

## Romans 12:14

Probably one of my most uncomfortable sermons and the one that I struggle with the most.

### I. The verse

#### A. Bless

1. This word is pretty extensive in the concept of the Old Testament and the New Testament and for us to try and cover the idea of blessing would easily be a half hour by itself
2. Notice blessing is used two times. Paul, by the leading of the Spirit, really wants us to understand what he is saying
  - a. It is a command to do this.
  - b. There is no room to decide if we want to or not. There is no faltering or hesitation in what Paul is saying.
3. The blessing also has two very interesting points
  - a. First, the point of this blessing comes because of a very real relationship we have with God
  - b. Second, the idea of this blessing is to seek the good for another.

#### B. Persecute

1. This word is solely used, in the Scriptures in the area of religious persecution
2. It is indeed seen around the world that majority of the religious persecution is aimed at Christians. And it is based simply on our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.
3. The reason is because Christianity is indeed the way, the truth and the life. It is exclusive in its claims and it is the one faith that is based on truth. Everything else is a lie.

#### C. Do not curse

1. Do not desire or speak a wish of evil on someone who is persecuting
2. It is also found in a wish to have something evil or a doom to happen to someone (We are not to wish even those who are our enemies doom).

#### D. Lastly, the idea of cursing and blessing in the same structure is not foreign

1. God speaking to Abraham – **Genesis 12:3**
2. Jacob's fear in regards to Isaac – **Genesis 27:12**
3. Balaam was asked to curse and not bless – **Numbers 22:6**
4. Israel's choice – **Deuteronomy 30:19**
5. God's judgment on Israel – **Malachi 2:2<sup>1</sup>**

### II. Our Example

#### A. We have no better example to observe than Jesus – **John 15:20**

#### B. What Jesus went through

1. He was attacked – **Matthew 12:14**
2. He was abandoned – **Mark 14:50<sup>2</sup>**
3. He was lied about – **Mark 14:55-57**
4. He was abused – **Matthew 26:67; John 19:1-3**
5. He was denied – **Matthew 27:22-26**

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1 **Mal 2:2 NKJV** - If you will not hear, And if you will not take [it] to heart, To give glory to My name," Says the LORD of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, Because you do not take [it] to heart.

2 **Mar 14:50 NKJV** - Then they all forsook Him and fled.

6. He was crucified – Luke 23:33<sup>3</sup>
- C. In all of this, notice:
  1. He was innocent – 2 Corinthians 5:21
  2. How He answered – John 18:23; Luke 23:34<sup>4</sup>
- III. Our expectation
  - A. We can expect to go through persecution
    1. Jesus told us this – Luke 21:12
    2. Simply living godly will suffer – 2 Timothy 3:12
  - B. History reveals that persecution against Christians is the norm
    1. Paul – Acts 22:4; Philippians 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:13-15
    2. 1<sup>st</sup> Century starting with Nero
    3. Even in recent History, more Christians have been killed in 2018 than in History – As reported by Foreign Secretary of England Jeremy Hunt. He says it is near “Genocide” levels and in many places Christianity is close to being eliminated.
  - C. How bad will it get?
    1. I don’t know. We are seeing the signs of it coming in our nation
    2. America was an abnormality in how Christians were treated...not the normality.
    3. Can things be reversed? Maybe. But it will depend on the church (not the building)
      - a. Christians need to get real about their faith...it is not an add-on
      - b. Christians need to repent – 2 Chronicles 7:14<sup>5</sup>
      - c. Christians need to be willing to live, talk, act and be different than the world
      - d. Christians need to put the things of God over and above any and all other attractions and desires
  - D. Why?
    1. I believe Paul answers this very clearly – Galatians 5:11
    2. He also states the steadfastness that we should have – 1 Corinthians 4:12
- IV. Our response
  - A. What should it be?
  - B. Well, what does Jesus tell us to do?
    1. We are to pray for them - Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28
    2. We are to rejoice in this testing for God is going to be honored – 2 Corinthians 12:10<sup>6</sup>
    3. We are not to respond in kind – 1 Peter 3:9
- V. Our hope
  - A. There will be strength in our suffering – 2 Corinthians 4:9
  - B. There will come rewards for our suffering – Matthew 5:10-12
  - C. There will come and end to our suffering – 1 Corinthians 15:54-58, Revelation 21:4<sup>7</sup>
  - D. There will be justice for our suffering – Romans 12:19

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3 **Luk 23:33 NKJV** - And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

4 **Luk 23:34 NKJV** - Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

5 **2Ch 7:14 NKJV** - "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

6 **2Co 12:10 NKJV** - Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

7 **Rev 21:4 NKJV** - "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."