



Sermon: *Persecution as a Blessing*

Text: *Matthew 5: 10-12*

Preacher: *Wy Plummer*

Sermon question - How can persecution be a blessing?

Introductory questions - Jesus' eighth Beatitude is the most lengthy: "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" (Matthew 5.10-12).

When the OT prophets spoke the words of the Lord, their preaching seldom led to popularity. In the first half of the eighth century bC, the prophet Amos warned the northern kingdom of Israel that God would judge them for their idolatry, self-indulgence and complacency. The first person to speak out against Amos was a priest of the Lord, Amaziah, who should have known better. Read Amos 7.10-17.

1) Paraphrase what Amaziah said to Amos and Amos' reply.

Another prophet who spoke the Lord's call to repentance was Jeremiah. Read Jeremiah 26.1-24.

2) What kinds of abuse did Jeremiah suffer for speaking the word of the Lord.

Read 2 Chronicles 36.15-16.

3) How did the prophets serve as instruments of God's mercy?

4) How would you say that the abused prophets of God were blessed?

Reflection questions -

1. Why is there persecution?
2. What is persecution?
3. What reasons did Jesus give us to rejoice when we are persecuted?
4. When does Persecution come?
5. Identify some differences between being persecuted for the sake of Christ and simply drawing opposition for being obnoxious.
6. Have you ever experienced righteous persecution for the sake of Christ?