

## THE ATTITUDE OF LIVING BEAUTIFULLY IN A BROKEN WORLD # 7 David Yeghnazar

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

***Blessed are those who are persecuted. Matt 5v10*** (Read to v16)

David has an Iranian background. His grandfather prayed for revival there in 1950s. In 1985, post revolution it seemed impossible for the church, but now we're seeing God answering their prayers. Revival is possible.

This beatitude seems an odd climax to Jesus' teaching but it is the consequence of living the beatitudes - the lifestyle of Christ's kingdom - in a world that rejects this way. There is opposition to God's Kingdom. There is a cost to following Jesus. There is also a reward to faithfulness: yours is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Renewal and revival comes when we're ready to say "Yes" to everything that God has for us. Rev 17v14  
*They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.*

How has the church in Iran grown?

1. Lordship of Jesus. In 1975 there were about 500 Christians. Now one of the fastest growing churches in the world. Persecution forces you to ask "Is Jesus worth it all?" (i.e. losing family, job, home, career, life). Meti was imprisoned in 1985 for 9 years, sentenced to death in 1994, said that to live is an opportunity to serve God and to die is a better opportunity to be with Christ. "I'm satisfied to be in prison to honour Jesus and am ready to die for my Lord." His example has been an example to many.

Video shown of team member in prison speaking to his wife on video call. He was upbeat and has since been released. He led 12 prisoners and 1 warden to Christ. He and his wife are using Safar to disciple them.

Why are the persecuted blessed? Because they know it's worth it all.

2. Everybody plays their part. It's not just church leaders but "ordinary" people are sharing faith. A young girl was sold into marriage and abused. Became a believer, prayed for her husband who is now a believer. Whole family changed which affected community. 100's becoming Christians through testimony of ex-addict

Neighbours witnessed to a family that was about to kill each other (all drug addicts). Son becomes a believer and leads mother to Christ. Husband (divorced 10 years previously) hears of change, believes and remarries wife. Jesus is at work in midst of darkness and pain. How? Because believers are willing to share faith despite risk of imprisonment. Willing to pay the price because Jesus is worth it!

3. Growth of disciples. Rasoul (now in USA) shared his faith with Javad, former school-friend in Iran, now a high military official. Javad's son, Immad, was an embarrassment to him so was told to leave home whilst Javad had visitors. Aged 14, Immad left home and got involved in crime for 6 years. Javad asked Rasoul to call Immad who responded to Jesus. Javad welcomed him back. To get a Bible to Immad a "drop" is made by leaving a Bible, taking a photo of the location and sending it to the recipient. When Immad got the photo, he was amazed that the location is the very bench where he'd spend the previous 4 years in misery, pain and nightmare. God knew Immad's bench!

There is a reward for faithfulness. All of us can play a part in making Jesus known. God knows each of us.

- What does persecution look like for us in our situation?
- How should we be preparing for persecution ?
- How can we encourage one another?
- Who could you work with to study Safar together?
- Spend some time in prayer for those facing persecution today. (Ed: see [elam.com](http://elam.com) and [opendoorsuk.org](http://opendoorsuk.org))