

Baycities Lomita Fall 2019 Growth Groups
Series: “Living The Jesus Life” Part 8
Theme: “Finding Opportunity In Opposition”- Week of October 27, 2019
Follow-Up Bible Study and Discussion Questions

Message Summary: Nobody likes the idea of persecution... but the church was birthed in persecution, Jesus was persecuted and crucified and rose on the 3rd day to life eternal, and the effort to stamp out Christianity and Christians has not stopped since then. The evil one has done all He's committed to eliminating Christianity and Christians. And the opposition is still there today! But we're surprised that persecution happens to people like us! Nice folks, well-meaning people... Southern California Christians. But yes, it is our reality too! Jesus told us that all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution! (2 Tim.3:12) It may be a form of political correctness we sense we must conform to... or it is a hesitancy to pray in public... or we see our kids face “indoctrination” in schools that runs counter to our Christian values and we were not consulted before a decision was made and these sessions became mandatory! And more is on the way! Open persecution is already big time in China, India, Middle East, Africa and making itself known here in North America as well. Yet, the secret to opposing persecution is simply-standing firm! You don't have to fix or fight every form of persecution out there, just stand firm when it comes your way! The gospel has many opponents, but the opportunity in that opposition is this: when you stand firm, you demoralize the opposition. They have no counter-punch! They don't understand why you didn't lose your faith and give in- because they would give in or give up in under the same pressures you faced! Your steadfastness is the resurrection power of Jesus on full display! It's the supernatural response to persecution and it turns opponents into wondering seekers... because you did not lose your faith through it all! You can impact your world by simply standing firm when tough times hit. Our greatest testimony may be that we follow Jesus and become overcomers- all that happens, when we stand firm for Jesus!

1. What did you hear in the message Sunday that stuck with you and made you think about Christian persecution? Describe any opposition to your faith in Jesus you have experienced. How did it/ does it make you feel?

2. Read: **Matthew 5:10-11** “**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.**”
 - a. Have you ever experienced any of the opposition to your faith that Jesus describes in these two verses above? How did you respond? Did you like the way you responded?

3. Read Philippians 1:28. “Don’t be intimidated in any way by your enemies (persecutors). This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself.”

Paul is giving advice and describing the blessing and the opportunity Christians have in their response to opposition or persecution of their faith. Discuss the following questions:

- a. What are some ways that you can show people who are opposing your faith in Jesus, that you are “not intimidated by their efforts?”
 - b. Describe how you would “Stand Firm” in each of those situations.
2. We could say that “Standing Firm” causes things we call “Blessings” or “Opportunities” to result in your life and in the lives of those who are watching you go through persecutions! Use Philippians 1:28 and Matthew 5:10-12 to form your answers to the following questions:
- a. What are some Blessings that you gain by standing firm in persecution?
 - b. How are other people impacted when they see you stand strong and not lose your faith as you go through times of trials and persecutions?
3. What are some ways we could positively impact our “circles of influence” by just **Standing Firm for Jesus** in the following places:
- a. At home
 - b. On the job, in your neighborhood, or at the market
 - c. At the gym or kids athletic events