

# An 'Unpopular' Promise Regarding Persecution

by Bob Hoekstra

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*Those who desire to live a life of godliness in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, but this promise is not meant to discourage us, but rather to prepare us for the difficulties of following Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:6, Matthew 5:10, John 15:20, 1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 3:12

**Topics:** "Persecution", "Godliness"

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## Description

Bob Hoekstra preaches about the promise of persecution for those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, emphasizing that this guarantee is often unpopular in a church culture that values comfort and popularity. The promise of persecution is given to those who seek to live a life of godliness, as it is the will of the Lord for His people, and it is accompanied by the promise of blessings for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus Himself warned that those who desire to follow Him will face persecution, as He did, and this promise is all-encompassing with no exceptions.

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## Transcript

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

For a final visit, we return to the category of "unpopular" promises. This promise guarantees persecution for serious believers in Jesus Christ. In a church world where many treasure comfort and popularity, this promise is not well-received.

This promise is given to those who want to live a life of godliness: "who desire to live godly." Godliness is the will of the Lord for His people. "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11). Our Lord Himself declared that there is great blessing in having a passion for righteous living. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6a). The blessing is God's pledge to satisfy that heart which yearns for righteousness. "For they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6b).

Yet, we have seen that fullness of righteousness is not all that is promised to those who want to walk in godliness. Persecution is also promised. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." Notice the comprehensive, inescapable dimension of this promise. "All who desire to live godly . . . will suffer persecution." There are no exceptions. There are no exemptions.

All who sincerely desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ will experience the consequences that He met, as He walked in righteousness. "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). Jesus was not universally hailed for His righteous path. He was opposed, mocked, conspired against, and betrayed. We need not be startled when measures of similar persecutions befall us.

Of course, this promise of persecution is not given to discourage us from pressing on down the path of godliness. Rather, it is offered to prepare us for the difficulties that are guaranteed as we seek to grow in Christlikeness. The Lord even adds gracious encouragements to righteousness, so we will be strengthened to pursue His holy will in this matter. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). Persecutions can remind us that we are headed for heaven. Persecutions can bring us heavenly measures of sustaining grace along the way.

O righteous Lord, I long to walk in Your paths of righteousness. Strengthen my heart with Your grace that I might press on in godliness. Help me to never shrink back, even though persecutions are guaranteed. Help me to stand true, even though persecutions may become severe. Lord, I count on Your promises to see me through the battles, in Jesus name, Amen.

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