



Rejoice in Persecution

MAIN IDEA

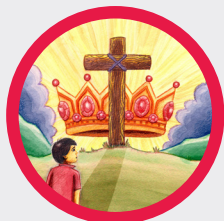
- Followers of Jesus will experience persecution in this world.
- For the child of God, this suffering is temporary and cannot compare with the everlasting joy to be experienced in the future.
- Jesus commands us to keep this perspective and rejoice in our sufferings.

MEMORY VERSES

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.”¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,”
—Matthew 5:11-12a

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Matthew 5:10-12
- 2) John 15:18-20a
- 3) 2 Corinthians 1:3-5
- 4) 2 Corinthians 4:17
- 5) Philippians 4:12-13
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:12
- 7) 1 Peter 4:12-15



LESSON SUMMARY

Why a lesson on persecution and suffering? Aren't children too young for this? Shouldn't we strive to protect them from these harsh and troubling realities? The reality is, Christians will suffer persecution for their faith to one degree or another. If not now, then later. Furthermore, Christians—even young children—are currently enduring terrible persecution in some parts of the world. They should not be forgotten by the worldwide body of Christ. If we fail to give our children a right understanding of persecution, they will try to make sense of it on their own, and their answers will come up short. Increasing evidence points out that one reason children who have grown up in Christian homes reject the faith is because they have not been given sufficient answers to hard questions. Therefore, it is wise for us to be proactive and give them a biblical perspective on persecution and suffering—one that does not serve to scare, but to encourage. They need a perspective that acknowledges the real pain and suffering, but also the eternal weight of glory to be anticipated.

In this lesson, we used a variety of Scripture passages and the experiences of Jesus and Paul to give students a solid, biblical view of persecution—one that acknowledges the deep pain, yet is also hope-filled as it points to eternal, immeasurable joy.

PRAYER POINTS

As you review this lesson with your child, pray...

- *that your child would be given an unwavering confidence in Jesus that prepares him or her for any persecution they may face.*
- *that your child would have a heart that is tender toward the persecuted, desiring to be in prayer for them.*



AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

- Read Matthew 5:10-12. **Is Jesus talking about any kind of persecution against a person?** For example, suppose a student finds out you cheated on your math test and starts to say mean things about you to others. Point to the words, “on my account” from verse 11. Then read 1 Peter 4:14-15. The type of persecution Jesus is referring to is aimed at righteous words and actions that identify a person as a disciple of Jesus. **Have you ever experienced any kind of persecution for being a follower of Jesus? What happened? How did it make you feel? Were you able to have another perspective**

that caused you to be able rejoice and be glad? Why can this be very difficult? What might serve to help us?

- Point out that our natural tendency is to try to avoid suffering. However, if there is something really important to us, we often are willing to endure temporary suffering (e.g., learning to ride a bike). Read 2 Corinthians 4:17. **Have you ever endured something difficult because a goal you wanted to achieve was really important to you? Is loving and following Jesus even more important? What eternal benefits are there of being His disciple? Are you willing to endure even some minor suffering at present in order to gain an “eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison”? Does God leave His children without any help? What help has He given His children?**

Also read and talk about Philippians 4:12-13.

- Point out that although Jesus is fully God, He also became fully man. Jesus experienced a tremendous amount of pain, suffering, and persecution. Therefore, He can completely sympathize with the suffering of His people. Read and talk about 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. **How can the church care for one another in times of persecution and suffering? If you are being made fun of at school because you are a follower of Jesus, who can help comfort and encourage you? Do you also look for ways to comfort others? How so? How can we grow to be more aware of the needs of those being persecuted for Jesus’ sake? What things could you do to help them? What is one step you could take this week?**

ACTION STEPS

This week, look up each verse and fill in the missing words. Next, use a red pencil, pen, or marker to circle words on the blanks that describe a Christian’s temporary suffering. Use a green pencil, pen, or marker to circle words that describe a Christian’s future, eternal joy.

Blessed are those who are _____ for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of _____. ¹¹Blessed are you when others _____ you and persecute you and utter all kinds of _____ against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your _____ is great in _____...—*Matthew 5:10-12a*

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery _____ when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s _____, that you may also _____ and _____ when his glory is revealed.—*1 Peter 4:12-13*

For this light momentary _____ is preparing for us an _____ weight of _____ beyond all comparison,—*2 Corinthians 4:17*

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the _____, which God has promised to those who love him.—*James 1:12*