

Panthers:

When you are insulted, persecuted, or slandered for your full surrender to Christ, do you endure or give up? The source of the insults might be a spouse, co-worker, friend, or foe. In any event, he is threatened by full surrender to Christ because he doesn't want to surrender something. When this hardship for our faith comes, we often attempt to satisfy our desires by giving up. In His eighth secret to satisfaction, Jesus gave us a different way. He said, "*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 5:10).

Who are satisfied? Those who endure persecution for full surrender to Christ are satisfied. "*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.*" Those who are blessed are those who are persecuted for Christ's righteousness, not their own. Have you ever been persecuted for your righteousness in Christ—your full surrender to Him? If not, then you might not be fully surrendered. Fully surrendered people boldly advance the kingdom of God through evangelism and discipleship, and at some point they are persecuted by others (Matt. 10:22; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:12).

Enduring persecution flows from the heart of Christ (Jn. 6:27). When Jesus was insulted, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to God (1 Peter 2:23). Jesus considered it joy to endure the cross so that those who would experience persecution from full surrender to Him would endure (Heb. 12:2-3). He told His disciples that those who endure persecution to the end will be saved (Matt. 10:22; 24:13-14).

Why are they satisfied? "*Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Those who endure persecution for full surrender to Christ possess God's divine reign, rule, and order in their hearts and lives both now and in the future. Jesus said that those who endure insults, persecution, and slander have a great reward in heaven (Matt. 5:12). That reward is praise from God based on our intimacy with Him and our relationships with others (1 Cor. 4:5). Just as persecution and suffering flow from our connection to Christ, so will our comfort flow from Christ, producing endurance in us (2 Cor. 1:5-6). Paul said that those who endure will reign with Christ in His kingdom; those who disown Christ will be disowned by Him (2 Tim. 2:12; cf. Matt. 10:32-33).

How are they satisfied? They surrender their persecution. Surrender says to God, "I can't. You can. I can't satisfy my desires by giving up. I can't endure the persecution for my full surrender. You can." This heart condition results in two behaviors.

First, we must bless those who persecute us, praying for their surrender to Christ (Matt. 5:44). Paul said, "*When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly*" (1 Cor. 4:12-13).

Second, we must evangelize others to full surrender. Paul said that he had endured persecution for his faith so that others would fully surrender their hearts to Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). He went on to tell Timothy to endure hardship and evangelize (2 Tim. 4:5). Jesus commanded his disciples to preach His gospel of full surrender enduring its subsequent hardships to the end (Matt. 24:13-14). Peter said that when we are persecuted for evangelizing others to full surrender to Christ, we are blessed because the Spirit of God rests on us (1 Peter 4:14).

Our desires will be satisfied when we advance Christ's kingdom of full surrender to the point of enduring persecution.

Satisfied through surrender,
Mitch