



Small Group Guide: The Forgotten Jesus

“Blessed are the Persecuted”

Ice Breaker

Question: Share about a time when standing up for what was right cost you something (friendship, opportunity, comfort, etc.). How did that experience shape you?

Key Takeaways

1. Persecution for Righteousness Is Expected

- Jesus promises that living righteously will bring opposition from the world
- Paul affirmed: "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12)
- The world doesn't hate us for our politics; it hates us for our allegiance to Christ.

2. The Bible Is Our Authority

- We carry the most reliable ancient text in history (66 books, 1,500 years, 3 continents, 3 languages)
- The Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the 95% accuracy of Isaiah after 1,000 years.
- We don't need to apologize for speaking biblical truth.

3. Faith Leads to Action

- Hebrews 11 (the "Hall of Faith") remembers people for what they did, not just what they believed.
- Righteousness isn't just received, it's lived out through our choices and behavior.
- Noah built the ark for 90+ years despite mockery and persecution.

4. The Value of Life Isn't in Length, But in Legacy

- Jim Elliot: "Lord, I don't desire a long life, but I do desire a full life in you."
- Charlie Kirk (31), Jim Elliot (late 20s), and Jesus (33) had short lives with eternal impact.
- Don't waste your life seeking comfort; pursue faithfulness.

Discussion Questions

Understanding Persecution

1. Read Matthew 5:10-12 together. What stands out to you about Jesus's promise regarding persecution?
2. Why do you think Jesus specifically says "persecuted because of righteousness" and "because of me"? What kinds of persecution does this not include?
3. The sermon mentioned that persecution in America often looks like "a raised eyebrow or a dislike online." Do you agree? What forms of persecution do Christians face in our culture today?

Examining Our Lives

4. If you're not experiencing any opposition to your faith, what might that indicate about how you're living? Are you surrounding yourself only with people who agree with you?
5. The podcast emphasized that "the Bible is a mirror and a map." When was the last time Scripture confronted you or made you uncomfortable? How did you respond?
6. In what specific areas of your life might God be calling you to stand for righteousness, even if it costs you something?
 - At work?
 - In your family?
 - On social media?
 - In your neighborhood?

Living with Courage

7. The podcast mentioned detoxing from social media "echo chambers." How might taking regular breaks from technology help us hear God's voice more clearly?
8. Read Hebrews 11:4-7. These people were remembered for their actions, not just their beliefs. What is one tangible action you could take this week that demonstrates your faith, even if others might criticize you for it?
9. Elizabeth Elliot and Nate Saint's wife responded to their husbands' murders by continuing to share the gospel with the tribe that killed them. How does this radical forgiveness challenge our typical responses to opposition?

Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Courage to live righteously even when it's costly
- Wisdom to know when to speak and what to say
- Protection for persecuted believers around the world
- A full life, not just a long life
- Hearts that respond to hate with love, anger with grace, and strife with peace