
First Baptist Dyersburg • Sermon Notes

God Blesses Those Who Are Persecuted

Message #9 in the series

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026 • Mike Hickman, Senior Pastor

Jesus' Triumphant Entry

As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. ²“Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

⁴This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,

⁵“Tell the people of Jerusalem,
‘Look, your King is coming to you.
He is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey’s colt.’”

⁶The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.

⁸Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God for the Son of David!
Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!
Praise God in highest heaven!”

¹⁰The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. “Who is this?” they asked.

¹¹And the crowds replied, “It’s Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.” (Matthew 21:1-11, NLT)

Jesus Speaks about the Future

As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings. ²But he responded, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!”

³Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, “Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?”

⁴ Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, ⁵ for many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately. ⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. ⁸ But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

⁹ “Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. ¹⁰ And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. ¹¹ And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. ¹² Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:1-14, NLT)

The Plot to Kill Jesus

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² “As you know, Passover begins in two days, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

³ At that same time the leading priests and elders were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, ⁴ plotting how to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ “But not during the Passover celebration,” they agreed, “or the people may riot.” (Matthew 26:1-5, NLT)

Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

⁴⁷ And even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: “You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss.” ⁴⁹ So Judas came straight to Jesus. “Greetings, Rabbi!” he exclaimed and gave him the kiss.

⁵⁰ Jesus said, “My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for.”

Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest’s slave, slashing off his ear.

⁵² “Put away your sword,” Jesus told him. “Those who use the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? ⁵⁴ But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?”

⁵⁵ Then Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn’t you arrest me in the Temple? I was there teaching every day. ⁵⁶ But this is all happening to fulfill the words of the prophets as

recorded in the Scriptures.” At that point, all the disciples deserted him and fled. (Matthew 26:47-56, NLT)

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷ Some of the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters and called out the entire regiment. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. ²⁹ They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” ³⁰ And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. ³¹ When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified. (Matthew 27:27-31, NLT)

²² What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. ²³ When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way. (Luke 6:22-23, NLT)

¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹¹ “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way. (Matthew 5:10-12, NLT)

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² 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, NIV84)

What is righteousness? The simplest answer to that question is this: *Righteousness is doing what is right in the sight of God.* This is a simple definition that is far more complex under the surface. To be righteous is to do everything that God calls us to do. The demands of true righteousness are so great and so many that none of us ever in this world achieves it perfectly. It involves following the whole counsel of God. (R.C. Sproul)

The World's Hatred

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. ²⁰ Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. ²¹ They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. (John 15:18-21, NLT)

Because this life is just a fraction of all eternity, we can and must rejoice even in persecution. The joy commanded here, as elsewhere in Scripture (especially James 1:2), is not an emotion but an attitude. (Craig Blomberg, *The New American Commentary: Matthew*, page 101.)

Delight in inevitable persecution because you will receive a great reward, and you are in good company.

(Danny Akin, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in The Sermon on the Mount*, page 13.)

¹² Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. ¹³ But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived.

¹⁴ But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵ You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:12-17, NLT)