

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: MARCH 21-27, 2026

SERIES INFO

Upside Down

Most of us already know what the good life looks like in our culture... success, comfort, confidence, control. We don't have to be taught what to chase; we're already running. In the opening lines of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus disrupts all of it. He blesses weakness, grief, humility, mercy, purity, peacemaking, and faithfulness under pressure... qualities we usually avoid, ignore, or see as setbacks. This series slows us down long enough to notice the gap between what we chase and what Jesus calls blessed. Not to pressure people. Not to shame people. But to help people see clearly. Each week, we'll unpack one of Jesus' statements and let it confront our assumptions about the good life... one attitude at a time.

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

- What is one of the most ridiculous trends you went along with during your growing up years, just because you wanted to fit in? Why did you go along with it?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest "takeaways" you had from the message this week on "bless are the persecuted for the kingdom of heaven is theirs?"

DISCUSSION

1. You are Going to Create Tension

Scripture: Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-20

We are often surprised when the world doesn't respect our spirituality or core faith beliefs. Jesus bluntly told His disciples that the world will hate them. That warning carries over to us today as His disciples. He said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first." This is what we can expect when we align our lives with Christ's. What He experienced, we will experience. We often think that being a Christ-follower should make our lives easier ... smoother. But Jesus says, "If you follow me closely, friction with the world's standards will increase." It's not just that the world dislikes or hates Christians ... it's that a Christ-shaped life quietly confronts a world shaped completely by something else.

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

1) Where do you feel tension the most right now in being a Christian?

2) Have you ever felt, as a Christian, that this world at times doesn't feel quite like home to you? Why do you think that is the case?

2. Persecution by Today's Standards

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-16

The reality is that everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Persecution is not a sign something is wrong in your relationship with God—it is often a sign that something is right. If you take your faith seriously in a world that does not recognize faith, there will be friction. The more your life reflects Christ, the more it will contrast with the world around you.

1) What does living a godly life mean?

2) What could possibly be the purpose of pressure from the culture in your life regarding your faith?

3) Why does Jesus say that you are blessed when you are persecuted?

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3. Standing Firm in Persecution

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Peter 2:23; 1 Peter 4:19

The world needs Christians to do more than just blend into the crowd. Christians are those that point to the true north of truth, even when everything else seems to be in chaos. As believers, we know that following Jesus will cost us something, but what we gain in Christ is far greater than what we lose in this world. When we as believers face persecution and trials based on our faith, we are encouraged to sustain our identity in Christ, and to deepen who we trust. Jesus shows us how to absorb the injustice without losing His identity. He trusted God to vindicate Him, and His Father did just that.

1) As Jesus as our example, how do we respond to persecution when it comes into our lives?

2) Where am I tempted to defend myself instead of entrusting myself to God?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Where in my life is it most evident that I belong to Jesus?
- What am I afraid might happen if I take a clear stand for Christ and His way of life?
- What is one small step of obedience or boldness I can take this week?

PRAYER

Lord, when we are tempted to stay silent, give us courage.

When we feel misunderstood, give us peace.

When we are pressured, give us strength to stand firm.

Teach us to respond like Jesus, with grace, truth, and trust in You.

We entrust ourselves to You right now. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.