

Blessed are the persecuted

Matthew 5: 10
1st August 2021



Call to worship

“If you find the godless world is hating you, remember it got its start hating me. If you lived on the world’s terms, the world would love you as one of its own. But since I picked you



to live on God's terms and no longer on the world's terms, the world is going to hate you."

John 15:18-19 (The Message)



Must Jesus bear
the cross alone?



Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.



How happy are the saints above,
Who once went sorrowing here!
But now they taste unmingled love,
And joy without a tear.



The consecrated cross I'll bear
Till death shall set me free;
And then go home my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me.



Upon the crystal pavement down
At Jesus' pierced feet,
Joyful I'll cast my golden crown
And His dear Name repeat.



O precious cross! O glorious crown!
O resurrection day!
When Christ the Lord from heaven
comes down
And bears my soul away.



Opening prayer

For all whose day starts with anxiety, as they leave the security of home worrying about the risk of infection; particularly those whose health or age classifies them as vulnerable,



Loving God, be close, keep them safe,
along with all whose tasks today
include the care of the frail and elderly.
And for all of us, grant wisdom to make
sensible choices, not just for ourselves,
but for everybody.



In the darker moments, when clouds gather and the heaviness we feel seems overwhelming, remind us of your love, carrying the weight of so much in that cross, embracing the world with arms outstretched, that we might know freedom from



The chains which now constrain us.
Bring us to your light, Lord, release
our burdens and from despair bring
hope.

This we ask in the name of Jesus
Christ our Lord, **Amen.**



Confession

Gracious God, You have given us a world of beauty ... and we have spoilt it.

A world to feed us ... and so many go hungry.



A world of riches ... that we are unwilling to share.

A world to care for ... and we think only of ourselves.

Forgive us, Lord, for those times when your heart is saddened by our selfishness.



For those times when we have no thought for others, no cares but our own.

Enable us to see this world anew as a gift from you, to be shared and nurtured,
and those who live upon it to be

loved and cared for.

We ask this that your name may be glorified, through the beauty of this world, and the service of our lives.

Amen



Let us say together a prayer for forgiveness.

Forgive us, Father, that we are often more willing to accept forgiveness than to forgive; more willing to accept your love, than to share it with those who have hurt



**us. Teach us to forgive, as you
forgive us.**

**Through Jesus Christ we pray,
Amen**



Assurance of pardon

Merciful Lord, you are the path of life, fullness of joy and pleasure forevermore, so we can be confident of this truth: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
Amen.**



How long?



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We have sung our songs of victory,
We have prayed to You for rain;
We have cried for Your compassion
To renew the land again.



Now we're standing in Your
presence,
More hungry than before;
Now we're on Your steps of mercy,
And we're knocking at Your door.



How long before You drench the
barren land?

How long before we see Your
righteous hand?



How long before Your name is lifted
high?

How long before the weeping turns
to songs of joy?



Lord, we know Your heart is broken
By the evil that You see,
And You've stayed Your hand of
judgement
For You plan to set men free.



But the land is still in darkness,
And we've fled from what is right;
We have failed the silent children
Who will never see the light.



But I know a day is coming
When the deaf will hear His voice,
When the blind will see their
Saviour,
And the lame will leap for joy.



When the widow finds a Husband
Who will always love His bride,
And the orphan finds a Father
Who will never leave her side.



How long before Your glory lights
the skies?

How long before Your radiance
lifts our eyes?



How long before Your fragrance fills
the air?

How long before the earth
resounds with songs of joy?



Matthew 5: 10

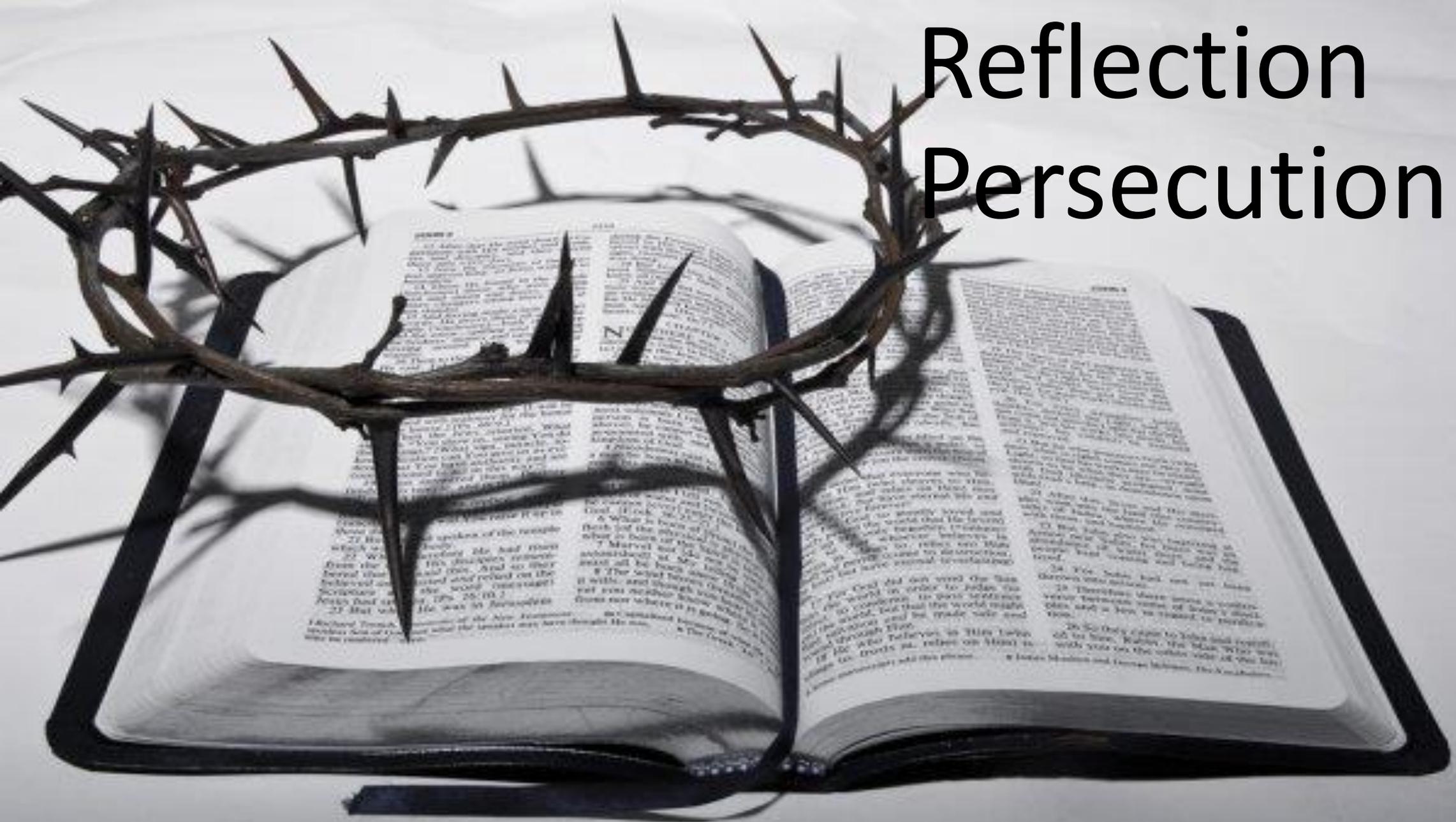
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' (NIV)



Blessed [comforted by inner peace and God's love] are those who are persecuted for doing that which is morally right, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [both now and forever]. (AMP)



Reflection Persecution



King of the world



I try to fit you in the walls inside
my mind

I try to keep you safely in between
the lines



I try to put you in the box that I've
designed

I try to pull you down so we are
eye to eye



When did I forget that you've
always been

The king of the world?

I try to take life back right out of the
hands

Of the king of the world



How could I make you so small
When you're the one who holds it all
When did I forget that you've always
been
The king of the world?



Just a whisper of your voice can
tame the seas

So who am I to try to take the lead



Still I run ahead and think I'm
strong enough

When you're the one who made me
from the dust



When did I forget that you've always
been

The king of the world?

I try to take life back right out of the
hands

Of the king of the world



How could I make you so small
When you're the one who holds it all
When did I forget that you've always
been
The king of the world?



Oh, you set it all in motion
Every single moment
You brought it all to me
And you're holding on to me



When did I forget that you've
always been
The king of the world?
I try to take life back right out of
the hands
Of the king of the world



How could I make you so small
When you're the one who holds it all
When did I forget you've always been
The king of the world?
You will always be the king of the
world



Prayers of intercession

Sovereign God, we worship You and we acknowledge that You know all of those who suffer in Your name.

We remember those who are imprisoned for their faith and ask that they would join with the



Apostle Paul to see that even though they remain captive, their chains have furthered the gospel, not frustrated it. May they inspire and embolden their fellow believers to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.



God of all comfort, for those who are tortured both in body and mind, give them the grace to endure and to see their suffering as part of following in Christ's footsteps.



Merciful God, for those asked to pay the ultimate price; who are martyred because of their love for You, may they truly know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.



Father God, for those who are widowed and orphaned may they know the comfort that comes from Your promised presence even when they walk through the valley. May they be strengthened by Your Spirit,



enabling them to rejoice with the psalmist as they proclaim that the Lord will not abandon them in death.



Heavenly Father, we ask that You would make us ever mindful of our brothers and sisters around the world who need us to stand with them as they suffer in Your name. Teach us what it means to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and



by the word of our testimony;
we pray that we would not love
our lives so much as to shrink
from death.



Lord, hear our prayers and
accept them **for the sake of
your Son, our Saviour, Jesus
Christ.**
Amen



In Christ alone my hope
is found



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In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought
and storm



What heights of love, what depths
of peace

When fears are stilled, when
strivings cease

My Comforter, my All in All

Here in the love of Christ I stand.



In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to
save



'Til on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live.



There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness
slain

Then bursting forth in glorious
day!

Up from the grave He rose again



And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of
Christ.



No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny



No power of hell, no scheme of
man

Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll
stand.



Closing prayer and blessing

Lord, thank you that we are a family in Christ. Help us to share his love and legacy with everyone that we encounter this week. May we lavish Christ's abounding goodness



Upon our families, friends and colleagues. Holy Spirit, come and equip us in our workplace, guide us in our school life, and inspire us in our neighbourhood. May we be your hands and feet to the needy,



your words of affirmation to the
persecuted and oppressed and your
arms of comfort to the lonely.

Thank you for choosing to use us to
bring your kingdom here on earth.

Amen.



And now may the blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and all those we love, all those we care for, and all those we pray for, this day and ever more, **Amen.**



Go in peace to love and serve the
Lord.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

