it will be just!



# How?



- Now I realize that all of this points to the fact that we can rejoice, but we have yet to understand how to rejoice in suffering.



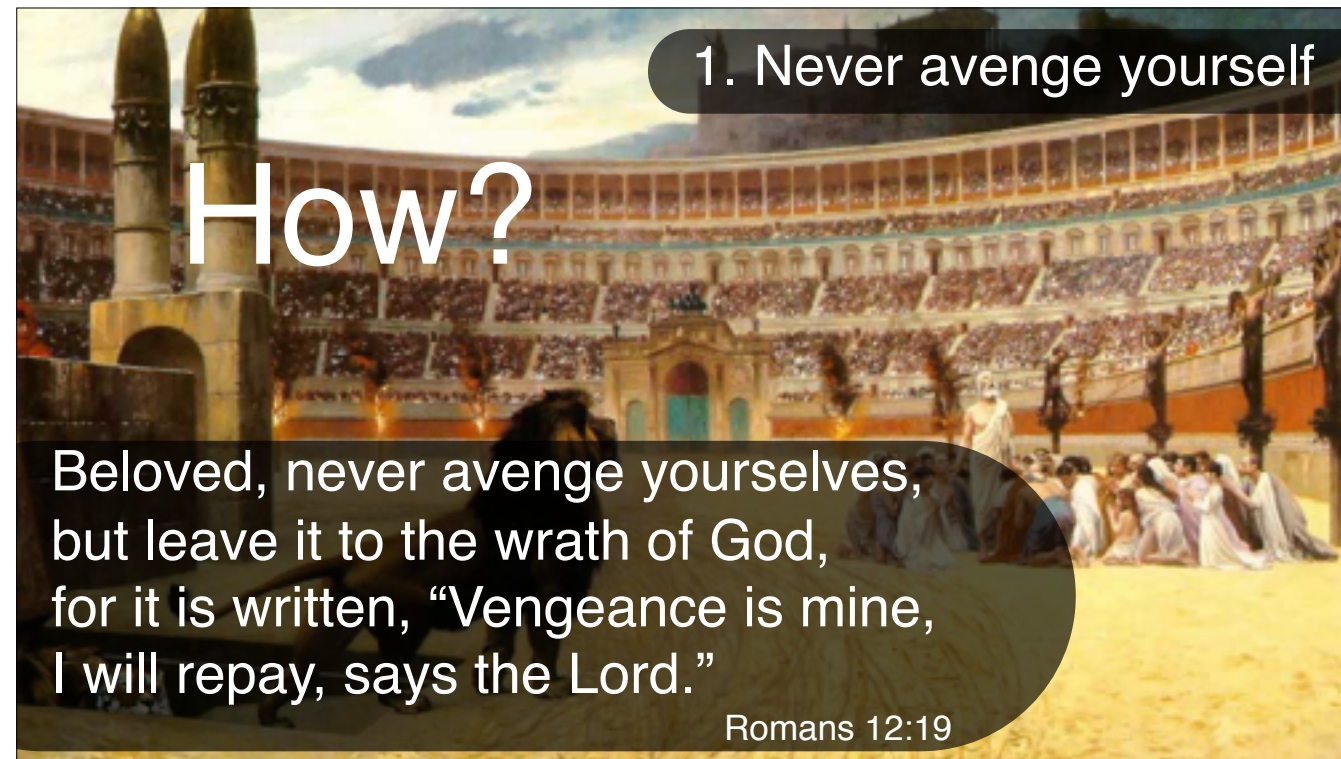
# How?

1. Never avenge yourself

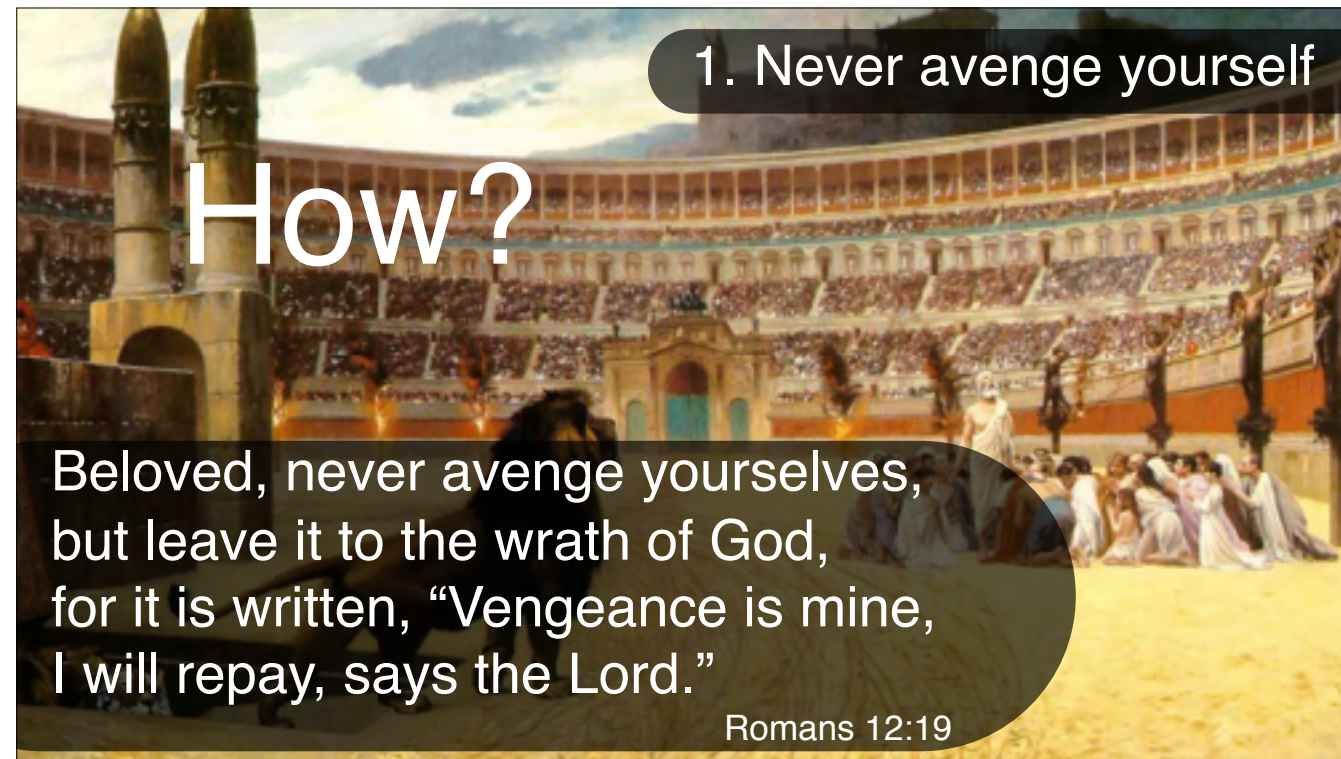
Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

Romans 12:19

- Lets begin by remembering what we are not to do when persecuted.
- We are not to retaliate against those who abuse us (Romans 12:19), nor are we even to be wrathful.
- Jesus's example of praying for the soldiers is a most powerful reminder that we must not even think evil thoughts about our persecutors.
- We are to be peacemakers.



- Jesus tells us to rejoice and be glad, so we must beware of even feeling depressed because of the persecution.
- I've often heard the stories of the saints who were marched into the Roman colosseum to their certain deaths who were joyously singing hymns of praise to God. (This needs to be verified if possible).



- Whether true, or not, they are stories told to remind us that we can face even death with joy when we stop looking at our suffering, our earthly life and our persecutors.
- Our joy is what is set before us beyond the momentary afflictions.





- We rejoice and are glad because being persecuted for righteousness sake demonstrates that our lives have become like Jesus:
- “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:18-19).



- Such trials remind us of who we really are and where we are really going, knowing that our reward is in heaven with our Father.
- Paul remind us that we are joint heirs with Christ "provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Romans 8:17).



- Another reason that we can rejoice in our suffering is that it provides us with an opportunity to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- When Jesus was warning of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, He tells his disciples that it will be an opportunity to bear witness (Luke 21:13).



- When Saul's persecution led to the saints leaving Jerusalem, they were scattered and "went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).
- These saints, uprooted from their homes were now pilgrims, who like Abraham, were looking for an eternal city prepared for them by God.





- As they journeyed through this world and through this life they sought diligently to bring as many with them to heaven as they could teach.
- The persecution provided opportunities to share the joyous news of reconciliation, and so we may learn to rejoice in suffering and be thankful to teach.



- "I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Philippians 1:12-14).
- imperial guard numbered in the thousands



- Paul did not sit in prison and sulk, or suffer in silence.
- He taught the gospel to those who were chained to him.
- His example emboldened other saints to teach without fear.
- What a joy that we can use our trials as a way of teaching the lost that they can be saved through Jesus Christ just as we have.
- Like Jesus, the joy is not just in what will be, but in the accomplishment of bringing many to repentance!



A sunflower with a bright yellow face and dark brown center stands in the middle of a parched, cracked earth. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant, hazy hills.

# How?

1. Never avenge yourself
2. You are like Jesus
3. Opportunity to teach
4. More than conquerors

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:37

- Finally, we rejoice and are glad because we are more than conquerors in spite of the trials.
- Romans 8:31-39





# How?

1. Never avenge yourself
2. You are like Jesus
3. Opportunity to teach
4. More than conquerors

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:37

- Paul reminds us that tribulation, distress and persecution cannot separate us from the love of Christ.
- We may be like sheep led to the slaughter in the eyes of the world, but in Him we have triumphed.
- God is for us... God is for ME!
- Knowing this we rejoice in the Lord always.



# How?

1. Never avenge yourself
2. You are like Jesus
3. Opportunity to teach
4. More than conquerors
5. Eternal weight of glory

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an **eternal weight of glory** beyond all comparison,

2 Corinthians 4:17

- Jesus... the joy set before Him
  - Hebrews 12:2 (ESV) 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.



# How?

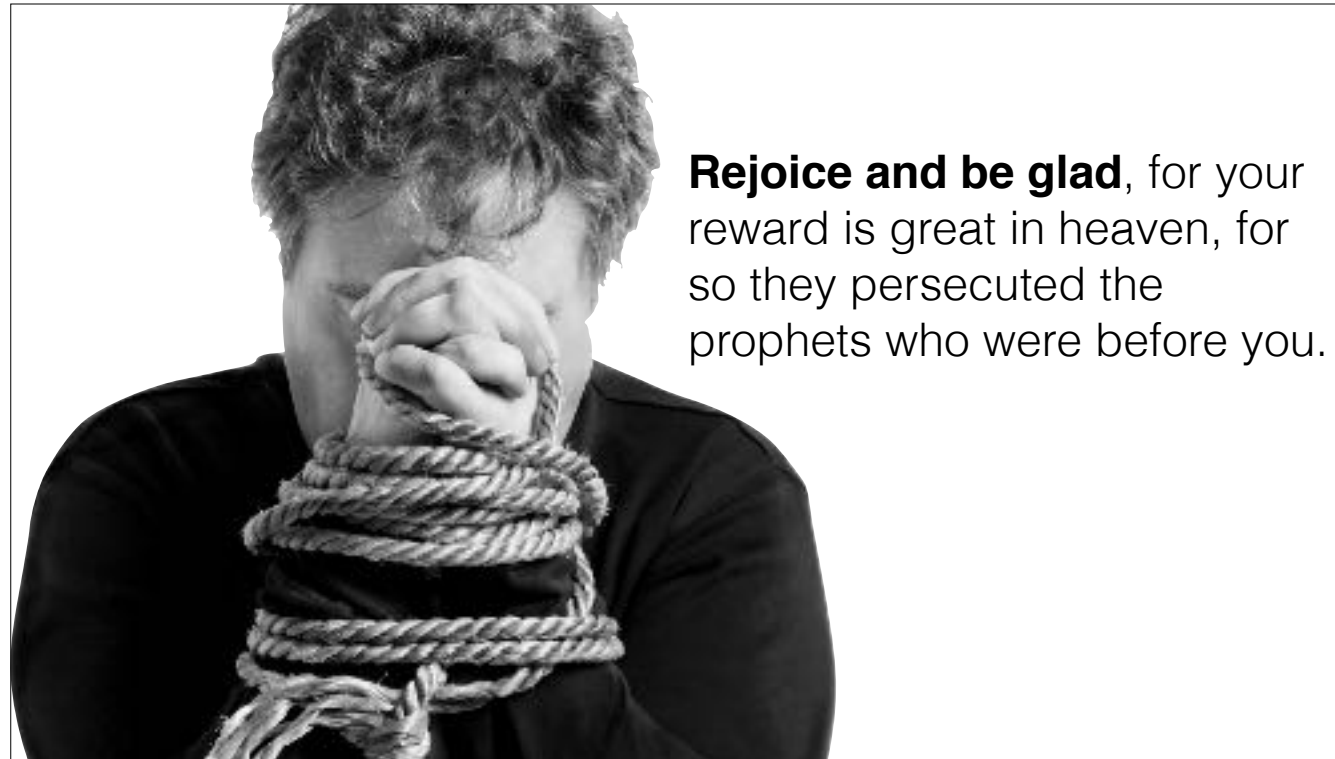
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2 Corinthians 4:17

- Prepared...
  - 2 Corinthians 4:17: For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,





When persecuted, rejoice!

You have demonstrated that you are like your Master, you are being prepared for eternity and glory, and even in persecution, you can help others understand that salvation is possible in Jesus.



**We implore you on  
behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20**

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14



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Sandals: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a9/Jesus\\_Shoes\\_B%26W\\_%283546114469%29.jpg/1280px-Jesus\\_Shoes\\_B%26W\\_%283546114469%29.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a9/Jesus_Shoes_B%26W_%283546114469%29.jpg/1280px-Jesus_Shoes_B%26W_%283546114469%29.jpg)

Paul bears witness: [http://pub.distantshores.org/images/rg/44/44\\_Ac\\_25\\_01\\_RG.jpg](http://pub.distantshores.org/images/rg/44/44_Ac_25_01_RG.jpg)

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## Are You Rejoicing?

Matthew 5:10-12

Synopsis: The last character trait is not as easily recognized in this text. What is the proper reaction for a citizen of the kingdom when we are persecuted? We are to rejoice and be glad. In this lesson, we'll consider what this means and how we can realistically rejoice while suffering for our Savior.

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**"Let all that you do be done with love."**