

## Beatitudes for the Workplace - #8

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Mt 5:10*

Beatitudes are Jesus' promises about how he is present with us in our daily lives and work. Following is an explanation of how he is present when we are persecuted for practicing his values.



Explanation:

1) *Blessed* is Jesus' word for how he transforms our lives. Jesus' will is to enable us to live and work with power, love, creativity, fulfillment and freedom, in extravagant abundance. What he offers stands in contrast to the world's self-referenced, ever-changing values.

2) *the persecuted* is an interesting phrase because it is a label. It makes no reference to people. I sense Jesus' use of the phrase to make a double point. Persecuted people are usually dehumanized. They are labeled with whatever names are the choice of the moment.

Jesus responded to persecuted people as special human beings! He chose to live and work among them, even to the point of sharing meals with them. He proactively cared for their needs. Often, he took initiatives to be with them, to encourage, heal, forgive, and love them.

Every person is special to Jesus. Every person should be special to us.

3) *righteousness* means *right relationship*. It is what God initiates, always cries out for, and eagerly embraces. On our part, it means turning to and following God, in the way that a sunflower turns to and follows the sun. To be in right relationship with God opens a never-ending flood of graces, which are the ways God helps us to live and work as God intended. God wants for us to enjoy our work, to experience satisfaction and fulfillment, and to treat every human being with respect and care according to God's values.

What Jesus taught about righteousness features two values, which are dear to God's heart. They are *love* and *justice*.

- *love* is unselfish caring for the well-being of every person
- *justice* is defending people with God's values and actions

When we practice righteousness, we **are** and **work** with God. When anyone challenges us, s/he is challenging God. That is not a good idea, given whose world this is, and whose values govern it!

4) *heaven* The Lord's Prayer teaches us: *Your kingdom come...on earth as in heaven.* It reminds us that Jesus came into the world to transform it by bringing God's values to us, here and now. The work of spreading the Kingdom is his and ours, which we practice daily.

So, when we are persecuted for practicing God's values and priorities (people), God stands with us in a special way. Persecuted people have always been near to God's heart. So are we as we serve, defend, advocate and care for persecuted people. We join with them and God in a special and blessed bond.

Summary:

To practice God's values in the workplace can get us into trouble. The world has its values, and it wants them to prevail. Ultimately, this is Jesus' world, and his values always prevail! The cross was and is real. So was and is Jesus' resurrection.

If we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, we can count on Jesus' very real support. He never made promises he did not keep. We are blessed as we embrace and practice his values in our lives and work.

D. Browning  
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