**INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE**

**Kingdom Living**

**A Study of the Beatitudes**

**Week 9**

**Session Title: *Happy Are the Harassed***

**Focal Passage: Matthew 5:10-12; Psalm 129:1-7**

**Central Teaching/Learning Aim:** The learner will be challenged to live prepared for persecution to endure for the sake of Christ.

1. **Hook**
2. **Place** members into groups. Display the following statement and question and have them discuss.

“It is estimated that more people have been martyred for Christ in the past 500 years than in the church’s first 300 years.”

“Persecution in the Early Church” Christian History

Besides martyrdom what other forms of Christian persecution are prevalent in our society today?

Share an example of personal persecution.

**Next –** Call the class back together and read (Matthew 5:10-12).

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to endure persecution for the cause of Christ.

1. **Optional Method – Movie Clip “Forrest Gump”**

**Location:** <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/forrest-gump/run-forrest-run>

**Length: 2:04**

**Synopsis:** In this clip, Forrest is a boy who is wearing awful leg braces. Forrest tries to run and eventually the braces explode off his legs and he runs like the wind escaping them.

**Ask –** How did young Forrest endure his trials and come out stronger? Would anyone like to share a testimony of how enduring persecution in life has made you a stronger, better person?

**Read** (Matthew 5:10-12) and discuss how it applies.

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to endure persecution for the cause of Christ.

1. **Optional Method – Share the following:**

**‘The Internet Is Broken’ Because of Negativity says Twitter Cofounder**

Evan Williams, a Twitter founder and co-creator of Blogger—wanted to set everyone free to express their emotions and opinions on line. So, how's it going? A recent (May 2017) article in The New York Times offered the following answer to that question:

"I think the internet is broken," Williams said." He has believed this for a few years, actually. But things are getting worse. "And it's a lot more obvious to a lot of people that it's broken."

[The article continued]: People are using Facebook to showcase suicides, beatings and murder, in real time. Twitter is a hive of trolling and abuse that it seems unable to stop. Fake news, whether created for ideology or profit, runs rampant. Four out of 10 adult internet users said in a Pew survey that they had been harassed online. And that was before the presidential campaign heated up last year.

"I thought once everybody could speak freely and exchange information and ideas, the world is automatically going to be a better place," Mr. Williams says. "I was wrong about that."

David Streitfeldmay, ["'The Internet Is Broken': @ev Is Trying to Salvage It,"](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/20/technology/evan-williams-medium-twitter-internet.html) The New York Times (5-20-17)

**Ask –** Who has experienced some type of cyber-bullying or harassment? Besides cyber-attacks what are other ways Christ-followers experience persecution?

**Read –** (Matthew 5:10-12).

**State** – Today we are going to discuss how to endure persecution for the cause of Christ.

1. **Book**

1. **Utilize** the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.
2. **Look**
3. **Place** members into groups and have them discuss the group assignments.
4. **Took**
5. **Share** the following true story:

**Boko Haram Terrorists Place Bounty on Pastor**

Hassan John, a Christian pastor from Jos, Nigeria, is regarded as an "infidel" by Muslim extremist Boko Haram insurgents and has a price on his head of 150,000 Naira (about 800 American dollars). He goes to his church each day not knowing whether someone will murder him in order to claim the price on his head.

As an Anglican pastor and as a part-time journalist for CNN, the 52-year-old Hassan has often been surrounded by violence and bloodshed in northeast Nigeria. He's seen friends shot dead or injured in front of his eyes. As a reporter, he has often rushed to the scene immediately after bombings. He has narrowly escaped death himself. Hassan said, "You see it again and again and again. You get to places where a bomb [planted by Muslim extremists] has just exploded. There are bodies all over the place. You visit people in the hospital. You go back and meet families, you cry with them, you console them, you do the best you can with them all the time."

But this violence and hatred has not stopped him from reaching out to his Muslim neighbors who need Christ. After he helped a small Muslim girl who could not go to school after her father had been killed in the violence, he started to reach out to other orphan children. Soon he was helping 12 Muslim women, then 120. Young Muslim men in the area are starting to ask if they can find help as well.

Hassan's evangelistic outreach involves eating meals with Muslims. Hassan explained, "Now in Nigeria that is a big thing. You don't eat with your enemy because you are afraid that you will be poisoned. Now [in an attempt to share the gospel,] Christians build friendships with Muslims; it is just so marvelous."

["Boko Haram Placed a Bounty on Christian Pastor from Jos,"](https://www.naij.com/655910-boko-haram-placed-bounty-christian-pastors-head.html) Naij.com (12-3-15); personal interview with Hassan John in Nigeria

**State –** Pastor John faced persecution head-on and God is blessing his efforts. We are promised that we will experience persecution. Are we prepared? Do we have the faith to endure?Top of Form

Bottom of Form

1. **Optional Method – Share the following true story:**

# Former Muslim Follows Jesus and Willingly Loses Everything

Open Doors, a ministry working with persecuted Christians around the globe, shared the following true story about a Muslim convert to Christ. Bagus (not his real name) came to know Jesus in 2014, and was baptized the following year. Bagus remembered well the reason he followed Christ: "It was because of my long, hard, and troubled life, Ma'am."

"So, when you finally decided to follow him, your life wasn't troubled anymore?"
"Not anymore, Ma'am."
"What did you do for a living, then?"
"I was a trash picker."
"And what do you do now?"
"I'm still a trash picker."

But looking at the external circumstances of his life it would be easy to conclude that his life has not improved. The journalist asked him, "So, how did you feel after following Isa (Jesus)?"

"Very different. I felt happy and restful," he replied.

Bagus then quietly mentioned that he was a house church leader of 15 former Muslims in his village. The journalist also discovered that Bagus' life was far from untroubled as a follower of Christ. A villager had seen Bagus sharing the story of Jesus with a neighbor and reported him to the village authorities. The authorities dragged him and 15 others to a paddy field and threatened to kill them unless they returned to Islam. Bagus refused and remained firm in his new faith. While his life was spared, he is now forced to live apart from his wife and children, spending his days on the street. He now can only see them periodically.

"I never regretted my decision to follow Jesus," he said without a hint of doubt. "I'm following him wholeheartedly."

["Led to Christ to Lead Others,"](https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/led-to-christ-to-lead-others/) Open Doors Asia (4-7-16); submitted by Lee Eclov, Vernon Hills, Illinois

**State –** Bagus faced persecution head-on and God is blessing his efforts. We are promised that we will experience persecution. Are we prepared? Do we have the faith to endure?Top of Form

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Teacher Copy**

1. What types of persecution are referenced in (Matthew 5:10-12)?
	1. **Insults**
	2. **Persecution**
	3. **Slander**
2. Have you experienced any of these because of your faith?
3. What forms of persecution are prevalent in your community?
4. Read the following passages and list what each says about persecution.
	1. **(John 15:18-25) Persecution is inevitable because Jesus endured
	 the ultimate persecution**
	2. **(Acts 14:22) The Disciples endured persecution.**
	3. **(2 Tim. 3:12) All who are living godly lives will experience
	 persecution**
	4. **(1 Peter 4:13-14) We are to be joyous through our persecution
	 because of the rewards to come**
5. How can a person find joy even in the midst of persecution?
6. (Psalm 129:1-4) is a testament of how God had delivered Israel in the past. When has God delivered you from persecution?
7. How does remembering past deliverance give you hope for future persecution?
8. In (vs. 5-8) the psalmist encouraged the Israelites to pray for continuing deliverance. How can you pray more fervently for deliverance?
9. What do the following verses teach about perseverance?
	1. **(Romans 5:3-5) The end result of perseverance is hope through
	 the Holy Spirit**
	2. **(2 Cor. 4:16-17) Perseverance that is focused on eternity allows
	 us to endure**
	3. **(Hebrews 10:36) It takes perseverance to complete the will of God**
10. What is your usual attitude under persecution?

**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Student Copy**

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	2.
	3.
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**Group Assignments**

Discuss the following:

* 1. Share examples of recent persecution in your life.
	2. What life lesson was learned or could be learned from this experience?
	3. Was your faith strengthened? How?
	4. How will this experience impact how you manage future persecution?
	5. Pray for one another.

**-------------------------------------------------------------------**

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**THEE WORD FOR THE WEEK**

**Glorifying God in the Darkness**

**Matthew 5:13-16**

**Monday – Read Matthew 5:13**

* What is the purpose of using salt in cooking?
* How can you enhance the lives of those around you?
* Why are we called to do this?

**Tuesday - Read Matthew 5:13**

* What are things that can cause you to lose your saltiness?
* What specific steps can you take to guard yourself from this?

**Wednesday - Read Matthew 5:14-16**

* How can you shine Christ’s light on those around you with your words?
* What specific actions can you take to be a light for Christ this week?
* How is it possible to let your deeds speak for themselves without being boastful?

**Thursday - Read Matthew 5:14-16**

* When are you tempted to hide your light and what are the reasons?
* What can you do to keep from hiding your light?
* How can you make sure God receives the glory?

**Friday - Read Matthew 5:13-16**

Jesus talks about being the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

* Who is in your immediate circle of influence?
* How can you be intentional about expanding your circle of influence?
* How can you be salt and light in the world and still protect yourself from the influence of the world?

**EXEGETICAL ~ THEOLOGICAL ~ PEDAGOGICAL**

**Note**: In Matthew 5-7 Jesus taught the way of true righteousness (see 5:20 with 7:13-14). True righteousness (how to be “right” before the holy God) is not a man centered, works-generated product of following “religious rules” (5:20). Rather, true righteousness requires a change of attitude and behavior that results from God doing a supernatural work in the character of a true believer. And only those in whom God “works out” His supernatural work of salvation can know what it means to be blessed/happy. With God’s help, we can reflect His righteous character in our thinking and doing so as to enjoy the blessings He intends for His Kingdom subjects.

 Here is Jesus’ party platform, His administrative insights, His Kingdom manifesto. When we accept His rule, we can be 100% sure of our salvation/ deliverance into His Kingdom – not because we can justify ourselves, but because we realize we can’t; not because we are well, but because we realize we are sick; not because we are rich (materially or spiritually), but because we realize we are spiritually impoverished, and, therefore, humbly receive God’s commands and promises.

 Today, in Matthew 5:10-12 Jesus teaches that Kingdom subjects who faithfully endure the persecutions, insults, and slanders of those who oppose the King and His Kingdom will join the company of the Great Ones who persevered in righteousness in the past and will enjoy great reward in Heaven.

 (**Exegetical**: What it meant to the Jewish believers back **THEN**)

**YHWH’S FAITHFULNESS TO ISRAEL IN PRESERVING**

**HIS PEOPLE/PROPHETS THROUGH AFFLICTION**

**AND KING JESUS’ PROMISE OF HEAVENLY REWARD** . . .

**FORTIFIES THE KINGDOM SUBJECT WHO SUFFERS**

**PERSECUTION AND ENDURES INSULTS AND SLANDER**

**FOR THE SAKE OF THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM**,

(Matthew 5:10-12; Psalm 129:1-7).

1. **The reasons Jesus’ Kingdom subjects were to rejoice and be glad when, in the present dispensation, they suffered persecution for the sake of righteousness, withstood insults, and endured slander because of their commitment to King Jesus, signifying that theirs was the Kingdom of Heaven and that they were, thus, blessed** . . . **was because, in the future, their heavenly reward would be great and because, in the past, the prophets had been persecuted in the same way**, (Matthew 5:10-12).

**Note**: “We come now to a most unexpected beatitude, one for the persecuted. Matthew’s first readers, who probably had some experience of persecution, would no doubt have been surprised at this statement, for it is never pleasant to experience suffering (cf. Heb. 12:11). Matthew uses his verb ‘persecute’ four times in this chapter and twice elsewhere. It can denote putting to flight, driving away (10:23), or even following without hostile intent (Luke 17:23). It may even be used of pursuing virtues like love (1 Cor. 14:1) or generally what is good (1 Thess. 5:15). But in the New Testament it is mostly used of inflicting suffering on people who hold beliefs that the establishment frowns on, and it is this kind of persecution of which Jesus speaks here. He does not speak of persecution as such, but of persecution *for the sake of righteousness.* People may suffer for doing evil, but such suffering is punishment, not persecution, and in any case believers are not to suffer that way (cf. 1 Pet. 4:15). Jesus is speaking of those committed to God’s cause, and *righteousness* is the kind of conduct appropriate for those who have been given right standing before God. Salvation is all of grace, but there is a kind of conduct that is expected of those who have received God’s good gift and it is that kind of conduct on which Jesus pronounces a blessing. Those who undergo persecution for God’s cause and not for any fault of their own receive a blessing like that for ‘the poor in spirit’ (v. 3), and it is given in exactly the same words: *the kingdom of heaven is theirs.* There is the same underlying attitude and the same ultimate reward” (Morris, L. [*The Gospel According to Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcmatt?ref=Bible.Mt5.10&off=4&ctx=name+indicates.%0a10.+~We+come+now+to+a+mos)*, 101–102).*

1. **The reason those who were persecuted for the sake of righteousness, insulted, and slandered because of their commitment to King Jesus would be blessed/happy/completely whole/in a state of shalom, according to King Jesus’ instruction regarding the character of His kingdom subjects** . . . **was because the kingdom of Heaven would be theirs**, (5:10-11).
2. CLAIM: **King Jesus’ claim regarding those who were persecuted for the sake of righteousness, insulted, and slandered because of their commitment to King Jesus** . . . **was that they would be blessed/ happy/completely whole/in a state of shalom**.
3. CHARACTER: **The character trait demonstrated in the lives of Jesus’ Kingdom subjects** . . . **was their willingness to suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, to withstand insults, and to endure slander because of their commitment to King Jesus**.

**Note**: “Many of the benedictions have been surprising, but none more than this; it is an intensification of the statement in verse 10. Persecution is universally regarded as evil (except by the persecutors). To have it pronounced as a blessing is surprising indeed. But God’s people have always been rejected by the worldly: persecution puts us in good company. There is a change from the third person in the beatitudes up to this point to direct address in this one. *When* is a general term; we could understand it as ‘whenever.’ *Upbraid* refers to verbal abuse, reproaching, insulting, and the like, but *persecute* refers to actions as well as words. With *falsely say all kinds of evil* we are back at words, but we are to bear in mind the qualification *falsely.* Believers are not to engage in the kind of conduct that enables people to accuse them genuinely; their lives are to be above reproach. *All kinds* is comprehensive; believers must expect a great variety of evil comments. *For my sake* links the whole saying with the Christian profession. Jesus is not pronouncing a blessing on those in general who receive criticism, but on those who are upbraided for following him. For them reproach, persecution, and slander are occasions of blessing” (Morris, 102).

3. CAUSE: **The reason Jesus’ Kingdom subjects, being willing to suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, to withstand insults, and to endure slander because of their commitment to King Jesus, would be blessed** . . . **was because the kingdom of Heaven would be theirs**.

4. CHARGE: **The implied charge to/expectation of Jesus’ Kingdom subjects** . . . **was that they would be willing to suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, to withstand insults, and to endure slander because of their commitment to King Jesus**.

1. **The reasons Jesus’ Kingdom subjects were to rejoice and be glad when, in the present dispensation, they suffered persecution for the sake of righteousness, withstood insults, and endured slander because of their commitment to King Jesus** . . . **was because, in the future, their heavenly reward would be great and because, in the past, the prophets had been persecuted in the same way**, (5:12).

**Note**: “Far from being despondent and depressed, saddened or enraged, Christians who find themselves in this situation are bidden, *Rejoice* (cf. Acts 5:41). This call for joy is reinforced with *be very glad.* There is a twofold reason for this joy. *Because* introduces the first. The word for *reward* properly signifies a ‘wage’ (20:8), but it is also used in the sense ‘reward,’ and this is in order in the present passage, though we should bear in mind that the word often has something of equivalence in its meaning. This does not mean that the pious have merited a heavenly reward, for ‘the reward is so far beyond anything which men could possibly attain by their own goodness that the very word ‘reward’ has something of irony about it’ *. . .* it is rather that God’s goodness overflows toward the persecuted. *Great* shows that the reward in question is far from meager, and *in heaven* locates it. Jesus is not talking about a reward in the here and now. Whatever compensations they receive in this world, the full reward of the persecuted is reserved for the next.

“The second reason for joy is that this is the way *the prophets* were treated. Persecuted believers are in good company. The plural brings all the prophets together as one godly company. The persecutions they received no doubt varied greatly, but the point is that persecution is the lot of the people of God while they walk this earth. In three consecutive verses Matthew has used the verb ‘persecute,’ which puts emphasis on the concept. Here even the prophets, whom everyone now accepts as the servants of God par excellence, were treated badly in their own day. It is a privilege for the servants of God in later days to share in some measure in the lot of these great men of God” (Morris, 102–103).

1. **The response Jesus commanded of His Kingdom subjects when they experienced persecutions, insults, and slanders for the sake of the King and His Kingdom** . . . **was to rejoice and be glad**.

**Note**: “Because this life is just a fraction of all eternity, we can and must rejoice even in persecution. The joy commanded here, as elsewhere in Scripture (esp. Jas 1:2), is not an emotion but an attitude” Blomberg, C. [*Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac22?ref=Bible.Mt5.11-12&off=507&ctx=with+his+standards.+~Because+this+life+is), Vol. 22, 101).

1. **The reasons Jesus’ Kingdom subjects were to rejoice and be glad when they experienced persecution insults, and slanders for the sake of the King and His Kingdom** . . . **was because their heavenly reward would be great and because the prophets had been persecuted in the same way**.

**Note**: “Jesus offers a poignant reminder that the great men and women of Old Testament times often suffered a similar fate. The prophet Jeremiah provides the classic example. The same is true of Christian history. When we suffer, we must avoid the trap of thinking that we are the only ones who have ever experienced such problems” (Blomberg, C. [*Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nac22?ref=Bible.Mt5.11-12&off=1048&ctx=n+the+life+to+come.+~Jesus+offers+a+poign), Vol. 22, 101). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

1. **The reasons** [implied] **Israel appealed to YHWH to shame and rebuff their enemies, making them like grass on a rooftop that withered before it could grow, be harvested and preserved** . . . **was because their enemies had wickedly afflicted and persecuted them from their earliest days as a people, and because they could testify that YHWH had cut/broken the ropes of their captivity in the past**, (Psalm 129:1-7).

**Note**: “Whereas most nations tend to look back on what they have achieved, Israel reflects here on what she has survived. It could be a disheartening exercise, for Zion still has its ill-wishers. But the singers take courage from the past, facing God with gratitude and their enemies with defiance” (Kidner, D. ([*Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/totc19psbus?ref=Bible.Ps129&off=27&ctx=29.+Persecuted+Zion%0a~Whereas+most+nations), Vol. 16, 480).

 “The psalmist encouraged Israel to testify (**let Israel say**; cf. 124:1) that the wicked who had continued to oppress them from the beginning had **not** been victorious” (Ross, A. P. “[Psalms](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkc?ref=Bible.Ps129.1-2&off=9&ctx=129:1%E2%80%932.+~The+psalmist+encouraged+Israel+)” in J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, 886).

1. **Israel’s recollection/lament** [as they approached YHWH in worship] . . . **was that they had been afflicted/persecuted many times since their earliest days as a people**, (129:1-2a).

**Note**: “We hear the cantor in verse 1 (as in 124:1) declaiming the words which the rest of the company will take up. The mention of Israel’s *youth* leads the mind back to the exodus, the event which two of the three pilgrim feasts commemorated. ‘When Israel was a youth, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son’ (Hos. 11:1). This was the best starting-point for reflections on suffering, as the cross and resurrection are for the Christian. Many of the later ordeals of Israel, unlike the Egyptian bondage, were punishments; but God’s character as *righteous* (4) and as rescuer (4b) shines through them all” (Kidner, 480–481).

“Israel’s recollection is one of frequent, almost constant, ‘affliction.’ She has been downtrodden beneath the feet of Egyptians, Moabites, Mesopotamians, Canaanites, Ammonites, Philistines, Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians” Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). [*Psalms*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tpc19?ref=Bible.Ps129.1&off=58&ctx=d+me+from+my+youth.+~Israel%E2%80%99s+recollectio), Vol. 3, 240–241).

1. **But, Israel’s acknowledgment regarding their many afflictions/**

**persecutions** . . . **testified that their persecutors had not prevailed against/defeated them**, (129:2b).

1. **Israel’s experience of affliction/persecution** . . . **was like having their backs plowed like a field by plowers who plowed a long furrow**, (3).

**Note**: “The two-stage metaphor showing Israel as a scourged man, and the weals on his back as *furrows* of a ploughed field (3), could hardly be stronger or more horribly apt. The survival of this people, so hated but so resilient, bore silent witness to their Preserver (as, one may feel, it has continued to do). Such involuntary evidence is strong, as far as it goes. But the Servant Songs visualize this witness lifted to a higher plane altogether: that of a willingly accepted suffering, first as the cost of speaking out for God (which is the context of the words, ‘I gave my back to the smiters’, Isa. 50:6), and finally as vicarious sacrifice—a task beyond the capacity of Israel itself (‘with his stripes we are healed’, Isa. 53:5). The New Testament, while showing its fulfilment in Christ (and in him alone, as to its atoning aspect), calls the church to follow in his steps, and shows the apostles rejoicing to do so” (Kidner, 481).

1. **Yet, Israel’s confession regarding YHWH’s righteousness** . . . **was that He had cut/broken the ropes** [of captivity] **placed on them by their wicked persecutors**, (129:4).

**Note**: “Confidence in the Lord is based on his past acts of deliverance (vv. 1–4). The curse (imprecation) arises out of a dire need and a concern for God’s kingdom, not out of individual pettiness. The enemies who ‘hate Zion’ (v. 5) are those who have no regard for God or his promises. ‘Zion’ denotes here the Lord’s presence among his people, his covenant and blessing, and hope for the victorious establishment of God’s kingdom. . . . The enemies of Zion include not only ‘the wicked’ of the world but also the Israelites who do not fear the Lord (cf. 125:5)” (VanGemeren, W. A*.* “[Psalms](https://ref.ly/logosres/ebcrev05?ref=Bible.Ps129.5-8&off=55&ctx=COMMENTARY%0a5%E2%80%938+~Confidence+in+the+Lord+is)” in T. Longman III & D. E. Garland (Eds.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms (Revised Edition)*, Vol. 5, 919).

“**The cords**—that is, which fasten the plough to the ox; and *cutting* denotes God’s arresting the persecution” (Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/jfbcomm?ref=Bible.Ps129.4&off=3&ctx=sents+all+kinds.%0a4.+~the+cords%E2%80%94that+is%2c+w), Vol. 1, 386).

“Still, God is just. He allowed these sufferings to be inflicted on us because we deserved them; and he interposed on our behalf when we had been sufficiently punished, and cut asunder the cords of the wicked. Cut, *i.e.*, the cords wherewith they had bound us. The ‘retrospect’ here ends, and in the next verse the ‘anticipation’ begins” (Spence-Jones, 241).

 “Deliverance from such suffering is attributed to the righteous **Lord** (v. 4). He had **cut** them loose. Perhaps the figure from verse 3 is continued here: God may have broken the plower’s harness so the plowing could not continue” (Ross, 886).

 “The same attribute of righteousness which compels Yahweh to punish, binds him to deliver, for it involves faithfulness to his covenant” (Smith, J. E. [*The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ots-wsdm?ref=Bible.Ps129.4&off=7&ctx=ng+the+back.%0a129:4.+~The+same+attribute+o), Ps 129:4).

1. **Israel’s appeal** [to YHWH] **regarding those who hated Zion, that is, those who afflicted/persecuted Israel** . . . **was that they may be put to shame and their plans rebuffed**, (129:5).

 **Note**: “The psalmist prayed that **all** his enemies **who** hated **Zion**, the city of the Lord, would be put to **shame** (v. 5). He prayed that they would wither up so they could not be found (vv. 6–7). **Grass on the housetops** suggests that grass seeds blown by the wind sometimes fell on flat roofs and then began to grow but withered because of no depth of soil” (Ross, 886).

1. **The curse Israel desired YHWH to place upon their afflicters/ persecutors** . . . **was that they might be like grass on a rooftop that withers before it can grow and cannot be harvested and preserved**, (129:6-7).

**Note**: “If *Zion* were no more than a capital city, this imprecation on its enemies would be mere petulance and bluster. But in the Psalter Zion is ‘the city of our God’ (48:1), ‘the mount … for his abode’ (68:16) and the destined mother-city of the world. . . . It is only appropriate, speaking in those terms, that those who reject her should wither (6f.); leaving metaphors aside, they are not only choosing the way of hate, which is soul-destroying, but setting themselves against God, which is suicide.

“The simile of fading grass (6f.) is not reserved for enemies alone, but applied to man in general in 90:5f.; Isaiah 40:6–8, over against the Word of God, whose eternity we can share (1 Pet. 1:23ff.; 1 John 2:17)” (Kidner, 481).

(**Theological**: What it means for God’s people **ALWAYS**)

**THE PERSECUTIONS SUFFERED BY GOD’S OWN KINGDOM SUBJECTS**

. . . **WILL BE TERMINATED BY HIS RIGHTEOUS POWER AND**

**WILL RESULT IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED PERSECUTORS BUT HEAVENLY REWARD FOR THE FAITHFUL**,

(Psalm 129:1-7; Matthew 5:10-12).

1. **The persecutions suffered by God’s own people** . . . **will be terminated by His righteous power and covenant-loyalty**, (Psalm 129:1-4).
2. **The persecutions suffered by God’s own people** . . . **will result in the destruction of the wicked persecutors**, (Psalm 129:5-7).
3. **The persecutions suffered by Jesus’ Kingdom subjects because of their righteousness** . . . **will result in heavenly reward**, (Matthew 5:10-12).

(**Pedagogical**: What it means for us **TODAY**)

**ENDURE UNJUSTIFIED PERSECUTIONS, INSULTS, AND SLANDER**

**FOR THE SAKE OF THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM:**

**DO RIGHT UNTIL THE STARS FALL**,

(Psalm 129:1-7; Matthew 5:10-12).

1. Persecutions have always afflicted God’s people, (Psalm 129:1-2a, 3).

(The Egyptians, Moabites, Mesopotamians, Canaanites, Ammonites, Philistines, Syrians, Assyrians, and Babylonians all persecuted Israel.)

(Abel, Noah, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, and Jeremiah to name a few.)

1. Don’t despair: God’s righteous covenant-loyalty has always terminated persecutions in due time, (Psalm 129:2b, 4).
2. Don’t despair: Those who persecute God’s people will be punished, (Psalm 129:5-7).
3. Keep living the righteous life of a Kingdom subject until the King returns, (Matthew 5:10-12).
4. CLAIM: Kingdom subjects are blessed, happy, whole, in shalom, (5:10a, 11a).
5. CHARACTER: Happy Kingdom subjects will . . . Rejoice and be glad when they suffer unjust persecution for the sake of King Jesus, (5:12a).
6. CAUSE: You will be blessed with great heavenly reward and you will be found in the company of the Great Ones who suffered before you, (5:12b).
7. CHARGE: **Suffer persecution, endure insults, and slander for the sake of the King and His Kingdom**, (5:10b, 11b).