

**“Lord of all—or not at all”**  
(8<sup>th</sup> in series on Beatitudes)

**Sermon Scripture: Matt. 5:10-12**

In New Testament times when a person made a commitment to Jesus Christ---it was very serious. It most likely was going to cost them----maybe even their life.

We are well aware of the early Christians who were thrown to the lions or burned at stake. These were almost the kindly deaths.

Nero---Emperor of Rome—wrapped early Christians in Pitch or tar----then set them on fire----sewed them in the skins of wild animals----then set his hunting dogs on them to tear them to death.

Molten lead was poured on them----parts of their body was cut off and roasted before their eyes----hand and feet were burned while cold water was poured over them to prolong the agony.

These things are not pleasant----but these were things a person had to be prepared for if a stand was taken for Jesus Christ.

In early times----Christ was Lord of all----or Not at All----and it is still true today.

**Too often today if a person attends a couple of meetings during the week for Christ and His Church---we hear grumbling---and we are told of the great sacrifice and cost-----**

**What does it mean to be a Christian??** Well, part of it should mean we are taking a stand for Jesus Christ--- --It is saying we are giving our life to Jesus Christ----He is the love of my life.

There are a lot of things in our world that we can give our life to----drugs----they control us---alcohol—does the same--sports-----even good things like----job---school----marriage.

Or----we can give our lives to Jesus Christ---when that happens the bad things begin to disappear----and the good things are enhanced. The Christian life is a joyous life----but it sometimes brings hardship

Marriage vows---for better for worse.....

When we give our lives to Jesus Christ---its for all times----if it brings about joy---Praise the Lord---if it brings about suffering---and it will---

if we are serious about our commitment---we say thank you Lord for counting me worthy.

Persecution wears many faces----at one time or another all Christians can expect to face some kind of harassment, snubs, rejection or discrimination----an attack on our self-esteem and this can be devastating---- that calculated insult----the put down----sometimes even from friends or family.

**Young people-----we know that peer pressure can be powerful persecution for you----the straight person can expect to be laughed at---made fun of---they will attempt to embarrass you---you will be called all sought of names----if you take a stand for Jesus Christ.**

**Do you know what our young people face?? Be proud of these young people---praise them----support them—let them know you are with them---even to help them up if they fall.**

Anything that is worth something----cost you----marriage---that cost you----but the love for that husband or wife more than off sets it.

In New Testament times----once a year people under Roman government had to go and burn a pinch of incense to the godhead of Caesar and say “Caesar is Lord” ----- and this is what Christians refused to do----for this title belongs to Jesus Christ alone----they uncompromisingly chose Christ.

Polycarp, most famous of early martyrs----was told sacrifice to the godhead of Caesar or die.

“Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?”

So he prayed-----“I thank you that Thou has graciously thought me worthy of this day and this hour.” He was roasted alive.

Yes-----if we make Jesus Lord of our lives----it will bring you joy beyond what the world can give----but it will also cost us at various times-----

Same for adults---in work place or in social life----take your stand---for Christ and His Church----at times people will put you down.

Count it a privilege---smile----be happy that you----little ole you have had a chance to be counted with the prophets and saints of Jesus Christ.

The message of this scripture----in spite of all persecution ----you can still be happy!!

In fact----if your faith in Jesus Christ is not costing you something you something-----you better take a hard look at it-----

If Jesus Christ does not take precedent over all things-----then He is not your Lord.

The scripture is simply saying-----Jesus hung on a cross----took your sin upon Himself---counted it a privilege-- --“Father forgive them”

His love for you---took Him to that point-----that was the attitude of Jesus.

We are free to choose our attitude in a given situation----if we don't have the right attitude----the put-down's the persecution can devastate us.

We all have some type of emergency equipment in our homes----flashlight----first aid kit----fire extinguisher---- or at least a telephone----we prepare ourselves for emergencies.

We need to be prepared spiritually----and we do that by spending time in prayer---Bible Study----worship---- with Christian friends---in small groups---

We need the Lord----we also need each other----early church did much more than just worship together-----they were there for each other in all these times.

In times when the temptation is to “become like” everyone else----when there is pressure----when you've been swallowed up by society----by Satan-----STAND UP---We are called to be different.

Don't stop doing good----what is right---stand fast---Stephen----Paul---Peter----Christians all down through history----that great cloud of witnesses-----they stood fast.

They knew that no matter what happens----even death----nothing can come between them and God's Love. Romans 8

<sup>5</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

<sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let me encourage you to “Forgive those who have hurt you---one of the most difficult things to do---sometimes humanly impossible to forgive----need divine intervention-----say over and over as Jesus said “Father forgive them-----for they know not what they do.”

When persecution comes-----we can do one of 3 things

BURN OUT----BURN UP----BURN BRIGHTER

Burn out-----is to give up

Burn up----angry at God and everyone else

Burn Brighter----just shine---shine ---shine----and say I still trust in God.

Scrawled on Basement wall of German home after WWII

I believe in the sun----even when it is not shining

I believe in love----even when I do not feel it

I believe in God---even when He is silent.

You see all of us have a great need-----the need to give our life to something greater than ourselves.

If you have a love for Jesus----made a commitment to Him-----that love will take Him with you through every part of this life----the good and the bad-----and you can and will stand up and shout -----Jesus Christ is Lord----My Lord-----and I stand with Him-----no matter the cost.

Jesus was persecuted ---whipped----rejected----crucified----yet no bitterness-----Jesus looking at people through the eyes of love and mercy-----what they could be----Peter----Mary Magdalene----Matthew----

They had belief that people can be born again----character can be changed-----you can become a new person----life can be beautiful-----in spite of persecution.

GOD IS ALIVE-----HEAVEN IS FOR REAL----JESUS PROVED IT ALL BY DYING AND RISING AGAIN!!

HE IS LORD OF ALL----OR NOT AT ALL-----WHERE DO YOU STAND???