

Facing PERSECUTION

Series: Faith vs Fear

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We have been reflecting upon Psalm 23 and the picture it paints of living well with the Shepherd. We have seen that when our Faith matures into Trust, Fear becomes less threatening, Peace rises!

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Psalm 23:5

Along the Shepherd’s Path we will encounter Enemies!

Today we will consider an often avoided, little talked about dimension of Shepherd life: Persecution

- **As a Christ-follower I should be prepared for _____**

- Jesus: “Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.” John 15:20
- Paul: “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” 2 Timothy 3:12
- Peter: “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

1 Peter 4:12-13

- **The Temptation to live a _____ life.**

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” Matthew 5:13

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

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 5:3-12

- **Key #1: I must apply God’s clear _____ when facing Persecution.**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:38-48

- **Key #2: Faith blossoms into Trust when we look past Persecution & find _____.**

Conclusion:

How salty is your walk with Christ?

As you embody peace, humility, meekness, mourning, mercy, purity, righteousness how will you react when rejected, treated harshly, cruelly, unfairly?

All Scriptures are from the New International Version Bible unless otherwise mentioned. You may make comments or ask Bro. Tony questions about this message by email at: brotony@itawambachristianchurch.org