Suffering For Righteousness Sake

Intro: The Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5-7) is one of, if not the, greatest sermons ever recorded. The Lord tells us how we can be blessed. In Matthew 5:3-12 “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” He gives us the key in a progression of attributes which we are to add to our lives. In this study, we want to discuss the last of these in Matthew 5:10-12 “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”, being persecuted for righteousness sake, or suffering.

I. CHRIST IS OUR EXAMPLE.
   A. In everything Christ is our example.
      1. Gal. 4:19 “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”
      2. Phi. 2:5 “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”
      3. 1 John 2:6 “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”
      4. Special mention is given in regard to suffering.
         a. 1 Pet. 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”
         b. 1 Pet. 4:1 “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;”

II. CHRIST SUFFERED UNTO DEATH.
   A. Phi. 3:10 “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”
   B. Heb. 2:10 “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”
   C. Heb. 13:12 “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”
   D. 1 Pet. 3:18 “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit:”
   E. 1 Pet. 4:1 “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;”
      1. Christ suffered = death.
      2. We are to be of the same mind.
         a. To suffer unto death.
         b. Our death is a spiritual death
            (1) Rom. 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
(2) Rom. 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, \textit{which is your reasonable service}.”

c. After we become spiritually dead, then we suffer in the flesh as did Christ.
d. When we suffer in the flesh, then we are referred to as having ceased from sin
(1) Rom. 6:4-12 “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 4For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also \textit{in the likeness of his resurrection}; 5Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with \textit{him}, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 6For he that is dead is freed from sin. 7Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 8Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 9For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 10Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 11Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

(2) Rom. 6:17-18 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

(3) Walking in the light.

III. \textbf{The Persecution We Receive is for Righteousness Sake.}
A. Mat. 5:10-12 “Blessed \textit{are} they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great \textit{is} your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”
B. Phi. 1:29 “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”
C. 1 Pet. 3:17 “For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”
D. 1 Pet. 4:15-16 “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”
E. 1 Pet. 2:19-21 “For this \textit{is} thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 19For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffetted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this \textit{is} acceptable with God. 20For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”

IV. \textbf{Our Attitude in This Persecution.}
A. It is not one of being ashamed.
1. 2 Tim. 1:12 “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”
2. 1 Pet. 4:15-16 “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”
B. It is one of being blessed, Rejoicing.
1. Mat. 5:10-12 “Blessed \textit{are} they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great \textit{is} your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”
2. 1 Pet. 1:6 “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:”

3. 1 Pet. 3:14 “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;”

4. 1 Pet. 4:13 “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

C. The reason we can rejoice in suffering is because we will be glorified.

1. Mat. 5:10-12 “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

2. Rom. 8:17-18 “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

3. 1 Pet. 4:13 “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

4. 1 Pet. 5:10 “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

5. Rev. 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Conclusion: If we never suffer for righteousness sake, then we have never been made perfect, been established, strengthened, and settled (1 Pet. 5:10 “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”). We have never really become a Christian.