

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 53)

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE CHURCH (CONTINUED). The church was met with resistance. Disciples were arrested, beaten, and threatened. Jesus said this would happen. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake..." (Matthew 5:10). One indication of radical discipleship is the willingness to risk persecution for Christ. When the Jewish authorities sought to stop the work of the church by threatening to arrest them, they prayed and continued, counting it a privilege to suffer for Jesus. When some were arrested and released from custody, "they departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name. "And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Persecution made radical disciples more radical. Here's the point. Nothing happened to the disciples that Jesus had not prepared them for. The people followed the disciples, because the disciples followed Jesus. The disciples were willing to die for Jesus (Acts 7). The church in Jerusalem was a community of joy. Disciples in Jerusalem were a picture of what the church should be. "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common...Nor was there any among them who lacked... (Acts 4:32-34). G. Campbell Morgan commented, "These people lived in the conviction of the supremacy of the spiritual over the material. The very life of the Spirit in them made the question of property a secondary question."