#### PERSECUTION

#### Don Krow

Today we're going to look at the subject of persecution and the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:16-23. He wanted to prepare His disciples for opposition, so He wanted them to know, "Look, opposition is going to come." All those who live godly, Christ-centered lives will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). It's not something you can rebuke. The enemy may be behind it, but persecution is part of standing for righteousness. The Bible says those who live godly in Christ will suffer persecution. Jesus is preparing His disciples by saying in Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." The word "behold" is saying, "Listen to Me, guys. I want you to get this. I'm going to send you as sheep in the midst of wolves." Sheep are the most defenseless, dependent animals I know of. A sheep doesn't have fangs, doesn't have venom like a snake—it has no defense whatsoever. The only defense it really has is the shepherd.

A shepherd's responsibility is to keep wolves out of the flock of sheep, but Jesus is saying the very opposite: "I'm sending you out as sheep into a pack of wolves." Isn't that amazing? The reason He is saying it is that He's preparing them for opposition. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." There will be opposition. Part of the Christian life is opposition, and Jesus wants you to know that. He wants to prepare you for that, and He says, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents" (Matthew 10:16). That word "wise" means in every situation you will not needlessly incite problems but will have wisdom that you carry with you. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Then He says in Matthew 10:17, "But beware of men." The enemy is going to use men. Ephesians 2:2 says that there is, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Satan is going to use men to oppose us, to oppose the purposes of Jesus Christ, and to oppose the Word of God. "Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" (10:17). Paul said, "Five times I was scourged, five times I was beaten with thirty-nine lashes, because of Jesus Christ, and the message of Jesus Christ, and the message of the gospel" (2 Corinthians 11:23-24). Jesus said you will be brought before governors—even the government will sometimes be used to oppose the purposes of Jesus Christ. You'll be brought before governors and kings for His sake, for a testimony to them or against them.

I'm a teacher at Charis Bible College, and in teaching a course on evangelism, I was showing the students how they could use an evangelism letter, a personal testimony of what God has done in their lives to reach out to the lost. I did one myself and sent it out to 50-100 people. Just a couple of days after that, I got a phone call from a woman in town named Marianne. She said, "You're not going to get away with it; you can't tell me about Jesus Christ; you can't get away with this. Where did you get my name anyway?" I said, "Well, I got it right out of the phone book." She said, "You're a liar! My name and address are not in the phone book!" I said, "Well, that's where I got it." She said, "Tomorrow the police will contact you." I thought to myself, "Is the Bible really true?" And the police did contact me the next day. I spent about two hours with a policeman, Captain Shields, trying, in a sense, to interrogate me.

Do you see what I'm saying? When there are criminals out on the street, they spent two hours of their time. Why? For the sake of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the Gospel. Is the Word of God really true? If you stand on the Word of God, if you're bold to witness, if you're bold to proclaim Jesus, if you're bold to live a righteous life before men, is the Bible true? It's exactly true. There will be opposition, because there are forces of evil, just like there are forces of good. And Jesus wanted His disciples to be prepared.

He said in Matthew 10:19, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought [be not anxious] how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." With God's Spirit you'll have wisdom like Stephen of old. The people couldn't handle the wisdom by which he spoke. Jesus says in verses 22-23, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." Opposition against righteousness, against the purposes of Jesus Christ, is a reality if you're a doer of the Word and not just a hearer.

I was in a park a while back, and I saw an elderly lady sitting in the swing. I thought to myself, "She's harmless; she can't hurt me!" I asked her if I could sit down in the swing with her, and I sat down and began a conversation with her. I found out her name was Jane, and I said, "By the way, Jane, what do you do?" She said, "Oh, I'm an old lady; I don't work any more. I'm retired." Then she said, "And, by the way, what do you do?" I said, "I work for a parachurch ministry, a parachurch organization." Suddenly, her countenance changed, and she said, "Don't you tell me about God! Don't you tell me about Jesus!" I said, "Oh, Jane, you shouldn't talk that way," and she said, "If Jesus Christ was in front of me, I would spit in His face!" I said, "Jane! You shouldn't say things like that! You must have had a lot of people hurt you in churches, or whatever, for you to talk like that. Jane, you shouldn't talk like that! Let me tell you about my family." She said, "No! I said you can't talk to me. You're going to tell me about Jesus Christ and what God did in your family, and I'm not going to let you. You cannot speak." I said, "Jane, please. I've got to tell you about Jesus." She said, "No! I'm telling you to SHUT UP!"

She had a little dog on a leash, and she just pulled that little dog until he was sitting there going, "Arrgh," and away she went. Here was a woman out of control, because a spirit rose up in her, the spirit of disobedience. She was controlled by the enemy. I thought to myself, "I'm not used to having people yell at me. I'm not used to people getting in my face." But I had nothing but compassion, nothing but love for Jane. She was out of control, and I was totally in control. I went home and said, "Lord, you know what? The greatest miracle is that I was in control. When someone was in my face, I had nothing but love and compassion."

Persecution and opposition will come when we go out in the name of Jesus. The same Spirit of God that gives boldness to proclaim Jesus, when we're rejected for His sake, that same Spirit will give us comfort and strength in any situation. God bless you as you continue to meditate on the sayings and the words of Jesus.

### PERSECUTION (Outline)

#### Persecution will come!

Matthew 10:16-23: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. <sup>17</sup>But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; <sup>18</sup>And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup>But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. <sup>20</sup>For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. <sup>21</sup>And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. <sup>22</sup>And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. <sup>23</sup>But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

Jesus wanted us to know that all who live godly will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). Persecution is part of standing for righteousness; it's part of the Christian life.

Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

The enemy will use men to oppose the Word of God.

Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

Even the government will oppose you.

### PERSECUTION (Teacher's Guide)

1.	According to 2 Timothy 3:12, those who live a godly life will experience what consequences?
	They shall suffer persecution.

- 2. According to Mark 4:16-17, affliction and persecution come for what reason? For the Word's sake (that is to take away the Word).
- 3. In Acts 8:1 and 4, persecution resulted in what?

The preaching of the Word everywhere. (Notice that according to verse one, it was not the apostles who did the preaching!)

4. A. According to Matthew 5:11-12, what are the consequences for truly following Jesus?

People will insult you, persecute you, and falsely say things against you.

B. What kind of reward does persecution result in?

A great reward in heaven.

- 5. A. According to Acts 9:4-5, who is it that Saul was persecuting?

  Jesus.
  - B. In reality, who was Saul persecuting? (Acts 9:1)The church—God's people.
- 6. A. Can Christians move away from the true Gospel? (Galatians 1:6-7)
  Yes.
  - B. How do we fall away from grace according to Galatians 5:4?Trying to be declared righteous by keeping religious laws.
  - C. Preaching the true Gospel results in what? (Galatians 6:12)Suffering persecution for the cross of Christ.

### PERSECUTION (Detailed Teacher's Guide)

NOTE: The following information may be read out loud (a numbered section at a time) with the person(s) being discipled. After each numbered section is read, pause and ask the question(s) that correspond to the paragraph(s), and then discuss them.

<sup>1</sup> Persecution is an inevitable part of the Christian life (John 16:18-20; Philippians 1:29-30). The only Christians who don't suffer persecution are those who aren't living a godly life (2 Timothy 3:12). Persecution is from Satan and is designed to uproot God's Word in our lives (Mark 4:16-17) by taking our eyes off Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3), and therefore causing us to fall into strife or despondency (James 3:16).

<sup>2</sup> There are many forms of persecution. Having your life threatened because of your faith in Jesus is one way you can be persecuted, but it is not the most damaging. History shows that the church has always flourished under persecution with increased numbers and zeal. During intense, life-threatening persecution, people's priorities get straightened out, and the Lord assumes His rightful place. This always works for our good, regardless of what our outward circumstances might be.

<sup>3</sup> A far more deadly form of persecution is simply men speaking evil of you or separating you from their company as Jesus mentions in Matthew 5:11-12. It's more deadly because it's more subtle. Many who would never directly deny the Lord will fall into self-pity or strife because of someone's criticism. This will render you just as ineffective as would a negative reaction to your life being threatened.

<sup>4</sup> It helps to recognize that it is not you that they are persecuting but rather Christ in you (Acts 9:4). You are actually becoming a partaker of His sufferings (Philippians 3:10) and will share His rewards (Romans 8:17-18; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; Hebrews 11:26). With this in mind, you can actually shout and leap for joy in persecution (Luke 6:22-23; Acts 5:41). God takes the persecution of His children personally (Luke 17:2). In Acts 9:4, when Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, He spoke to Saul and said, "Why persecutest thou me?" Judgment against those who persecute God's children will not always come in time to prevent their harm, but as this warning makes very clear, God will avenge His own (Romans 12:19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>(a) According to 2 Timothy 3:12, those that live a godly life will experience what consequences?

<sup>(</sup>b) According to Mark 4:16-17, affliction and persecution come for what reason?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Persecution resulted in what? According to Acts 8:1,4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> According to Matthew 5:11-12 what are the consequences for truly following Jesus?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>(a) According to Acts 9:4-5, who is it that Saul was persecuting? Jesus

<sup>(</sup>b) In reality, who was Saul persecuting?

<sup>5</sup> Luke 21:19 states, "In your patience possess ye your souls." The context of this statement is about persecution (verses 12-17), and the compensation for enduring it that we will receive in the resurrection. So the patience that Jesus is speaking of here is the calm assurance that God knows every hurt that we feel, and He will abundantly recompense us in the resurrection (Hebrews 11:26). This knowledge enables us to dominate our emotions in the face of persecution (i.e. possess our souls), instead of letting our emotions of fear dominate us.

<sup>6</sup> Paul said in Galatians 5:11 that if he preached righteousness by the law, then the offense of the cross would cease. Grace is offensive to religious people. Legalism is not. The suffering that Paul is refers to the Galatians enduring was persecution for preaching the Gospel of Christ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>What kind of reward does persecution result in? Matthew 5:11-12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>(a) Can Christians move away from the true Gospel? Galatians 1:6-7

<sup>(</sup>b) How do we fall away from grace according to Galatians 5:4?

<sup>(</sup>c) Preaching the true Gospel results in what? Galatians 6:12

## PERSECUTION (Discipleship Questions)

Persecution: to pursue with harassing or oppressive treatment; harass persistently. To oppress with injury or punishment for adhering to principles or religious faith. To worry, badger or vex.

1.	Read 2 Timothy 3:10-14         What did Paul commend Timothy for following?         A.
2.	Of the persecutions and afflictions that Paul experienced, from how many did the Lord deliver him?
3.	What will happen to you if you desire to live godly in Christ Jesus?
4.	What will happen to evil men?
5.	Even though evil men become worse, what must we continue to do?
6.	Based on this, are we to fear evil and persecution?
7.	Read Mark 4:5-6, 16-17, 20 What happens when seed is sown on stony ground?
8.	What happens when the sun comes out?
9.	Why did the plant wither away?
10.	What is the sun compared to in verse 17?
11.	Why did the persecution and tribulations come?

12. Because the people had no root or foundation in Christ, what happened to them when they were

13. How important is it for you to establish a root system in Christ Jesus?

persecuted?

14.	What three steps take place for the seeds sown on good ground? (Verse 20)  A B C
15.	Does the sun still shine on the ones sown on good soil?
16.	What do you think the difference is between the ones sown in good soil and the ones on stony ground?
17.	Read Matthew 5:10-12 What is your reward if you are persecuted for righteousness sake?
18.	What other things will happen to you for Jesus' sake?
19.	What is our response to be toward the persecution?
20.	Our reward in heaven is: A. Great B. Minimal C. A token gesture
21.	Read John 15:18-23 Who did the world hate first, you or Christ?
22.	Why does the world now hate you (verse 19)?
23.	If a servant is not greater than his master, what can we expect from the world, based on what happened to Jesus?
24.	Why will we experience persecution?
25.	If people hate Jesus, whom else do they hate?
	Read John 16:33 Why has Christ spoken these things to you? Even though we will have tribulations, why are we to have cheer?
28.	Read Romans 12:14, 17-21 Who are we to bless and not curse?

30.	How are we to live with all men?
31.	Why aren't we to avenge ourselves?
32.	How are we to treat our enemy according to verse 20? A B
33.	How are we to overcome evil?
34.	What does the end of verse 20 say will happen to our enemy if we repay evil with kindness?
35.	Can you see where the cliché "kill 'em with kindness" comes from?
36.	Read Matthew 10:16-22, 26 How does Christ send us out?
37.	What are we to be wise as?
38.	And harmless as
39.	Jesus warns us about what will happen to us. When we are delivered up, Who is it that speaks through us?
40.	If Jesus is speaking through us, have we need to worry?
41.	Why will we be "hated by all"?
42.	What happens if we endure the persecution?
43.	Why are we not to fear (verse 26)?
44.	Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-9 What is the treasure we have in earthen vessels?
45.	We are:  A. Hard-pressed but NOT  B. Perplexed but NOT in  C. Persecuted but NOT  D. Struck down but NOT

29. Are we to retaliate against evil?

46.	Read 1 Peter 4:12-19 What are we not to think it strange of?
47.	What are we to do instead?
48.	If we partake in Christ's sufferings, what will happen when His joy is revealed?
49.	What are we blessed with if we are reproached for the name of Christ?
50.	On whose part is Christ blasphemed?
51.	On whose part is He glorified?
52.	What are we not to suffer as?  A B C D
53.	(Did you notice that a busybody was ranked right there with a murderer?)
54.	How are we to respond if we suffer as a Christian?
55.	What are we to do if we "suffer according to the will of God"?
56.	Read Acts 4:17-20 What did the Jewish leaders decide to do if anyone shared the miracles and Gospel of Christ?
57.	What did they command the people in verse 18?
58.	What was Peter and John's response to them in verse 19?
59.	What should your response be when you are persecuted and told to not speak in Jesus' name?
60.	Read Galatians 1:9-10 What is to happen to the man who speaks another Gospel that is not according to Scriptures?

- 61. If you continue to be a man pleaser, what are you not?
- $62. \ \ If you want to serve God, whom will you have to stop bowing down to?$
- 63. Can you see how you can be a servant of Christ and through that can serve man, but you cannot serve man and be a servant of Christ?

Read Hebrews 10:32-36

- 64. Why is it we are to endure all the persecution and sufferings (verse 34)?
- 65. Why do we have need for endurance?

Perdition: a condition of final spiritual ruin or damnation; future state of the wicked, hell.

Read Philippians 1:27-30

- 66. How are we to conduct ourselves, whether anyone is looking or not?
- 67. Why are we to not be terrified of our adversaries?
- 68. What has been granted to us on behalf of Christ?

Read Acts 18:9-10

- 69. Write out this scripture.
- 70. What are we promised if we do not fear man and continue to speak the Gospel?

Read 2 Kings 6:16

71. Why are we not to fear?

Deuteronomy 31:6

"Be strong and of good courage,
Do not fear nor be afraid of them;
For the Lord your God,
He is the One who goes with you.
He will not leave you nor forsake you."

# PERSECUTION (Discipleship Answer Key)

1.	A. Carefully followed the doctrine B. Manner of life	16. The root system	
	C. Purpose D. Faith	17. The kingdom of heaven	
	E. Patience F. Love	18. Be reviled, persecuted, and falsely accounts	used
	G. Perseverance H. Persecutions	19. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad	
	I. Afflictions	20. A. Great	
2.	From them all	21. Christ	
3.	You will suffer persecutions	22. Because Christ chose me out of this wo	orld
4.	They will grow worse and worse	23. We can expect persecution	
5.	Continue in the things we have learned and been assured of	24. For Christ's namesake	
6	No	25. All who belong to Him, including me	
	It springs up	26. So that in Christ I may have peace	
	It is scorched	27. Christ has overcome the world	
	It had no root	28. Those who persecute us	
	Tribulation and persecution	29. No	
	For the Word's sake	30. Peaceably	
	The immediately stumbled	31. Vengeance belongs to God	
	Very important if you want to survive	32. A. Feed him B. Give him drink	
10.	and thrive	33. With good	
14.	A. Hear the word	Ü	J
	B. Accept it C. Bear fruit	34. Coals of fire will be heaped on his head	1
15.	Yes	35. Yes	
		36. As sheep among wolves	

37. Serpents 56. Severely threaten them 38. Doves 57. Not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus 39. The Holy Spirit 58. You decide whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you or Him? 40. No 59. The same 41. For Christ's namesake 60. He is accursed 42. We will be saved 61. A bondservant of Christ 43. There is nothing covered or hidden that won't be known 62. Man 44. The excellence of the power of God 63. Yes 45. A. Crushed 64. Because we have a better and enduring B. Despair position in heaven C. Forsaken 65. So that after I have done the will of God D. Destroyed I may receive the promise 46. The fiery trial and persecution that will come upon us 66. Worthy of the gospel of Christ 47. Rejoice 67. Because it proves to them their perdition and confirms our salvation 48. That we may be glad with exceeding joy 68. To believe in Him and suffer for His sake 49. The Spirit of glory and God 69. Write out scripture 50. The persecutors 70. Christ is with me 51. Mine 71. Those who are with us are more than those 52. A. Murderer who are with them B. Thief C. Evil doer D. Busybody 53. Yes 54. Be not ashamed, but to glorify God 55. Commit our souls to God in doing good

### PERSECUTION (Additional Information)

The first great persecution for religious opinion of which we have any record was that which broke out against the worshipers of God among the Jews in the days of Ahab. That king, at the instigation of his wife Jezebel ("a woman in whom, with the reckless and licentious habits of an Oriental queen, were united the fiercest an sternest qualities inherent in the old Semitic race") sought in the most relentless manner to extirpate the worship of Jehovah and substitute in its place the worship of Ashtoreth and Baal. Ahab's example in this respect was followed by Manasseh, who "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (2 Kings 21:16, comp, 2 Kings 24:4). In all ages, in one form or another, the people of God have had to suffer persecution. In its earliest history, the Christian church passed through many bloody persecutions. Of subsequent centuries in our own and in other lands, the same sad record may be made. Christians are forbidden to seek the propagation of the gospel by force (Luke 9:46-54, Romans 14:4, and James 4:11-12). The words of Psalms 7:13: "He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors" ought rather be, as in the Revised Version, "He maketh his arrows fiery [shafts]."

(Easton Bible Dictionary)

#### PERSECUTION:

1.	Christ suffered		
2.	Christ voluntarily submitted to Isaiah 50:6		
3.	Christ was patient under Isaiah 53:7		
4.	Saints may expect		
5.	Saints suffer, for the sake of God Jeremiah 15:15		
6.	Of saints, is a persecution of ChristZechariah 2:8; Acts 9:4-5		
7.	All that live godly in Christ, shall suffer 2 Timothy 3:12		
8.	Originates		
	A.	Ignorance of God and Christ John 16:3	
	B.	Hatred of God and Christ John 15:18, 24	
	C.	Hatred to the Gospel Matthew 13:21	
	D.	Pride	

	E. Mistaken zeal		
9.	Is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel Matthew 26:52		
10.	Men by nature addicted to		
11.	Preacher of the Gospel subject to		
12.	Is sometimes to death		
13.	God forsakes not his saints under 2 Corinthians 4:9		
14.	God delivers out of		
15.	Cannot separate from Christ Romans 8:35-39		
16.	Lawful means may be used to escape Matthew 2:13; 10:23; 12:14-15		
17.	Saints suffering, should		
	A. Commit themselves to God 1 Peter 4:19		
	B. Exhibit patience 1 Corinthians 4:12		
	C. Rejoice		
	D. Glorify God 1 Peter 4:16		
	E. Pray for deliverance		
	F. Pray for those who inflict Matthew 5:44		
	G. Return blessing for Romans 12:14		
18.	The hope of future blessedness, supports under 1 Corinthians 15:19, 32; Hebrews 10:34-35		
19.	Blessedness of enduring, for Christ's sake Matthew 5:10; Luke 6:22		
20.	Pray for those suffering 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2		

21.	Нурос	crites cannot endure Matthew 4:17
22.	False t	eachers shrink from Galatians 6:12
23.	The wicked	
	A.	Addicted to
	B.	Active in
	C.	Encourage each other in Psalms 71:11
	D.	Rejoice in its success Psalms 13:4; Revelation 11:10
	E.	Punishment for
	F.	Illustrated Matthew 21:33-39
24.	Spirit o	f—Exemplified
	A.	Pharaoh Exodus 1:8-14
	B.	Saul 1 Samuel 26:18
	C.	Jezebel 1 Kings 19:2
	D.	Zedekiah Jeremiah 38:4-6
	E.	Chaldeans Daniel 3:8-30
	F.	Pharisees Matthew 12:14
	G.	Jews John 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:15
	H.	Herod
	I.	Gentiles
	J.	Paul
25.	Sufferi	ng of—Exemplified
	A.	Micaiah 1 Kings 22:27
	B.	David
	C.	Jeremiah Jeremiah 32:2

D.	Daniel Daniel 6:5-17
E.	Peter
F.	Apostles Acts 5:18
G.	The Prophets Acts 7:52
H.	The Church Acts 8:1
I.	Paul and Barnabas Acts 13:50
J.	Paul and Silas Acts 16:23
K.	Hebrews 10:33
L.	Saints of old Hebrews 11:36

(New Topical Text Book)

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