

Hagerstown Church of Christ

Loving God, Loving Others



WELCOME

October 18, 2026

- Welcome to the Hagerstown Church of Christ. We are glad you are here to worship with us this morning.
- Supplies for the Lord's supper and the plate for the contribution are located in the back of the auditorium.
- May God bless us all as we worship Him together.

COMMUNION

And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Luke 22:14-20 ESV



CONTRIBUTION

⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 ESV

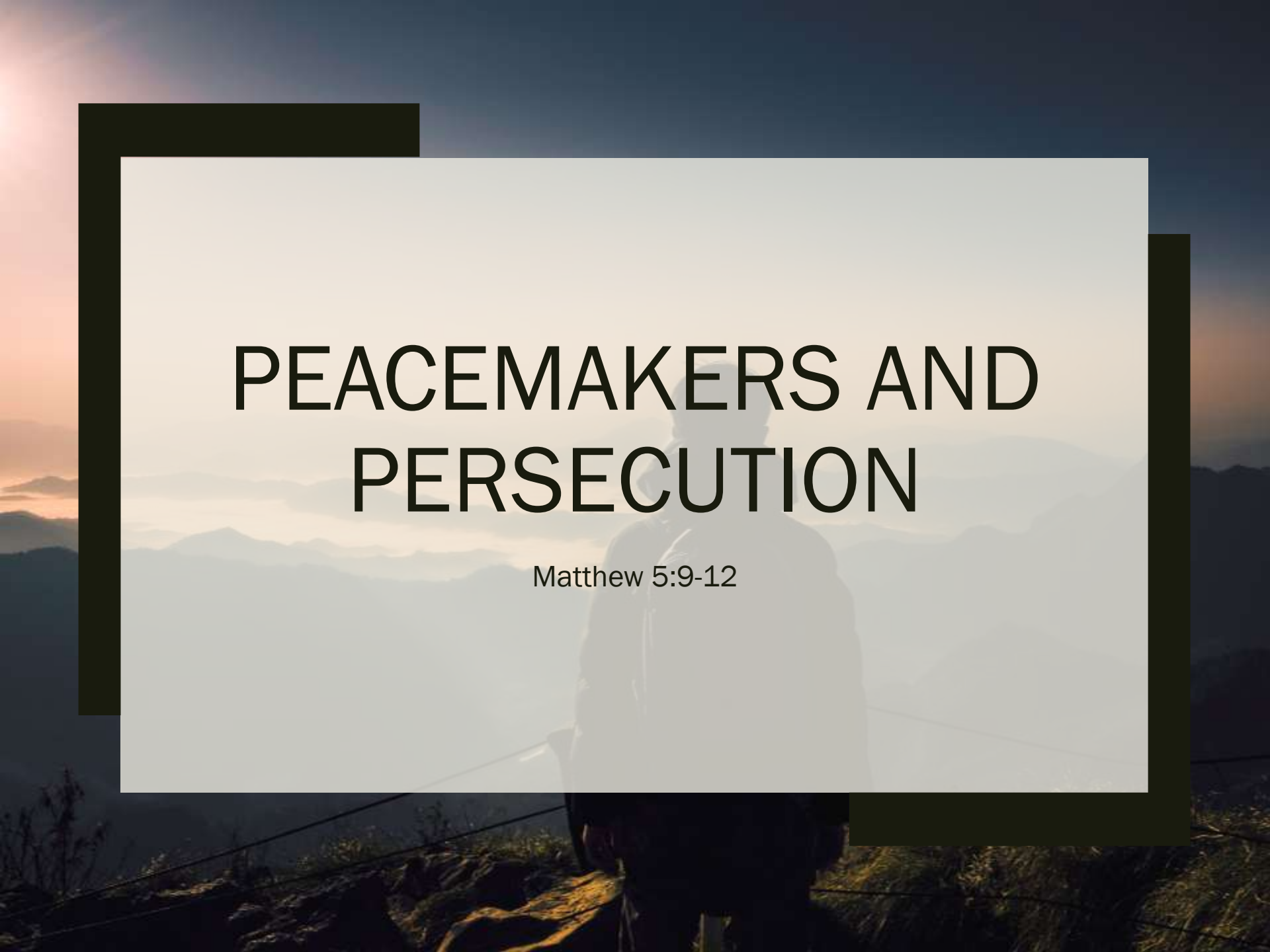
Scripture Reading –

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:9-12

A person is standing on a mountain ridge, looking out over a vast landscape. The person is silhouetted against a bright sunset sky. The landscape features rolling hills and mountains in the distance, with a body of water visible in the foreground. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

PEACEMAKERS AND PERSECUTION

Matthew 5:9-12



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Matthew 5:9-12

What is a Peacemaker?

- Not a peacekeeper! When we think about peacekeepers, we think about police officers, military or other law enforcement agents.
- Peacekeepers are not the same as peacemakers.
- A peacemaker is: someone who actively steps into broken or conflicted situations to restore healing, wholeness, and reconciliation.

Abigail

- 1 Samuel 25
- Wife of Nabal, who had refused to offer aid to the Israelites after his own shepherds had been well cared for.
- Comes out to meet King David to reconcile her household to David and prevent bloodshed.
- David recognized and honored her humility and tactfulness.
- Eventually became David's wife.

Colossians 1:19-20

¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

The Ultimate Peacemaker

- God is the Ultimate Peacemaker!
- All were/are at odds with God because of our sin.
- Made peace with us by offering the perfect sacrifice, reconciling us to Himself.
- We too should do whatever we can to make peace and help others be reconciled to one another and to God.

Matthew 5:10-12

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What is Persecution?

- According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the definition of persecution is: the systematic, cruel, or unfair mistreatment of an individual or group by another party, typically driven by prejudice related to race, religion, political beliefs, ethnicity, or social status.

Biblical Examples of Persecution

- Many examples throughout both the Old and New Testaments
- Daniel and the Lion's Den
- Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego
- Jesus
- Stephen
- Paul

Daniel 6:10-18

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

Daniel 6:10-18

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him.

¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

Daniel

- King Darius was forced to sign into law an injunction where no one was allowed to worship anyone but him.
- Daniel remained faithful to God and prayed 3 times a day, every day.
- Darius was forced to uphold his injunction and put Daniel into the Lion's Den
- God protected him because Daniel remained faithful and no fault was found in him.
- God remained faithful to Daniel.

Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego

- King Nebuchadnezzar decreed no one could worship anyone but his gods. He had a golden image set up to be faced when horns sounded.
- Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego refused to bow down and worship.
- They were thrown into the fiery furnace as a result.
- Nebuchadnezzar became so irate he had the furnace heated 7 times hotter than usual. The furnace was so hot, the men who carried Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego to the furnace died.
- When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace, he did not see three men, but four. The fourth who looked like a “son of the gods”

Acts 7:51-60

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

The Stoning of Stephen

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Stephen

- Stephen was full of the Spirit
- Gave a speech to all in the synagogue, including the Jewish high priest.
- Stephen spoke boldly, causing anger.
- He was stoned to death by the crowd.
- Before he died, he asked God to not hold their sin against them.
- Stephen showed mercy and love, even during the process of being murdered.

Paul

But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

2 Corinthians 11:21-29

Paul

- Went through so much persecution after his conversion
- Yet, Paul stayed faithful until the end.
- Paul and Silas in jail, praying and singing hymns
 - *Even converted their jailer and his whole house*
- 2 Timothy 4:17
 - *“But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it”*
- Paul’s focus was not on himself or his own wellbeing, but on his ability to effectively continue to bring the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all around him.

Examples of Persecution

- All the examples we saw, God's people remained faithful.
- Praised God through the storm they were in.
- Even asked for their persecutors to be forgiven.
- God will remain faithful to those who are faithful to Him.