

# TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?...

A Video Bible Study Series

(John 6:68, NIV)

## EPISODE 9 - BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO SUFFER

### THE BEATITUDES SERIES (MATTHEW 5:1-12)

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- Jesus was traveling near the Sea of Galilee. There were many people following Him. So, Jesus went up on a mountainside and gathered His core disciples around Him. The crowd found places around the mountainside, to hear what He was going to teach His disciples.
- Jesus began teaching His disciples what is known as the Beatitudes. The word “beatitude” means “blessedness.” There are eight blessings that Jesus taught during the Sermon on the Mount.
- This passage teaches us to look at our hearts and the attitudes God wants us to have toward ourselves, our sin, the Lord, and the world.
- Each statement starts with the word “Blessed” which means we are filled with a joy and peace that cannot be shaken. This kind of joy and peace comes as we put our trust in God.
- Trusting God changes our hearts and attitudes, and we find the blessing and future reward Jesus spoke about.
- The Beatitudes set the tone for the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. These blessed statements show the goodness of God, and that we find our blessing in God alone.



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- ***Eighth Beatitude: “Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Blessed are you when people make fun of you and hurt you because of me. You are also blessed when they tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be joyful and glad. Your reward in heaven is great. In the same way, people hurt the prophets who lived long ago.” (Matt. 5:10-12)***
- The last Beatitude talks about the blessings we will receive when we are mocked and rejected for our faith. Believers face persecution in many ways. Some are rejected by people or made fun of for their faith. Some have even died because of their faith.
- It can be hard being a Christian, especially when people make fun of you. But remember, Jesus was also mocked and faced struggles, to the point of death on the cross. No matter what happens on earth, yours is the kingdom of heaven. God will repay you, and more, for your faithfulness.
- There are many people in the Bible who suffered for their faith in God. One person was the apostle Paul. Early on he was a Pharisee named Saul, who arrested followers of Christ. Then Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus in a blinding light. Saul was blinded and led into the city.
- The Lord told a believer named Ananias to go to Saul and place his hands on him. When Ananias did this, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes and he could see again. He was baptized and began to preach the Good News. Later his name changed to Paul.
- Paul brought the Good News of Jesus to the Gentiles, or non-Jewish people. He was an important teacher and started many churches throughout Europe and Asia Minor. He was also a missionary and took three possibly four missionary journeys that lasted several years.
- Paul also wrote at least seven books in the Bible, which were letters to different churches and people he met during his missionary journeys. Some experts think that Paul wrote as many as 13 books in the Bible. He is considered one of the most important people to have preached the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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- During his ministry, Paul also suffered for his faith. He was arrested three times and spent over 5 years total in prison. His preaching of the Gospel made a lot of people mad, and there were several attempts on his life. One example where Paul suffered for his faith is found in the book of **Acts 14:8-23**.
- ***Paul and another believer Barnabas had been preaching the Good News in the city of Iconium when they learned of a plot to kill them. They fled and went to the city of Lystra, where they continued to preach.***
- ***In the city sat a man who couldn't walk. He hadn't been able to use his feet since the day he was born. He listened as Paul spoke. Paul looked right at him. He saw that the man had faith to be healed. So he called out, "Stand up on your feet!" Then the man jumped up and began to walk.***
- ***The crowd saw what Paul had done. They were excited because they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. Just outside the city was the temple for the god Zeus. The priest there brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates. He and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.***
- ***Paul and Barnabas were very upset about this. They rushed out into the crowd. They shouted, "Friends, why are you doing this? We are only human, just like you. We are bringing you good news. Turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the living God. He is the one who made the heavens and the earth and the sea. He made everything in them. In the past, He let all nations go their own way. But He has given proof of what He is like. He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven. He gives you crops in their seasons. He provides you with plenty of food. He fills your hearts with joy."***
- ***Paul and Barnabas told them all these things. But the crowd still wanted to worship them.***

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- ***Then some Jews came from Iconium and another city. They hated Paul and Barnabas. They won the crowd over to their side. They threw stones at Paul. They thought he was dead, so they dragged him out of the city. The believers gathered around Paul. Then he got up and went back into the city.***
- ***The next day Paul and Barnabas left for another city. Later on, they went back to Lystra to help the believers there grow in their faith.***
- It's incredible that even after Paul was almost killed, he got up and went back into the city. Then later he and Barnabas returned to Lystra to continue helping the believers who lived there strengthen their faith.
- Paul faced many struggles during his ministry. He was mocked, rejected, hated, imprisoned, and in the end killed for his faith. But he was faithful and obedient to God to the end of his life.
- The eighth Beatitude teaches us about the blessings we will receive when we are mocked and rejected for our faith. Believers face persecution in many ways. Some are rejected by people or made fun of for their faith. Some like Paul, have even died because of their faith.
- It can be hard being a Christian, especially when people make fun of you. But remember, Jesus was also mocked and faced struggles, to the point of death on the cross. No matter what happens on earth, yours is the kingdom of heaven. In the end, we as believers will be rewarded for our faithfulness to God.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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### **1. What are the Beatitudes?**

- The Beatitudes are blessed statements that Jesus taught His disciples, to show the goodness of God and that we find our blessing in God alone.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

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### **2. What is the eighth Beatitude, and what does it mean?**

- The eighth Beatitude is, “Blessed are those who suffer for doing what is right. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Blessed are you when people make fun of you and hurt you because of me. You are also blessed when they tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be joyful and glad. Your reward in heaven is great. In the same way, people hurt the prophets who lived long ago.” It means that we as believers will be rewarded for our faithfulness to God, even when we are mocked and rejected.

### **3. What happened when Paul healed the man who couldn’t walk?**

- The crowd there thought Paul and his friend Barnabas were gods. The priest from the temple for the god Zeus brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates. Everyone wanted to make sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.

### **4. How did Paul and Barnabas react?**

- Paul and Barnabas were very upset. They rushed out into the crowd. They shouted they were only human and were bringing the people good news. They told the people to turn away from false gods and turn to the living God. He was the one who made everything, and gave the people rain, crops and food. The living God was the one to fill the peoples’ hearts with joy. But the crowd still wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas.

### **5. There were some Jews who came into the city, who hated Paul and Barnabas. What happened to them as a result?**

- They won the crowd over to their side. They threw stones at Paul. They thought he was dead, so they dragged him out of the city. The believers gathered around Paul. Then he got up and went back into the city. The next day Paul and Barnabas left for another city. Later on, they went back to Lystra to help the believers there grow in their faith.

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## PERSONAL QUESTIONS

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### 1. How can you live out the eighth Beatitude in your own life?

- If and when you are mocked for your faith, pray for God to give you strength. Remember Paul and how even though he faced many struggles in his ministry he was faithful to God. Remember it's not easy to be a Christian, but that you will be rewarded by God for your faithfulness. Ask God to help you forgive those who do you wrong.

### 2. How can you encourage someone else with the Beatitudes?

- Pray with them and encourage them to read God's Word. Invite them to church or to Friendship group. Share how much you love God, and the blessings He has given you in your life.

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