

1. Matthew 5:10-12 *“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.”*
2. More Christians were martyred for their faith in the **20**th century than all the centuries combined.
3. Hatred, excommunication and murder - they may be the **cost** of discipleship.
4. Persecution from the secular world we expect. Persecution from religious people and **churches** is more difficult; but this was the case for Jesus, the disciples, and the early church and is a threat today.
5. When we evaluate a church or a pastor or a person who claims to be Christian - the **Bible** is the standard for our judgment.
6. God has a purpose in persecution and Jesus forewarns/forearms believers so they will not fall away from their faith. He warns us so that our faith will more than endure-it will be **strengthened**.
7. A Christian can **rejoice** in persecution because it shows this fallen world the supernatural power of God in the believer’s life.