

1. Connect

Question of the Day. When is it appropriate to begin listening to Christmas music?

2. LifeJournal

Last Sunday we read **Luke 24:36-44**. Share your SOAP application or prayer with your group.

*Next week pay special attention to **John 10:11-21** as we will be discussing this passage together.

3. Engage: Sermon Review + Discussion

This week, we heard from Pastor Albert in the eighth sermon of the Red Letters series. Albert preached from Matthew 5:10. Read the passage and dive into the questions below.

**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

1. How would you describe righteousness? How do you think the world describes righteousness?
2. The dictionary definition of righteousness is - "the quality of being morally right or justifiable". What does this tell you about what God asks of us? What he wants for us?
3. We've talked about what it means to be blessed by God. That it doesn't always equate to material earthly blessings. Have you ever had to make a difficult choice that you knew was morally right? How do you see a blessing in that decision making when it's so uncomfortable in the moment?
4. Jesus was persecuted because of His righteousness. Persecuted and killed. How might this change or deepen our relationship with Jesus when we are facing persecution and struggling to be "morally right?"

Apply: Next Faithful Step

We live in America where not everything is perfect, but we do have the freedom to praise Jesus freely and securely without fear of our lives. And that can make it harder for us to understand the complexity and severity of this passage. Jesus knows many who follow Him will

be persecuted and killed. So calling them “blessed” would sound outrageous. And highlights just how powerful Jesus is. He overcomes persecution and death! And there are many people in our world *today* that are severely persecuted and killed because of their faith in Jesus. They do not have the freedom to praise Jesus in safety.

1. Do you ever take your ability to praise and worship without severe persecution for granted? How can you live out your faith and pursue righteousness with our persecuted brothers and sisters in mind? How can you live out your life as an offering to God for those who can not worship freely?
2. The definition of persecution is “hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs.” Where do you see a form of persecution in America? If we are called to righteousness, what is our role in the face of these persecutions?
3. If you are in an environment where you’re being persecuted for your faith, who can you surround yourself with to support you? (...hopefully the people here in your life group!).

Prayer

Take some time to hear prayer requests from each member of your LifeGroup. Pray for one another, for your families, communities, our church, and the world.

*If anyone needs additional pastoral support or prayers regarding this sermon or any other aspect of our Red Letter series, please don’t hesitate to reach out to our pastoral staff. We would love to chat more deeply and pray with you.

