Title: Resilient in Persecution
Text: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” Romans 12:14
Target: The journey with Jesus is not for the faint of heart, because there will be people along the way that will seek to break it.

1. **Existence of Persecution:** “those who persecute you” Romans 12:14a
   A. **References to Persecution:** (2 Timothy 3:12, John 15:1, John 17:1, 1 Peter 4:12-16)

   B. **Reasons for Persecution:**
      1. **Spiritual Battle:** There is a real enemy named Satan.
      2. **Biblical Worldview:** A belief in absolute truth defined by the Bible and the principles within.
      3. **Non-Conformity:** Choosing to call sin, sin.
      4. **Exclusivity of Jesus:** Claiming Jesus is the only way.

   C. **Recognizing the Who in Persecution:**
      1. **From within the Church:** 3 John 1:9-10
      2. **From outside the Church:** 2 Timothy 4:14

2. **Expectation through Persecution:** “bless” (2x) Romans 12:14b
   A. **Re-Clarification of Persecution:**
      1. **Defining your neighbor:** Matthew 5:43
      2. **Golden Rule Explained:** Matthew 7:12
         a) Leviticus 19:18: Omission of “as yourself”

   B. **Responding to Persecution:**
      1. **Pray for them:** (Luke 6:27)
      2. **Turn the Other Cheek:** (Matthew 5:39)
      3. **Give your Cloak:** (Matthew 5:40)
      4. **Go the extra Mile:** (Matthew 5:41)

3. **Example in Persecution:** “and do not curse them” Romans 12:14c
   A. **Reflection towards Persecution:**
      1. **Stephen:** Acts 7:60
      2. **Jesus:** Luke 23:34
      3. **Paul & Silas:** Acts 16:24-25

   B. **Retribution of Persecution:**
      1. **Saul to Paul:** Acts 8-9
      2. **To the Nations:** Acts 1:8

**Take Away:** Choosing to Bless instead of Curse can only be done when being reminded that God did the same towards us! Romans 5:8: “While we were still sinners (enemies), Christ died for us.”