

1. **Launcher:** When have you experienced persecution? Who have you known that has been persecuted? Tell some of those stories.

2. **Worship God** – Psalm 111:1-4, 9-10

Praise and give thanks to the LORD that he reigns and rules. Be in awe of His Kingdom, that it is only going to keep increasing forever and ever.

3. **Sermon Reflection: “Blessed are the Persecuted”**

Blessed are the Persecuted

- Have you noticed in your life that there are certain consequences that maybe you didn’t see coming when you attached yourself to certain people?
- Why does Jesus include persecution as another key ingredient to the happy / blessed life?

Woe to You

- If we don’t face persecution, does that mean we are in sin or not taking our faith seriously?
- How do our idols promise us the same things in Bible verses? Do you find them to be empty?
- Have you considered what the job description is for following Jesus? Does the reward of following Jesus outshine anything you could suffer on this side of Eternity?

Rejoice and Be Glad

- Jesus’ first commands in the Sermon on the Mount is “rejoice and be glad.” What does that say about him? Is that just optimism? Or is it something far more glorious?
- What is Jesus’ tactic to help his followers follow the beatitudes, specifically to follow him down the road to persecution?
- Is God actually after our happiness?

4. **Kingdom Centered Prayer: You Can Pray with Us**

- I. Praise and give thanks to the LORD that he reigns and rules. Be in awe of His Kingdom, that it is only going to keep increasing forever and ever.
- II. Confess the ways you look like the world and love the world. Worship the LORD and confess your sin for not being in love with his design for hardship to follow obedience.
- III. Thank Jesus that he loved righteousness with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength and that it led him to the greatest persecution anyone has ever suffered, which accomplished the greatest good anyone has ever achieved.
- IV. Who in your life is being deceived by the false riches and blessings the world offers? Pray for their soul that the gospel would set them free and that they would run and cling to Jesus.
- V. Where is the Spirit prompting you to make obedient decisions that may bring hardship to your life? Ask for courage in this act of obedience.

5. **Mission:** Our mission as Christians is to happy our hearts in the Lord every morning, afternoon and evening—that we may be a people who can meet great opposition with a joy that the world cannot makes sense of.