



*Blessed Are
the Persecuted*

THE BEATITUDES (11)

10. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
12. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:10-12

Persecuted

Greek = 'diokō'

**To flee, to be chased, to be pursued
with the view to inflict suffering**

First Point

The difference between persecution and offence:

- When someone makes mean or unpleasant remarks we are offended for our faith, but we might call it persecuted.
- Saul, before his conversion to Paul, persecuted early Christians by pursuing, chasing, hunting and hurting them. He inflicted suffering on them.

Second Point

Persecution in Matthew 5 comes from righteousness.

- There is blessing from God when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake.
- Righteousness means justification or innocence.

Righteousness in the context of [Matthew 5:10](#) in our text means the goodness, holiness and purity of God, contrasted with the utter sinfulness of man and how mortal man can be made righteous with God. It is not the same as goodness. It is not in this instance relating to good works.

Righteousness in verse 10 relates to the proclamation of the Gospel.

How do we know this?

Verse 12 says: “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,” “for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

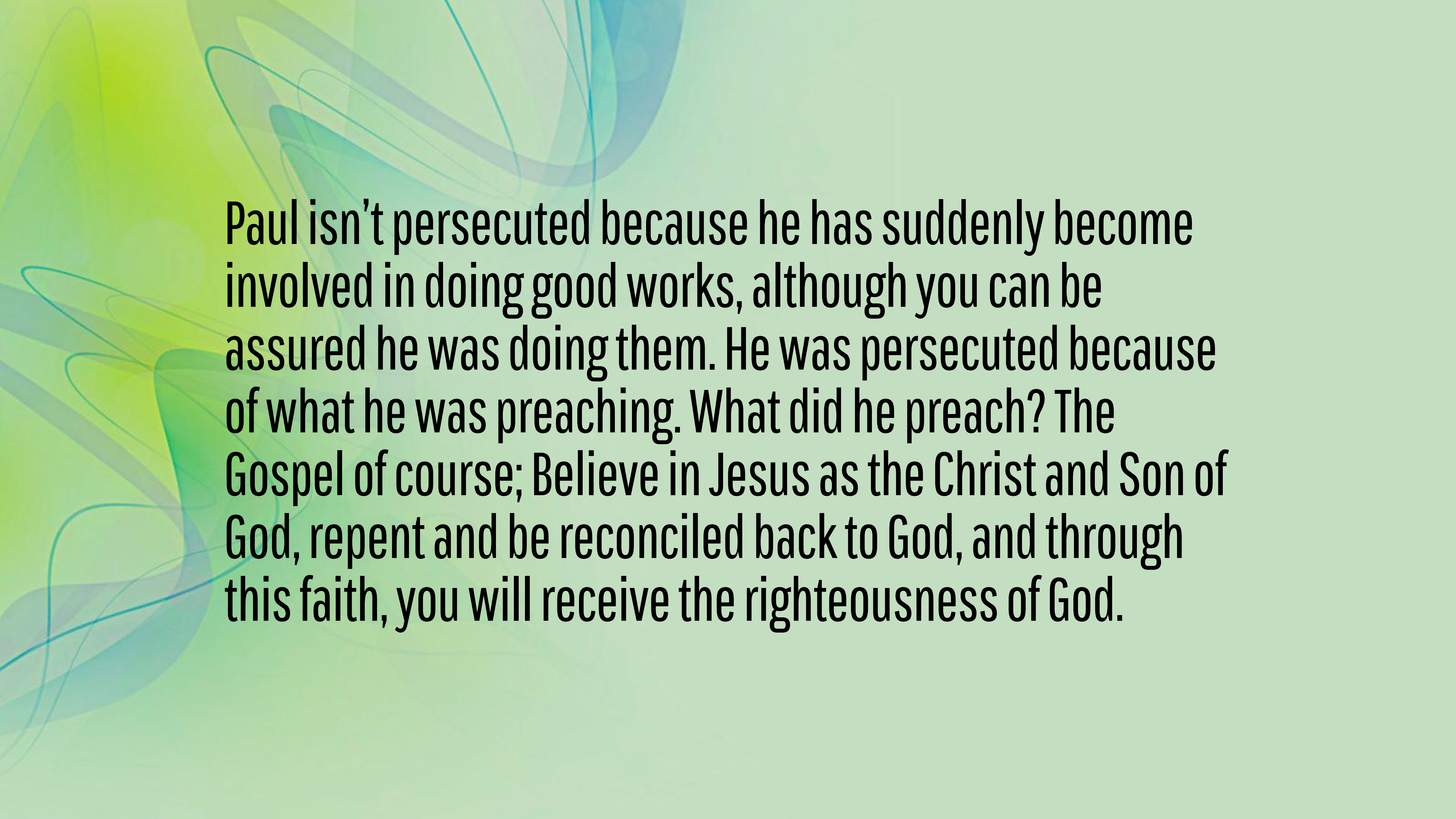
The prophets were not persecuted for their good works. They were persecuted because they spoke on behalf of God.

18. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
19. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
20. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

John 3:18-20

18. If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you.
19. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
20. Remember the word that I said to you: A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours.

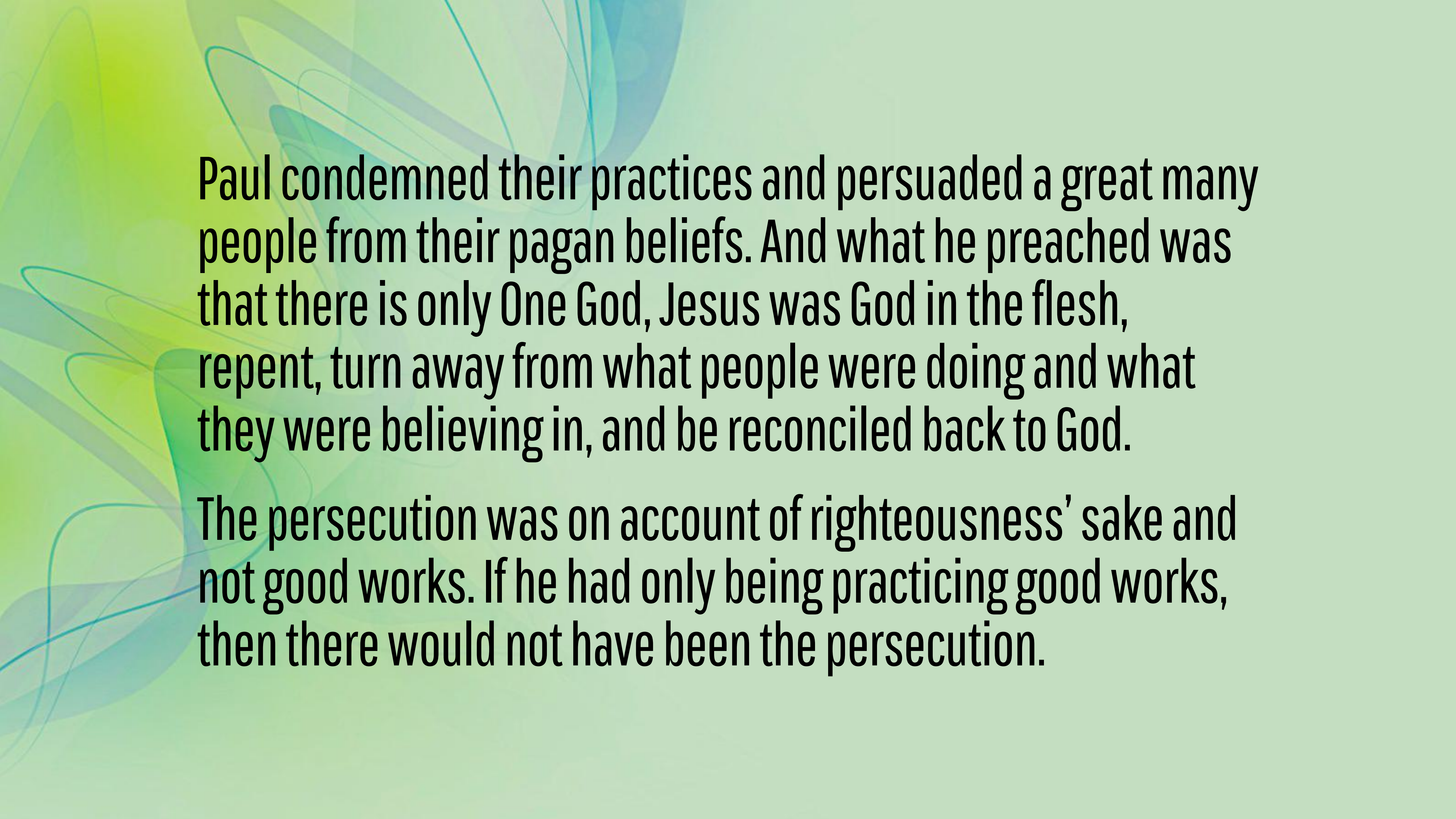
John 15:18-20



Paul isn't persecuted because he has suddenly become involved in doing good works, although you can be assured he was doing them. He was persecuted because of what he was preaching. What did he preach? The Gospel of course; Believe in Jesus as the Christ and Son of God, repent and be reconciled back to God, and through this faith, you will receive the righteousness of God.

23. About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.
24. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.
25. These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth.
26. And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.

Acts 19:23-26

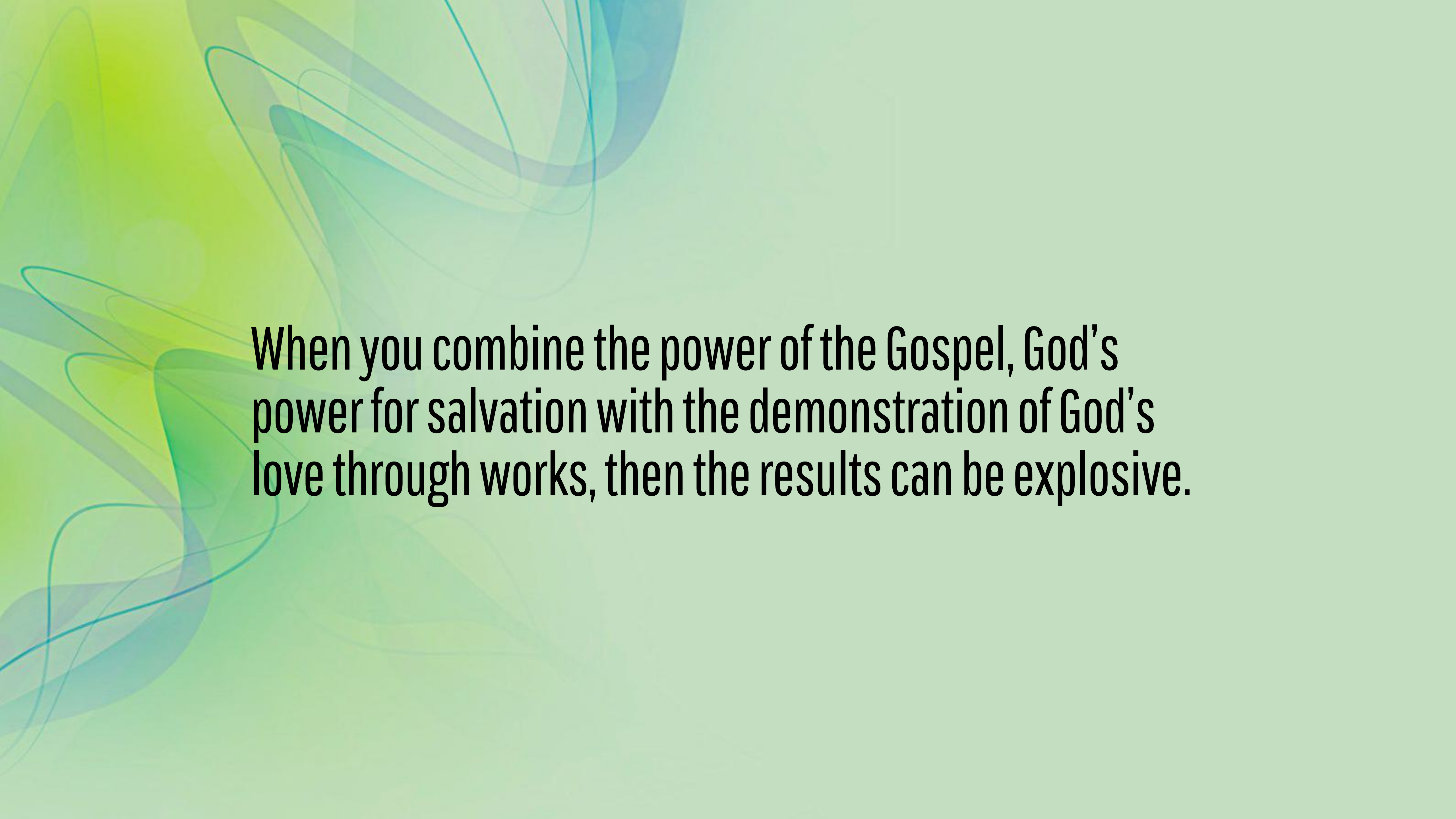


Paul condemned their practices and persuaded a great many people from their pagan beliefs. And what he preached was that there is only One God, Jesus was God in the flesh, repent, turn away from what people were doing and what they were believing in, and be reconciled back to God.

The persecution was on account of righteousness' sake and not good works. If he had only been practicing good works, then there would not have been the persecution.

When you ONLY preach the gospel, people will try to use persecution to stop you and to prevent you from revealing the righteousness of God. People do not wish to have their sins exposed and they would rather work out their own salvation through their own form of works.

If you are unable to do anything else for the Lord's Kingdom, then at least preach the Gospel.



When you combine the power of the Gospel, God's power for salvation with the demonstration of God's love through works, then the results can be explosive.

60% of Christians around the world live in places where they don't have religious freedom, where there is genuine persecution for those confessing their faith.

More and more people are being won to Christ despite the oppression and persecution that comes upon any who would not only confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour, but boldly proclaim the Gospel under such harsh conditions.

In the short time we have left we are to be about two things:

- we are those preparing for the Bridegroom's return**
- as Sons and Daughters of God we've got to be proactive as peacemakers and preach Christ and the cross, while we still can. And then when it is no longer safe to preach the whole Gospel, we still preach it anyway, no matter the cost.**

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

2 Corinthians 5:10

When **William Booth** was asked of the secret to his success, he said: I will tell you the secret. God has all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than me, men with greater opportunities. But from the day I got the poor of London on my heart and caught a vision of all Jesus Christ could do with them, on that day I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has had all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life.

The Gospel alone is God's power for salvation and the world does not like it. But nonetheless will you still stand for truth today? Will you determine in your hearts that you will not buckle nor shy away for God's righteousness? Although the Bible promises persecution for all who live in Godliness, **will you still take a stand for righteousness' sake, knowing that there will be persecution?** Because if you do, then [Matthew 5:10](#) says: **You are blessed.** And you are **demonstrating** that you are a Kingdom citizen. It says then that **yours** is the Kingdom of Heaven.

[Verse 12](#) rejoice and be glad, for your reward in Heaven is great.

And everyone who has left houses or brothers
or sisters or father or mother or children or
lands, for My name's sake, will receive a
hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

Matthew 19:29

Behold, I am coming soon! My reward
is with Me, and I will give to everyone
according to what he has done.

Revelation 22:12

Blessed are those who are persecuted
for righteousness' sake, for theirs is
the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:10

PERSECUTED: To be pursued with the intent of
harm and as we have seen even death.

RIGHTEOUSNESS: the justification that comes from
God to reconcile sinful man back to a sinless God.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3:8