

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
SERMON NOTES  
FEBRUARY 23, 2020**

**"KINGDOM CHARACTER: The Persecuted"  
Matthew 5:10-12**

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

"PERSECUTED" diōkō (διώκω):

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Whether for upholding the standard of righteousness in our sin-sick world or for following closely after Christ, persecution can come to us in many forms.

Most of us will say, "Who Me? Persecuted?" We live in a world heavily influenced by the Gospel and in America, where our foundation is rooted in Judeo-Christian ethics, though it is on the rise, we seldom see active persecution. It is not so everywhere.

A. Some modern Christian persecution statistics (taken from <https://savethepersecutedchristians.org/persecution-by-the-numbers/>):

- 1) At least \_\_\_\_\_ million Christians face persecution.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ million Christians in the top 50 countries on Open Door's 2019 World Watch List experience high levels of persecution.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ of those enduring persecution are children; women and girls are most violated.
- 4) Every month: \_\_\_\_\_ Christians are killed – often in public and without regard to gender or age

5) Nearly \_\_\_\_\_ million Christians were martyred from 2005 to 2015.

6) More than \_\_\_\_\_ million documented cases of martyrdom in the 20th century alone.

7) Christians today are \_\_\_\_\_ persecuted group in the world.

8) Persecution is on the rise because of:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

B. In our nation, so far, the most likely forms of persecution are:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_
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C. How does one experience "blessedness" in the midst of persecution? How does one "hang on"?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

**"Let's commit ourselves to pray continually for our brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted for their faith and to remember that we must ever be ready to pay the price of following Jesus!"**