

Blessed Are The Persecuted

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 June 2023

Preacher: Roger Cryan

- [0 : 00] The last Sunday evening, Pastor John led us in a memorial service of the Lord's Supper. Memorial service is a service in which we honor and remember someone we love.
- And in this case, it's our Lord Jesus Christ. And we need really such reminders in our world. Really little regard is given to the great work that Jesus Christ did.
- On that day on the cross, and as God's people, we have the honor of regularly proclaiming His death until He comes again.
- And He is worthy of such an honor through our observance of the Lord's Supper. But we also need that reminder of all that He accomplished for us through His death and the shedding of His blood on the cross.
- And during the service, Pastor John directed our attention to Psalm 78. And in that Psalm, the Ephraimites are mentioned.
- [1 : 12] And although they were prepared for battle, when the time and the day of battle came, they turned away, even though they were prepared.
- Well, prepared outwardly. And because they weren't prepared inwardly, with right meditations, right thoughts, as I said, they turned away, turned back on the day of battle.
- Well, what happened? Verse 11 of that Psalm 78 says, They forgot His works and the wonders that He had shown them. And then in verse 42, it says, They did not remember His power for the day when He redeemed them from the foe.
- I think most people like to think that forgetting is something that just happens to a person. They're passive in the whole process. We see that with our kids sometimes.
- And we say, Hey, you were supposed to do this. I forgot. You know, can't you understand? I just forgot. And it's like, this just came upon me.
- [2 : 20] And I bear no responsibility for forgetting and not getting this done because I forgot. You can understand that. It happens to us. Well, I don't think it's as passive as we like to make it out to be in reality.
- The person has a very active role in the matter of forgetting and not remembering. The person who has forgotten something at some point was actively not taking steps to remember in most cases.
- And when that happens, there are outward actions the person does or doesn't do that result from their forgetting and not remembering.
- And in the case of the Ephraimites, they turned back on the day of battle because they forgot God's works and the wonders that He had shown them.
- As it said in verse 11, They rebelled against God when they were passing through the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert because they didn't remember His power or the day when He redeemed them from the foe.
- [3 : 32] So there were certain things they could have been doing prior to these times that would have enabled them to remember. The wonders that God had done in His power would have been fresh on their mind.

And they would have pursued the situation in a very different way. So if we're going to learn, in this case, from the bad example of the Ephraimites, we need to take steps to remember the wonders of God Himself, the truth about God, and really the wonders that He has done, especially in our redemption and the deliverance that has been accomplished through Him, the deliverance from our foe, Satan, especially if we're going to live in the blessed reality of our next beatitude that we're looking at this morning in Matthew 5, 10 and 11, which says, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. So we see this connection of blessing in times of persecution.

The practice of rejoicing in times of persecution. We've been approaching these beatitudes as paradoxes. And so when we think of blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, doesn't seem like something that should go together.

[5 : 20] Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely. Again, blessedness doesn't seem to fit with persecution and probably doesn't make sense if you're looking at it apart from a relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Or if you're one like the Ephraimites who have forgotten the wonders of God and the great truths of God and what He has done.

So this morning we want to be reminded by Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5 so that when the time of persecution does come upon us, then it will come upon us.

In various degrees, at certain times, it will come upon us. We want to be sure that we are ready so that we don't draw back like the Ephraimites did when the time of battle comes or the persecution comes.

But rather we stand firm. And not just stand firm, but enjoy the blessedness of living distinctively as members of the kingdom of Christ in those times of persecution.

[6 : 36] So it might mean that we've got to go through quite a change in our mindset in this whole matter of persecution and how we move through it and how we look at it instead of something as we'll avoid it at all costs and when it comes we end up discouraged and in despair.

Now God and Jesus Christ is presenting to His disciples and to us today that we can move through such times in a much different way, even to the point of it being a time of blessedness.

So first of all, we need to consider the persecution. What was the reason for the persecution that comes upon the disciples then but will certainly come upon us as children of God because the blessedness or the happiness, the bliss, that's how we understand that whole word of blessed are you.

But the blessedness that we experience in times of persecution is directly connected to the reason for which we are undergoing the persecution.

And as we look at verse 10, the first reason is for righteousness' sake. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

[8 : 02] Now let's remember first who Jesus is describing in His teaching. He's teaching about those who are already His disciples. That's a point that's been emphasized over and over again throughout these past few weeks.

It's those individuals who are poor in spirit. They recognize and have recognized and continue to recognize in and of themselves their destitute condition because of sin.

Even the ongoing sin that remains in us certainly is taken care of in Jesus Christ, but we recognize it's still there. And in and of ourselves, we do not have the strength to really win the daily victory over that sin.

These are people who mourn over their sin. They don't celebrate it. They are meek and humble before God and how they live out their faith in Christ. They have tasted of the goodness of God and now they hunger and thirst even more for righteousness.

They want more of what they already have learned in Jesus Christ and have experienced in this relationship and aren't satisfied with what they have but want more.

[9 : 17] They desire more of that righteousness. They have benefited from the mercy of God and now they themselves are merciful toward others.

They have new pure hearts and make it their ambition now to daily, in their daily lives, to live out that purity, to be holy even as God is holy.

They have been justified by faith in Jesus Christ who is the great peacemaker, all that he did on the cross in order for us to have peace with God.

Now they have peace with God and make it their goal to show others the way of peace with God, but not just with God, but with one another and others as well in different relationships.

So the individual described by Jesus is humbly living out the righteous life of Christ. Christ in his daily life, living distinctively as a member of the kingdom of Christ and reflecting that righteous life of Christ in his daily walk.

[10 : 21] And what does this person receive from the world for living that righteous life of Christ? Well, he's persecuted for righteousness' sake. Jesus clarifies the reason for persecution even further making the connection between the persecution and that they were experiencing and that they were going to experience and himself.

In verse 11, when he says, blessed are you when people revile you, persecute you, falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me or on account of me.

Because the disciple loves Jesus and endeavors to live a life that pleases and honors, glorifies God, he's persecuted on account of Jesus. The disciple of Jesus, he isn't trying to be obnoxious.

We know that happens at times with those who proclaim to be believers in Christ, but that's not how we want to present Christ in our witness. No, they're not trying to be obnoxious or lift himself up in pride like the Pharisees did.

We've been learning about that in the morning service and during some of these Sunday school lessons when they went up to pray, they declared that they were glad that they weren't like the other sinners, the tax collectors, but had a righteousness of their own and were pleasing to God.

[11 : 55] The disciple of Jesus Christ tries to live a life worthy of God, worthy of the Gospel, a life in which God is glorified in all that He does and even for the good of others seeking to live this life out that they might come to know Christ as they have.

And again, how does the world respond? Negatively with persecution. The reason for the persecution is those who are still part of Satan's domain of darkness, they don't like the righteous life of Jesus Christ.

They don't like the message of the Gospel that Jesus exclusively is the way, the truth, and the life and no man comes to the Father except through Him.

They don't like the message that there is no other name under heaven given among men that they might be saved and avoid and be delivered from eternal damnation.

To the one who does not follow Jesus, the steadfast, righteous life of the Christian is a constant reminder that they are not measuring up to the righteous life of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 11] And it cuts against the grain of their ungodly desires and actions. John put it this way in John 3.19, And this is the judgment.

The light has come into the world and the people love the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. And we were all there at one time in all of our lives and at times we try and think back.

And I was just talking to somebody this past week. I can't remember. Oh, it's our friend from Boonville. You haven't met them, meet them. They're with us this morning talking about their son as we were visiting with them and his life prior to coming to Christ.

Did he ever share with you of what he was thinking at the time when he was rejecting Christ? So I'll go back and ask him a little bit more on that. But it's interesting to think back prior to your life in Christ and what was I thinking at the time about Christ, if I even knew Christ, and the way of righteousness.

What was my thoughts toward that? Well, for the most part, at some degree and at some level, there's a hatred toward that which is righteous for what Jesus Christ stands for.

[14 : 28] Even though the disciple of Jesus is well-intentioned, the unbeliever lashes out against him or her in various ways, just as they did to Jesus when he lived his righteous life in his day.

And the unbelievers can't lash out at Jesus, so they'll lash out at those who represent him. And again, you've probably experienced that if you've presented the gospel in any form to an unbeliever.

And I can remember a time doing that with a couple guys I was working with. They were sharing all their ungodly thoughts about life. And so I mentioned something about my thoughts about life.

And immediately they took offense to that, that I would bring something like that up. Or I can remember working on a construction site. And again, we were sitting around at break time and the guys, and there were some ladies there too talking about how miserable their marriages were and so on and so forth.

And I said, you know, really since I've been married, that's been the best days of my life. They just unloaded on me like, you've got to be kidding me.

[15 : 42] And so on and on it goes. The different forms, different levels and degrees. You know, it's the kind of witness cuts against the grain. They don't appreciate hearing those kind of things.

Well, Jesus identifies for His disciples a little bit more specifically the form that persecution will come upon them. In verse 10, He just uses the word persecuted.

The idea of the word is zealously persecute, hunt down, to harass, trouble, molest. So Jesus is telling them there will come a time when those who want to live righteously for Christ will face strong opposition from those who are opposed to Christ and His teaching.

And those who oppose Christ and righteousness will zealously persecute, hunt down, seek them out with the intention to harass and trouble the disciple of Christ.

And Paul wrote to Timothy about such times that were to come in 2 Timothy 3.12. He said, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

[16 : 56] There will come that time. It may not be constant, like it says in our Beatitude, blessed are you when people persecute you.

So it's not like it will happen all the time, but when it does come upon you, understand that there's a different approach, different mindset you can have toward what is happening to you.

It can be a time of blessedness for you when that happens. But as Paul was telling Timothy, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

And what form will the persecution take? Well, now in verse 11, Jesus becomes more specific with his disciples. And he personalizes this with the disciples in verse 11 as he uses the word you.

Blessed are you now. In verse 10 it was those. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Now it's blessed are you when people revile you.

[18 : 02] So this would certainly be an alert to them of the opposition and persecution that was to come upon them as it already really was coming upon Jesus in the opposition that he was receiving from the Pharisees.

They already didn't like what he was representing and the information that he was presenting to the people about them and their form of righteousness.

Well, in this case, in verse 11, what form would it take? Well, he says that they will revile you to defame, rail at, chide, taunt, cast in the teeth or in the face, suffer reproach, revile, abrade.

To cast insults is to throw abusive words in the face of an opponent, to mock viciously. Of course, we can see the examples of this that happened to Jesus Christ.

Certainly he was attacked physically, but also reviled in John 8.48 after Jesus confronted the Jews and the scribes and the Pharisees about their opposition to him.

[19 : 14] There was a desire to kill him and they reviled and defamed him. It says, the Jews answered him, Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

So the Samaritan certainly was a way to defame Jesus Christ for they were looked at as outcasts and those who were living and teaching contrary to the truth that they had received as God's special people.

So it wasn't certainly a compliment saying that he was a Samaritan casting these things in his face and accusing him of having a demon.

And of course, the opposition from there just grew. And it was their goal now to hunt him down and to get rid of him and kill him.

In Matthew 26, after Jesus declared his deity before Caiaphas and the council, the high priest said Jesus uttered blasphemy. In verse 67 it says, Then they spit in his face and struck him.

[20 : 23] And some slapped him saying, Prophecy to us, you Christ. Who is it that struck you? So that kind of mocking of, Okay, you say you're a prophet and you're the great prophet.

But slapping him across the face and saying, Now prophecy to us and tell us who hit you. That kind of mocking of our Lord.

Well, it continued even as he hung on the cross. A little longer section of Scripture, Matthew 27. And those who passed by derided him.

Just notice the various words that show this kind of reviling of Jesus Christ. They derided him. Wagging their heads and saying, You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.

You know, casting these things in his face. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross. So also the chief priests with the scribes and the elders mocked him saying, He saved others, He cannot save himself.

[21 : 31] He is the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now if he desires him.

For he said, I am the Son of God and the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. So Jesus was well acquainted with persecution and the reviling and the mocking that came upon him for righteousness sake.

For his connection and his declaration of his relationship with the Father. So you're beginning to see the connection with us for righteousness sake.

You know, we will be persecuted, mocked, reviled. Or on account of Jesus, on account of our relationship with him and seeking to live out a righteous life, a distinctively different life as members of the kingdom of Christ.

Well, it was something that his disciples certainly would have to prepare for and become well, because they too would become well acquainted with this type of persecution.

[22 : 45] They too would be reviled and persecuted and people would utter all kinds of evil against them falsely. So the form of persecution, they'll revile you and then it says they'll persecute you.

We've already taken a look at that word. Then it says they will utter all kinds of evil against you falsely. So this is the idea of slander. Since Jesus' disciples live righteous lives, the accusers must utter all kinds of evil against them falsely.

They'll come up with all kinds of false accusations. And this came upon the people of God even hundreds of years before Jesus came into the world.

I just selected one example of Daniel. He certainly lived a distinctively different life in his day, even in bondage where he was at in a city, in a country that was really not his own.

But he lived that distinctively different life in his day and others who were not followers of the one true God. They couldn't find fault against Daniel.

[23 : 57] They didn't like the life that he was living. They didn't like the prosperity that was in Daniel's life. So they set a trap for him using his faithfulness and prayer to God as an occasion against him.

The king signed the edict that anyone who prayed to any other God than the king, they would be thrown to the lions. And Daniel remained faithful in the face of the opposition, the persecution.

And he was thrown into the lion's den and God delivered him. Just one example from the Old Testament going back to Jesus. As he stood before the council leading up to his crucifixion, the people brought false accusations again.

There was nothing that they could accuse him of that he ever did wrong. In Mark 14, it says, Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none living a righteous life to please the Father.

For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. But then, in following up on the teaching of Jesus to his disciples, yes, it was to come upon his disciples.

[25 : 16] And I just selected Stephen as an example where they would utter all kinds of false accusations against him.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. But they could not withstand the wisdom and spirit with which he was speaking.

They didn't agree with it. They cut it against the grain of what they wanted to hear and what the real truth was about their lives. Uncomfortable, very uncomfortable with what he was doing.

But they couldn't really withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he was speaking. So what did they do? Then they secretly instigated men who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.

And they set up false witnesses who said, This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law. And so it happened. Not just against Stephen, but many other of his disciples over and over again.

[26 : 20] You can see it in the scriptures. You read through the Gospels and the book of Acts and the epistles as well. And the churches and what they had to endure in the face of great opposition.

We can read other books. Fox's Book of Martyrs. Maybe some of you looked at that. I couldn't read through the whole book. It was just too much to read of what the saints of God endured and how many of them died and how it's still happening even in our own day throughout the world.

and even happening more and more in our own country as well toward those who are unwilling to submit to what the majority says is the accepted norm of what is right today.

People elevate, whether it's science, psychology, one's own personal experience as the only reliable determiners of what is true. And the opposition will come upon the individual who wants to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and proclaim truth from His Word as authoritative and sufficient for life.

And Jesus prepares His disciples by teaching them when such persecution comes, they stand in the position of blessing. So now we bring this whole concept in.

[27 : 48] Blessed are you when you're persecuted, when you're reviled for righteousness' sake or on account of Christ. So we need to consider and remember the blessing.

If we're going to be steadfast and faithful in a time of trouble and persecution, and Jesus reveals what produces the happiness and the joy. Again, this is something we can't forget.

Again, the Ephraimites, they were ready for battle outwardly but not inwardly. And when the time came, they didn't move forward in the battle.

They withdrew because they forgot. They didn't remember. So let's not be active in forgetting. But let's be sure we're taking steps now to remember what we need to know for when the persecution comes, we're not drawing back like the Ephraimites.

But we're remembering and we're remembering that in this time of persecution, there actually is a blessing in this. Jesus said, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[29 : 02] Let's take a look at some of this blessing. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And this is something important to remember. The opposition and persecution comes from people who are communicating to the child of God we don't like what you're saying.

We don't like the message you're proclaiming. It offends us. It's offensive to us. We don't like the way you're living. It's contrary to the way the majority of us are living.

You're out of step with the rest of the populace. You need to change the way you think about certain things of life and what is right and what is wrong.

The way you think and live puts you on the outside. of the majority of people in our community or certain oppressed people in the community. It puts you on the outside of how we operate now as a corporation and what we want to communicate as a corporation to our purchasing public.

You need to sign that you agree with our statement of inclusion. You're on the outside of what we stand for and teach in our school or our college or our university.

[30 : 19] Beyond the outside of what our federal government stands for and what it's endeavoring to establish as law in our country that's good for our country. The individual who's committed to living distinctively as a member of the kingdom of Christ will find himself excluded more and more.

And Jesus says to his disciples theirs is the kingdom of heaven. As a follower of Jesus Christ you possess citizenship in a greater kingdom than what is offered in this world among men and the governments of men.

With a greater king who provides a greater counsel for life to a greater community of people. That's what we're taking into the time of persecution.

When the world is communicating to us this message that you're on the outside of what is accepted as the norm in this world we can say you're right.

I am on the outside. In fact I am part of a greater kingdom that represents something far greater than what you're saying I'm missing out on.

[31 : 34] And the ruler that I follow is far greater than any ruler in this world that is threatening me in the way I want to live day by day.

And actually I belong to a greater community of people that spans time and locations.

So this is the mindset we're remembering and bringing in and part of the blessedness that is ours. And that is a huge blessing to remember.

But there's even more to remember. He says your reward is great in heaven. We have much to be thankful for now as members of the kingdom of Christ.

Certainly. There's a lot that we can enjoy but there's much more for us yet to come. the reward is greater than anything that we would be asked to sacrifice now.

[32 : 37] Romans 5, 1 and 2 Paul said that those who are justified by faith in Christ have peace with God. And the result is that they rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

There's something beyond that brings rejoicing to the heart. Rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God.

And Jesus made reference to this in his prayer to the Father. He said, Father, I desire that they also whom you've given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you've given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

So there's a glory that Jesus enjoys with the Father that will be ours as well. That Jesus is looking forward to the time that they will be joined together with him.

Father, I want them so much to be able to enjoy this glory. So any glory you think that you might be losing in this world by following Jesus Christ cannot match the future glory that we will be able to share and enjoy with Jesus Christ and the Father.

[33 : 46] That has to be in our minds at those times when we think and the temptation is before us that I might be losing out on something. You won't be losing out on anything.

There's a greater glory waiting for us. 2 Corinthians 4 16-18 So we don't lose heart. Yeah, time of persecution.

We don't lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. See that distinction there. That which enables us to move on.

Yeah, the outward body is feeling the effects of the persecution. The affliction. But the inner man is being renewed day by day.

And what is the truth that he's actively remembering for this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

[34 : 46] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen for the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Paul said that in Romans 8-18 I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

What a blessing and a truth that we need to remember. But there's another blessing as well. When we're persecuted we are in good company.

In verse 12 he says rejoice and be glad for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Who were they? Not again I disselected a few. Elijah he was threatened by wicked Queen Jezebel after his confrontation with the prophets of Baal and Mount Carmel.

[35 : 53] He ran for his life. Amos was insulted by the chief priests and told never to prophesy there again. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest he was stoned to death for rebuking the people who turned aside to worship idols.

John the Baptist he had the courage publicly to rebuke Herod for marrying Herodias his brother's wife and he was beheaded by Herod and of course Jesus Christ he came to serve to give his life a ransom for many and Isaiah 53 he was oppressed he was afflicted that he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before it shears is silent so he opened not his mouth and the list could go on and on the point is that these are people of honor in God's sight and we have the privilege to be named among them in those times of persecution so when the persecution comes what are you going to do?

are you going to side yourself with the individual I don't want to lose him as my friend and lose the relationship you know so I can't say anything about Jesus and stand for righteousness or are you going to stand with Elijah and Amos and John the Baptist and listen they gave all to speak I would rather be in the company of these individuals than these individuals and who knows if I stand with these this person might recognize that this person has something of greater value than what I'm enjoying now if he's willing to lay aside this honor glory relationship whatever for what he believes about Jesus Christ there might be something to this that I need to consider well persecution will come upon God's people so now we need to think about how are we going to respond to this when it comes well first of all we need to remember the blessing

I've already gone over all that yours is the kingdom of heaven great is your reward in heaven you're honored to be in the company of others who've been persecuted but now we go on in verse 12 it says rejoice and be glad the idea here is to be filled with leap forth with unrestrained exuberant gladness what I'm being persecuted exactly because your mind is in the process of remembering these blessings I can have a heart that rejoices with exuberance in that time it means to exalt to rejoice greatly to be overjoyed be exceeding glad the literal meaning is to skip and to jump with happy excitement we're not doing it because of the pain the suffering that's happening to the people but because of the blessing the greater riches that are there that does have an effect on us outwardly and how we're responding various other translations be exceeding glad be tremendously glad keep on leaping for ecstasy

David rejoiced with such gladness when he realized the Lord was always with me therefore my heart is glad my whole being rejoices the Philippian jailer rejoiced in this manner he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God Peter wrote and experienced persecution but rejoiced as well 1 Peter 1 8 writing about the people that he was sending this letter to though you do not now see him which is our condition you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory and these people who are people already experiencing persecution but were on the threshold the doorstep of even greater persecution so they needed this reminder yes this is what you're going through but you're facing it with great joy and glory and this is what you'll need to carry through with you in the greater persecution that is ahead so our rejoicing and gladness is not in the pain and suffering but again for righteousness sake on account of Jesus because our reward is great in heaven again we're in the company of many others but how else should we respond well don't be surprised and Peter had to write to these

[40 : 53] Peter again in his second letter he says beloved don't be surprised at the fiery trial that's to come upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed you see how this truth comes to bear in our thinking so we're preparing ourselves and Peter preparing these people and setting aside in our minds meditating on that which is true that will carry us through not with sadness and discouragement through the persecution but with exceeding joy that is the potential that is the reality for us the next time you're faced with some temptation to turn aside and not proceed into the battle remember the truth let that come to bear in your mind so that you can proceed into the time of challenge to your faith in Christ well some things

I'll have to skip here let me go through quickly what else is the response consider it a gift from God Philippians 129 for it's been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him we love that thank you God that you've given this great gift of faith in Christ that I can enjoy that's not only the thing that's been given to me but also the supper for his sake we carry that same spirit of rejoicing and thanksgiving when the people at work or the neighbor whoever in the family even condemn us mock us respond with God thank you that I can be in such company of Jesus Christ in his sufferings well another don't be frightened to the point of turning back Philippians 127 and 28 only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or I'm absent

I might hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit yeah let's move on to the next one what else do we do we can pray pray for one another Paul said in Ephesians 6 18 through 19 praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplication to that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints and also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel prayers are very important part for us as we move from here on a Sunday to go through our week that we are praying for one another regularly as we're moving into a world that does not accept righteousness in the person of Jesus Christ are we praying for one another that we would stand firm do you have a list of the members of the church that you refer to each day and now

I'm going to pray for these two people this day that they would stand firm for Christ and righteousness we need to be doing this this is a response that we have the people of God but also pray for those who persecute you Matthew 5 44 but I say to you love your enemies pray for those who persecute you my time is gone you want the rest of the responses you'll have to ask me and I'll send them to you but the teaching is blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake blessed are you when people will revile you persecute falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven for the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you let's pray that God would help us remember these truths great God in heaven oh thank you for Jesus what he went through how he prepared his disciples how he prepared us with such teaching that we desperately need now I pray that by the help of your spirit we take up your word and make it a firm part of our meditation because all of us are going to leave here this day and go different ways and we need to stand firm for Jesus

Christ and so we pray that you would help us each to do that looking forward to the time that we will share the ultimate glory of being in the presence of Jesus Christ in his name we pray amen thank you so Thank you.