

**Blessed are the Unpopular**  
Matthew 5:10–12

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

**1. WHAT Should You Be Unpopular For?**

“...for \_\_\_\_\_’s sake.” — Matthew 5:10

- There is nothing blessed about being unpopular for being difficult, sinful, or foolish.
- The blessed are persecuted for **righteousness**.
- Sometimes simply doing what is right exposes what is wrong.

“Everyone who does wicked things hates the light...” — John 3:20

**2. WHO Should You Be Unpopular For?**

“...falsely on \_\_\_\_\_ account.” — Matthew 5:11

- Jesus places Himself where “righteousness” stood in verse 10.
- Righteousness is not merely a **what**; ultimately, it is a **Who**.
- Following Him means bringing every area of life under His authority.

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” — John 14:6

**3. WHY Should You Be Unpopular?**

“Let your \_\_\_\_\_ shine before others...” — Matthew 5:16

- The same light that causes some people to **reject** you may eventually lead them to **glorify God**.
- Don't soften the claims of Jesus simply to remain acceptable.
- The difficult issues may be the very places Jesus uses to reach the heart.

**Are you willing to be rejected by them so that they won't be rejected by God?**

**4. HOW Should You Be Unpopular?**

The person persecuted in verse 10 is the same person who is:

**Poor in spirit** (vs.3), **Mourning over sin** (vs.4), **Meek** (vs. 5), **Hungry for righteousness** (Vs.6), **Merciful** (Vs.7), **Pure in heart** (Vs.8), **A peacemaker** (Vs.9)

We don't tell the world, “Become righteous like us.” We tell them, “Come with us to the Righteous One who showed mercy to sinners like us.”

**Reach • Connect • Grow • Send**

**Study Guide**  
**Matthew 5:10-12**

**Getting Started**

1. Most of us naturally want to be liked and accepted. Whose approval or acceptance is hardest for you to risk losing? Why?

**Digging Deeper**

2. Read Matthew 5:10–12. Jesus does not simply say, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted.*” What two reasons does He give for their persecution? Why are those qualifications so important?
3. Read 1 Peter 4:12–16. Peter distinguishes between **suffering because we have done wrong** and **suffering because we belong to Christ**. How can Christians sometimes confuse the two? How should we respond when the problem really is us?
4. Read John 3:19–21 and 1 John 3:11–13. Why can simply living righteously provoke hostility from others, even when we are not confronting them directly? What do Cain and Abel teach us about this?
5. Compare Matthew 5:10 with Matthew 5:11. Verse 10 says “**for righteousness’ sake,**” while verse 11 says “**on my account.**” What does Jesus appear to be saying about the relationship between **righteousness and Himself**?
6. Read John 10:9, John 14:6, and Matthew 10:37–39. What is so radical about Jesus’ claims concerning Himself? Why might these claims provoke stronger reactions than simply saying that Jesus was a good teacher or moral example?
7. Read John 15:18–21 and 2 Timothy 3:12. According to these passages, why should Christians **not be surprised** when faithfulness to Jesus produces rejection or opposition?
8. Read Matthew 5:13–16. The sermon pointed out something surprising: the same light that initially provokes rejection may eventually lead someone to glorify God. How should that truth affect the way we respond when someone rejects us because of our faith?
9. Read Matthew 5:3–10 again as one continuous passage. How should the first seven Beatitudes shape the way a Christian experiences the eighth? What would it look like to be unpopular for Jesus while still being poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure in heart, and a peacemaker?

## **Making It Real**

10. Where are you most tempted to soften, hide, or compromise something Jesus teaches because you fear what other people will think of you?
11. The goal is not to become **more offensive**, but to become **more faithful**. What is one way you could be more openly faithful to Jesus this week while also demonstrating humility, mercy, and love?

## **Prayer**

Pray that God would free us from the fear of people and give us courage to live faithfully for Christ. Ask Him to make us people who love righteousness more than popularity and Jesus more than human approval. Pray that when following Christ brings rejection, we would respond with humility, mercy, meekness, and love—and that God might use even our unpopularity to draw others to Himself.