



ALL SAINTS  
PRESBYTERIAN

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR ALL SAINTS SMALL GROUPS

“The Decision at the End” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | October 27, 2019

**Matthew 5:3-12; 7:13-14, 24-27**

- 3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4** Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- 5** Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- 6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- 7** Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- 8** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- 9** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- 10** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
- 12** Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- 13** “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.
- 14** But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
- 24** “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
- 25** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.
- 26** But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice

**Background**

Tim begins his sermon with a story about a documentary involving a daughter who is crying to her father about normalcy. The movie is called *Normy* because the girl has Down Syndrome and is fighting aloneness and a lack of friendly intimacy. Then Tim begins to get into what he calls the *profound expectations for the “normal” Christian life*. Tim has 3 points surrounding the question of what it means to be “normal”. All 3 involve where the beatitudes lead us. Progression. Command. Decision. They are bookended with suffering and loss.

**1. Progression:**

- A. We are moved in the beatitudes from **need to capacity**. The first 4 involve need. They describe people that are in awful situations (i.e. poor in spirit). They mourn over their situations. They are meek in that they have emotional and spiritual fatigue. THEN they thirst for God. THEN everything gets flipped. They now have a life of capacity. His people are able to be merciful and desire peace. THIS is the Christian life.
- B. **Peacemaking** – this is reweaving God’s shalom. The downtrodden are woven in. We that are already woven in reach out to those and we weave them in because they are image bearers of God. THIS creates conflict. We often times don’t want to act like these people are image bearers of God. Tim spends some time on MLK and his question on where the church was in the deep south during persecution and asks, “what would I have done had I been a pastor in in this period?” He doesn’t know because had he sided with MLK, it would have come at a great cost to him and his family. We know seeking peace comes at a great cost. This stops our progression. We can be merciful at times; but living a distinctly Christian life, there’s a cost. Persecution is the end of that progression and Christ says we have the capacity. But do we have the will?

is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

**27** The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

## **2. Command:**

There are 6 commands after the beatitudes. Tim asks the congregation to repeat the word of the day: nyctinasty. A word that describes when flowers close their petals during darkness to sleep. Chapter 5 of the Gospel reading, the flower opens. If we are to be persecuted, then we are following his word. Many people have disciples because people follow their word. He mentions a music artist who has 75,000 people at her concerts because they like her “word.” But Christ tell us in his word that to follow him means that we will be called prude, fanatic, weird, foolish and weak. He knows that. He even says, “you have heard it said...” Christ mentions 6 things that we will called or struggle with: anger, sex, divorce, lying, retaliation and hatred. He says to love our enemies and how foolish does that look to the world. But this is the profound expectation to be a normal Christian. Tim finishes this second point by reminding us of the worldwide persecution the Church is facing. The Middle East, China, etc. have seen a dramatic drop in Christian numbers. Students not being popular or invited to parties because they won’t drink or do drugs. Singles not getting into serious relationships because they won’t have sex. These are forms of persecution.

## **3. Decision:**

Is believing and following Jesus worth it? Worth the cost? Jesus says “blessed” are those that follow me. You can choose his word or someone else’s word. Whose word will be your foundation? Rock or sand? **Both** images have a cost. Though the world may say you are being swept away, Jesus is saying that you are not. You will stand. Yes, you will be beat upon by the wind and rain and floods BUT you will stand because Christ has stood for you. Choose the way that is hard and narrow but it actually leads to life!!!!

### **Discuss - 2 main questions:**

1. Have you ever been persecuted? How? Why? What got you through that? Spend some time on what persecution looks like in Austin or the United States.
2. If willing, discuss areas in your life where you “need persecution” meaning, maybe you are walking with the world to make things easier and not bring about conflict. At work, at school, etc. Again, not looking to proactively create conflict for the sake of creating conflict but more of a conviction. Are there any areas that you feel you have been too reticent?