

Quality of Jesus' Friends

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[0:00] Well, we're going to continue in our look at the 15th chapter of John.

I've been letting you guys off easy lately. Getting out pretty early. I'm not going to treat you so well today. This evening. You know, the Bible is not gray.

It's pretty black and white. The Bible speaks in terms of absolutes. And I'm always reminded, and I happened to catch this on the Christian channel, the young man at a college who spoke out at a conference being held by Ravi Zachariah.

If you don't know who he is, shame on you. And probably the greatest apologist I would say in our day, we're actually trying to get him here. And it's a two-year or plus challenge.

OWU is trying to get him in here. And Dr. Zachariah brought a message to a secular college, which he speaks a lot at, on moral absolutes of the Bible.

[1:15] And then people line up to ask questions or challenge. Well, this young man got up and said he didn't believe in absolutes. And Dr. Zachariah said, well, how sure are you?

Well, I'm positive there's no absolutes. Well, how positive are you? He said, I'm absolutely certain there's no absolutes in the universe. Well, his fellow students start laughing.

You know, he's looking around at them like, what's the matter, you know? And Dr. Zachariah, of course, so you're absolutely certain there's no absolutes. And finally the light bulb came on, you know.

So he proved himself to be wrong by the very words he used. Of all the New Testament writers, in my opinion, John is the most black and white author.

You get that in all five of his writings, but especially in the epistle of 1 John. But the Bible is a book of contrast. It contrasts those who are saved with those who are lost.

[2:22] It speaks of those who are with Jesus and those who are against him. There are the children of God and the children of the devil. It speaks of two kingdoms.

There is a kingdom of light. And there is a kingdom of darkness. Well, today we're going to look at some scriptures. And Jesus will make a contrast between those who are his friends and those who are friends of the world.

And I believe we heard a message on that not too long ago. And this latter category is made up of those who are hostile to God and enemies with him.

And so we're going to talk about a series of characteristics that define the friends of Jesus. And this is the first one. John 15, verse 12 and 13.

This is my commandment. Of course, the Lord is speaking. This is my commandment that you love one another just as I have loved you.

[3:33] Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends. So this first characteristic that we're going to mention is that the friends of Jesus have a love for each other.

It is actually the distinguishing mark of the Christians in our day. Jesus always marks out his people. He marked out the Abrahamic people with circumcision.

I suppose we could say in Moses it was Sabbath worship. But in Christianity, we're marked out by having love one for another. We fail in that sometimes, don't we?

Twice in the upper room, the Lord told His followers that those who believe in Him would have a special love for one another.

And this level of love can only be achieved by those connected to Jesus through the new birth. And we just finished a section a few weeks ago on abiding in Christ.

[4:44] And those who are abiding branches are those who can love in this manner. Because they receive their sustenance from the vine. And the Lord really gives an impossible command.

We're to love one another just as He loves them. And that's a pretty high calling. I mean, you know, I've never achieved that. I'm no Mike Dursham. I can't, I haven't yet got to that level. But that intense level of perfection, you know, in this life is not going to be achieved. But we do have the capacity to love divinely.

The love of God is poured into every believer when they are saved. And let me put it to you this way. We cannot love limitlessly, which is what Christ can do, but we can love sacrificially, which is what Christ asked us to do.

And we can offer sacrificial love to our brothers and sisters, particularly those in need. Now, the Lord, of course, is mere hours when we come to this passage from laying down His life for His friends.

[6:05] In fact, His death is just mere hours away. How then can we hope to achieve such love? And I would suggest, number one, by meeting the needs of fellow believers.

Meeting the needs of others. When you have the capacity to do that, we need to do it. We need to do it. And I think that's really a great expression of love for one another.

The other characteristic of the friends of Jesus is that they obey Him. In John 15, 14, the second characteristic, you are my friends if you do what I command you.

Sin, of course, we all know in here is rebellion against God. When we make the choice to disobey God, we are in rebellion to Him.

At any given time, we are either in rebellion against God or obedient to Him. It is impossible to be submissive to God while at the same time rebelling against God.

[7:19] You can't do those two things at the same time. And for this reason, faith and obedience are forever linked. There's linkage there.

I heard a guy once, he was talking about, a guy said, you know, my church attendance is at an all-time high. I haven't missed in years. My giving is off the charts.

God has blessed me with finances. And he said, you know, it's just my prayer life is, you know, I get up early and I'm praying. And he said, the only little kind of a bump in the road is I do have a girlfriend and my wife hasn't caught us.

You can't. And the guy, I can't remember what preacher I heard telling the story, but he said, you can't bifurcate that. You can't live two lives.

He said, if you leak in one area, you leak everywhere. You leak all over. And you just can't, you know, that's not, you know, we don't have that available to us.

[8:28] Faith and obedience are a two-sided coin. Obedience is the natural outgrowth of a saved life. It is the result of salvation and not the cause of it.

I've said that many times. You're not saved because you're obedient. You're obedient because you're saved. And, you know, last week, I think it was, we talked about abiding branches. They eventually bear fruit.

And I said last time that every true believer bears fruit. A lot of it's plastic to be burned up. And some of it is small and we need a magnifying glass.

But if you're a true believer, you have borne some fruit. And the Lord keeps that account. He keeps that account. So we have this natural outgrowth of obedience.

When true believers hear the voice of Christ, they follow Him. Jesus said that. And the great enigma is that good works save no one, but a faith that is devoid of good works is a dead faith, James, and a dead faith cannot save anyone.

[9:49] And I'm always interested when you read guys that say, well, you know, James and Paul were at war with each other and they weren't. They perfectly complemented each other. Paul said you're saved by grace through faith and not of works.

James says basically the same thing. You're saved by faith not of works, but works will follow genuine salvation. And if you have a life devoid of works and you have what James called demon faith, the demons believe all that and they tremble.

You know? The third characteristic is that the true friends of Jesus know divine truth. John 15.15 Jesus says, no longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing, but I've called you friends.

For all things that I've heard from my Father I have made known to you. Now in the Roman world, most slaves did not have an intimate relationship with their master.

Slaves were merely told what to do and they did not participate in any decision making, any planning of events. We are referred to as slaves of Jesus, but that term falls short of describing our relationship to Him.

[11:12] So here, yeah, we're slaves, but He also can call us friends. He put His arm around us and say, you're my friend. In our relationship with Jesus, the friends are part of the inner circle.

Every believer is part of Jesus' inner circle because He's their friend. And the defining characteristic about the friend of Jesus is his or her ability to understand truth.

Now that's major. Without salvation, there is no Spirit of God indwelling the believer. Without the indwelling Spirit of God, there can be no profound understanding of God's Word.

The Bible is very clear. The Word of God is spiritually discerned. The Bible is also very clear that to the lost, the Word of God is foolishness.

And we look to Paul in 1 Corinthians 2 for the defining verses there, 12-16. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

[12:49] But a natural man, and I would tell you that's the unsaved man, a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. Why not?

Because they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they must be spiritually praised or spiritually understood.

But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he will instruct him, but we have the mind of Christ.

Boy, that's powerful. When I was a new believer, I made an assumption that if you were a professor of religion at any college in America, you had to be saved.

It was only a few years later I found out if you were a professor of religion in a secular college, you probably didn't have a clue what salvation was. God's And you can, you know, the unsaved can get some moral teachings from the Bible, clearly, but to know the deep things of God and particularly dealing with the atonement, with salvation, with faith, with the return of Christ, all those things, that's too deep for the unsaved.

[14:12] It's just too deep. There's another characteristic of the friends of Jesus, and it is that they have been especially chosen by Him.

John 15, 16. Jesus said, you did not choose Me, but I chose you. I always have to pause there.

There was a friend of mine in this church years ago. He hadn't been here in ten years. He's a member of a church somewhere. And boy, he objected in that passage. He said, it's not true.

He said, Jesus didn't choose Me. I chose Him. And if I hadn't chose Him, I wouldn't be saved today. He said, well, that's not what the Bible says.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you.

[15:14] In ancient Israel, rabbis had followers. And normally they approached the rabbi stating their desire to serve Him during His earthly ministry.

Well, Jesus reversed all of that. The disciples did not choose Jesus. He chose them. He chose them. Jesus chose each disciple, and I would tell you, He has chosen every person who has ever or will ever believe since then.

The fact that we are chosen eliminates, first of all, all pride. How can you have pride if the Lord chose you, and all pride is eliminated in the salvation experience?

Jesus chose His followers and then appointed them for service. In other words, He set them apart. And we've all been set apart for the particular service that God wants us to render.

Jesus then issues a command that believers are going to the world and bear fruit. food. Nowhere does it say that the Christian life is a spectator sport, and we watch it from the bleachers.

[16:37] It doesn't say that anywhere. It does say we are commanded to go and to make disciples. When we do this, we are producing fruit, or rather, more accurately, Jesus is producing fruit through us.

We've already covered that. The branch never produces any fruit that have the power to do that. It comes from the vine, through the branches. And it is the fruit that I'm talking about that remains for eternity.

It remains forever. I remember a holy pastor, I lost his name, he's the great professor of homiletics, was at Dallas Theological for, Haddon Robinson, whom I've met a couple times.

He told a story, it was sort of a fictional story, but with a great biblical basis. But he talked about this guy, and he was at the judgment, and they were looking for fruit in his life.

And he said it was a little scary because the Lord kept turning the pages and he wouldn't find anything. And he said, do you remember, you were a professor, do you remember that, you finished your service one day, your lesson, and there was a girl sitting in the back of the room that slipped in, and she was crying.

[18:10] And she wouldn't remember the class, and as you walked by, he said, are you okay? And she said, I just wondered if I could have a few moments with you. Dr. Robinson, and he said, well, sure.

And she said, what's the matter? And she said, well, six weeks ago, my father died. And about an hour ago, I got a call that my brother had been killed in a car wreck. And I just, I don't, and so he's starting at that point, ministered to her.

And then the Lord said, do you remember that couple that lived in the young married students' dorm, such and such seminary, and they had a 25-day paycheck and a 31-day month.

And you found out about it, and the cupboard was bare. And you and your wife, Bonnie, put some money in an envelope and sealed it and went over and slipped it under their door about midnight one night.

And in the story, of course, Dr. Robinson, the great professor of homiletics, he was, we're just all at the edge of our chairs, and he said, the Lord said, do you remember that? Hadn't?

[19:18] He said, you know, Lord, I don't remember that. He said, Bonnie's better remembering things than I am. And he said, oh, come on, you surely remember that, don't you? He said, no, I'm sorry, Lord, I don't remember it. And the Lord looked at him, and he says, well, I remember it.

I'll never forget that. And that was a dramatic moment in that message. It's fruit that remains for eternity.

Fruit that remains. Can you imagine in heaven and, you know, the Lord and some of the apostles are getting ready to walk by, so you move over out of the way, right, Mike? You got to get out of the way because I'm going to, and Jesus turns to any one of you and says, do you remember when? And then relate something. Wow, what a moment that would be. So here we have four main points that make up the qualities of Jesus' friends.

The friends of Jesus love each other. The friends of Jesus obey him. The friends of Jesus understand divine truth.

[20:28] And the friends of Jesus have been specially and uniquely chosen by him. Now, I'm going to add a fifth characteristic. And I'm glad I did because we've only been doing this for 20 minutes and the message would have been over.

I don't want you guys off the hook that early. Characteristic number five might be a little longer than the others all put together, but that's okay.

No ball game tonight. Basketball. I'm still rooting for Dallas. If you are a genuine friend of Jesus, are you ready?

The world is going to hate you. That's a bummer. If you're genuine, the world's going to hate you. The New Testament church started on the day of Pentecost. From its very inception, the church of Jesus has faced opposition.

[21:38] The men God used to start the church were from the very outset subject to arrest, persecution, and even death.

And you know, I did, when I taught Acts in here on Sunday morning, I looked at it closely, and I think John and Peter were arrested if not the first day, the next day.

I mean, it didn't take long. But certainly in the first week, these guys were being arrested. This started from the inception of the church.

church. I do know in the first week of the church, John and Peter healed a crippled man and were thrown into prison for their efforts.

Why would you put someone in prison for healing a crippled man? They did it in the name of Jesus. And the world hates Jesus. And the world hates the followers of Jesus.

[22:44] Soon after this, Stephen was arrested for preaching the gospel. He was put on trial before the Sanhedrin, which is the legislative, judicial, and executive branch of the Israeli

government.

In those days, he was put on trial. He was condemned, subsequently stoned to death. A young rabbi there was holding the coats so the guys could throw the rocks harder.

A young rabbi named Saul who later became Paul. And I've said before, maybe you can ask him someday, I don't think he ever recovered from that. I think that's why he would say, I'm the least of them.

I persecuted the church. I really believe that. So Saul was condemned, or rather, Stephen is condemned and stoned to death and became known to this day as the first martyr of the church. Well, let me assure you, millions more would come after him. Millions more. After Stephen's murder, there was an intense and widespread persecution.

[23:59] It broke out against the church. The chief persecutor was the rising star of Jewish leadership, the young and zealous rabbi named Saul of Tarsus.

the church fled in the night. Many of them fled. And guess what happened? A whole bunch of churches got formed everywhere they went.

God used that persecution to spread the gospel and to spread the church. James, the brother of John, was killed by Herod.

Peter was arrested, charged with a capital crime for which he would have been executed, but an angel of the Lord freed him from his prison cell.

All of the disciples with the exception of John were martyred for their faith. And John for his part of course was exiled to the Isle of Patmos which was a barren piece of rock on the Aegean Sea and he lived in a cave.

[25:01] Saul of Tarsus decided he wanted to extend the persecution of the church. So he went to the high priest he received arrest warrants for church leaders that had fled to Damascus.

So he said, well we're going to journey up to Damascus and we're going to shake up the world. And actually the world did get shook up on that journey. Paul's desire was to bring back those church leaders and you know what do we expect was going to happen to them?

You know pay a fine? They're going to be martyred. Paul's going to make sure these guys are killed. See Paul he's trying to impress some folks because I think he's on the fast track to be the high priest.

Very smart guy. Well we know the story. He's struck blind by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is radically saved. He's renamed Paul and becomes the instrument of boldness fiercely proclaiming the gospel of Christ first to the Jewish world later to the Gentiles.

Many times Paul faced arrest and torture. In fact if we had time to review the book of Acts we'd learn that Paul was stoned left for dead beaten jailed fled Thessalonica fled Berea mocked by the Greeks arrested in Corinth beaten in Jerusalem arrested by Rome and ultimately executed by Nero to name a few to name a few.

[26:33] So why did the Jews persecute Christians? First Christians were considered heretics and enemies of God.

Second the Jews feared that the Romans would blame them for Christ's claim to be a king and use that as an excuse to persecute Israel.

So why did the Romans persecute Christians? Christianity was outlawed Christian allegiance to Christ was greater than their allegiance to Caesar. Christians were considered disloyal to the state. Christians were considered treasonous because they would not worship the goddess Roma or bow down to Caesar. And then the biggie, Christians refused their annual duty to proclaim Caesar Lord and burn incense to him.

and probably if they'd done that one thing they'd been left alone. But you're like here, can you imagine having to bow down one day a year to some human guy, a governor, a president, or whatever?

[27:44] We can't do that, can we? We can't do that. And so it has gone down through the ages. Christian persecution has been around for 2,000 years.

it will be with us until Jesus returns for his church. And actually there's many a ministry devoted to the persecuted church, including VLM, that would suggest that Christian persecution is probably more intense today than it ever has been in history.

One estimate says that 156,000 Christians per year are killed because they refuse to deny Christ. And when you break that number down, that works out to about one Christian every three and a

half minutes somewhere in the world.

Somewhere in the world. You have a 30 minute Bible study on Sunday morning and ten brothers or sisters have been killed somewhere. Now, all of what we will study occurred the night before the Lord's crucifixion.

up to this point, he's been giving his disciples a message of comfort and hope. He's told them of his great love for them. Now the Lord is going to balance out this message of comfort, of blessing, with a warning of the great hostility that lies ahead for the disciples who are going to follow the shepherd.

[29 : 16] It's not going to be a smooth road. I can get pretty aggravated at the extreme charismatic guys, come to Jesus and get your Rolls Royce. Guys, it doesn't work that way.

It doesn't work that way. Earlier, Jesus had given this instruction to his followers, this I command you that you love one another. So why does the world hate the followers of Christ?

And three reasons will be covered. Number one, the world rejects those who are not a part of it. John 15 starting in verse 18. Jesus says, the world hates you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own.

But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this, the world hates you. That's strong language coming from the creator God of the universe.

[30 : 21] And again, we speak of the world, we're not talking about rivers and streams and mountains. We're talking about the world system controlled by Satan and infected with demons, with sin, and with followers of Satan.

It is the world of fallen mankind. This world is comprised of unregenerate people that are under the control of Satan.

And Satan hates God. It stands to reason, would it not, that Satan hates the people God has chosen unto himself. And in fact, I want to add this little thought.

The devil's hatred for the people of God may be just as intense or more so than his hatred for the Lord. Satan can't touch God.

so he tries to destroy those that are the apple of God's eye, and that's believers. And of course, we know also that nothing will befall us that's not within God's sovereign will.

[31 : 28] But Satan hadn't figured it out. He hadn't read that part of the book, or he doesn't understand it. Peter, of course, describes Satan as a prowling lion seeking whom he may devour.

I used to think that the devil and the demons hung out in places like Skid Row, bars, and places of darkness. And then one day I realized, I came to the realization, that's really not necessary.

He's got those folks exactly where he wants them. Satan hangs out in churches, in the study of pastors and ministers, and anywhere believers gather.

Anywhere believers gather. Now, follow me on this. If the ruler of this world, Satan, hates the followers of Jesus, does it not stand to reason that the world will also hate them as well?

Because Satan is the god of this world, little g. And that's logical. The world hates us because we are not part of his world. We're not part of his world.

[32 : 36] Now, our very lives are supposed to be lived in a fashion that brings condemnation to the evil works of the world's people. Several verses of Scripture speak to this.

Let me give you two. Proverbs 29, 27. An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked.

dead. And then 1 John 3, 12, for this reason did he, that's Cain, slay him, that's his brother Abel, because Cain's deeds were evil and his brothers were righteous.

But what a contrast with the world of Satan and God's people. Right there, when we only had four people on earth, and one was a murderer and one was a murder victim.

Christians are hated by the world because they were chosen by God to be unworldly. The chosen of our God are not to do the things of this world.

[33 : 43] We live in this world on a temporary basis. We're ambassadors. Our citizenship is in the heavenlies. It's in the heavenlies.

This isn't home, and we're not home. if you want to start a fight, just tell people you've been chosen or elected to eternal life by God.

And you can start a fight. You will be hated. That will even start a fight in most churches. It will. The unchosen tares cannot stand the chosen wheat of God.

You know, that's original to me. I'm going to put that on a bumper sticker. The unchosen, if you'll order yours early, give me \$25, I'll try to remember which one of you gave me that.

The unchosen tares cannot stand the chosen wheat of God. Reason number two, the world hates believers because it hated Jesus. Again, you know that it, the world, has hated me before it hated you.

[34:50] Remember the word I said to you, a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

We're the servants of Christ. Jesus was hated by the world. Does it stand to reason that his faithful bond slaves will also be hated by the same hostile world?

It says a slave is not above his master. Anything this Christ hating world did to Jesus, it's capable of doing to his children if it is the will of God.

If it's the permissive will of God. If the people of the world hated Jesus, they're going to hate us. If the people of the world persecuted Jesus, they will persecute us.

If the people of the world killed Jesus, they will strive to kill us as well. Now, men die every day for their allegiance to Christ Jesus. In fact, we identify with Jesus through the fellowship of his suffering.

[36:00] Suffering or persecution is the common denominator among believers. It's a common denominator. And if you're like me, you probably often think, well, I haven't suffered persecution for my faith.

Be godlier and it will happen. And I can prove that. 2 Timothy 3.12, Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Be more godly, it will come.

Now, that is an absolute promise from God. Become more like him in your daily living and you will suffer persecution at the hands of a Christ hating, Christ rejecting world.

In fact, living more godly will get you in trouble in some churches. In some churches across the world, across our land. But in the midst of all this, not all this bleak.

The passage also says, if they kept my word, they would keep yours also. What did the Lord mean by that? In spite of the fact that the vast majority of people would reject the message of the disciples and all who would come after them in faith, some would believe.

[37:18] Some are going to believe. Paul said, I've come that some might be saved. Even in our day, we have the joy of seeing some come to faith and that far outweighs the sorrow caused by the hatred and the hostility of those who despise Jesus and reject the gospel.

Richard Wurmbrand, 14 years in a Romanian prison, led his chief persecutor, who used to beat him, he laid him to the Lord. Saw him years later and said, I know you.

He said, yes, you do. I used to beat you. He said, you came to Jesus. Yes, I did. Still clinging to him. Third reason, the world hates believers because the world does not know God.

Because all these things he will do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sinned, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

He who hates me hates my father also. I love these guys saying, I don't believe in Jesus, but I do believe in God the Father. Well, not the true one.

[38:36] If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sinned. But now they have both seen and hated me and my father as well.

But they have done this to fulfill the word that was written in their law, they hated me without a cause. The ultimate target of those being persecuted in faith is not individual Christians.

We just have to be in the way. We're in the bullseye. The ultimate target is Jesus himself. This was the warning that Jesus gave in the Beatitudes, Matthew 5.11.

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

You're blessed when people do that to you because you have taken a stand for our Lord Jesus Christ. in the Olivet Discourse, and if you don't know what about that show up on Wednesday nights, the pastor is bringing us through the Olivet Discourse, the Lord said that believers would be delivered up to face tribulation and that they would be killed and hated by all nations because of the name of Jesus.

[39:59] And I want you to make a note here. It says all nations. all nations. I cannot read in the Bible an exception for America.

And the further we drift from our moorings of the Lord and of the Constitution based on Judeo-Christian principles, the closer persecution comes. But the ultimate reason for persecution at the hands of the world is because the world does not know the true God.

To start with, unbelievers are dead in trespasses and sin. How many times have you read that in the Bible? Dead in trespasses and sin. I never really thought about that once I was reading and a guy said to be dead means the inability to do anything.

You can't breathe. You can't roll over. You can't crawl out of a coffin. You're dead. You can't do anything. So, unbelievers are described as being dead in trespasses and sins.

So, we've already lost common ground with them. The Bible says we've been made alive. Alive in Christ. What a contrast. I can't remember who it was, but they said the world is filled with walking zombies.

[41:22] People are dead walking around and they don't know they're dead, but they're dead in trespasses and sin. The Jews with whom Jesus lived thought they loved God.

But in failing to recognize Jesus as the long awaited Messiah, as the prophesied Messiah, they proved their hatred for the true God of their fathers.

Anyone who rejects Christ does not and cannot know God the Father. Christ and the Father are one.

And that encompasses about 97% of the world. You can start feeling a little isolated in a hostile world. Anyone who hates Jesus, and that's the majority of the world, hates God also.

Yet all of this is done with the view of God's sovereign plan. God has a plan. The world's hatred for Jesus was a fulfillment of Scripture.

[42:33] Jesus said, I would be hated without a cause. There was nothing in the words or works of Jesus that should have generated such hostility. The hatred of Jesus and his people is a testimony to a fallen, sin-controlled world in which we find ourselves.

So is this a time to be depressed? or to live as secret believers? Maybe they won't find out who we are? We don't want to antagonize unbelieving people around us.

Well, may it never be. Jesus says in Matthew 5, verse 10 to 12, blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

righteousness. Now let me pause there for a second. I don't even have this in my notes. This is free. You can be obnoxious and be persecuted. We're not talking about that.

Jesus says, blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

[43:53] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

And that's from the Beatitudes, the very blueprint, I think, of Christian living. Thank you.