



# THE HIGHEST GOOD

a series in the Sermon on the Mount

*Taking flak*



Pastor Wang Yi

*I believe that this Communist regime's persecution against the church is a greatly wicked, unlawful action. As a pastor of a Christian church, I must denounce this wickedness openly and severely. The calling that I have received requires me to use non-violent methods to disobey those human laws that disobey the Bible and God. My Savior Christ also requires me to joyfully bear all costs for disobeying wicked laws. . . .*



Pastor Wang Yi

*...my disobedience is one part of the gospel commission. Christ's great commission requires of us great disobedience. The goal of disobedience is not to change the world but to testify about another world.*



N.T. Wright

*Wherever St. Paul went, there was a riot. Wherever I go, they serve tea.*

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;  
perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9  
persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but  
not destroyed;*

2 Corinthians 4:9



"Saying Grace," Normal Rockwell  
1947

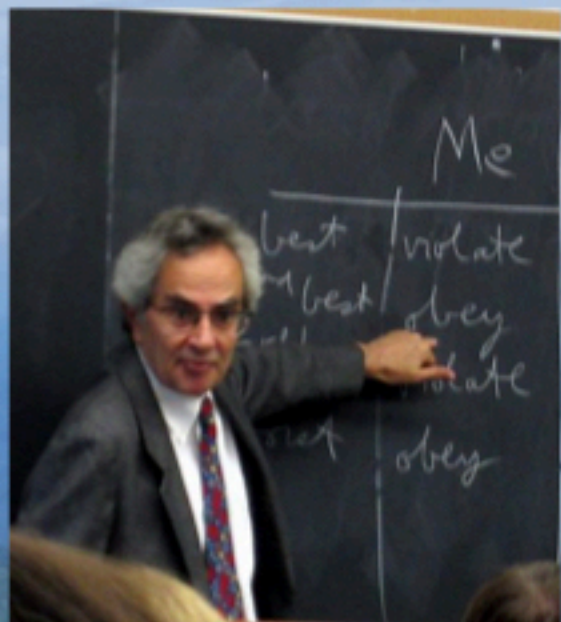
*[Christians] share their meals, but not their wives. They live in the flesh, but they are not governed by the desires of the flesh. They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, they yet live on a level that transcends the law. Christians love all men, but all men persecute them. . . .*

*Condemned because they are not understood, they are put to death, but raised to life again. They live in poverty, but enrich many; they are totally destitute, but possess an abundance of everything. They suffer dishonor, but that is their glory. They are defamed, but vindicated. A blessing is their answer to abuse, deference their response to insult. . . .*



*For the good they do they receive the punishment of malefactors, but even then they, rejoice, as though receiving the gift of life. They are attacked by the Jews as aliens, they are persecuted by the Greeks, yet no one can explain the reason for this hatred. To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body.*

*“Epistle to Diognetus”*



Dr. Thomas Nagel

*I am talking about something much deeper—namely, the fear of religion itself. I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.*



*It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.*

Dr. Thomas Nagel



*[I]t is just as irrational to be influenced in one's beliefs by the hope that God does not exist as by the hope that God does exist.*

Dr. Thomas Nagel



Dr. Robert Sapolsky

*... people's most fundamental allegiance is to the familiar. Anything or anyone else is likely to be met, at least initially, with a measure of skepticism, fear, or hostility.*



Pastor Wang Yi

*If God decides to use the persecution of this Communist regime against the church to help more Chinese people to despair of their futures, to lead them through a wilderness of spiritual disillusionment and through this to make them know Jesus...*



Pastor Wang Yi

*...if through this he continues disciplining and building up his church, then I am joyfully willing to submit to God's plans, for his plans are always benevolent and good.*

*...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*

Acts 2:23



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

*Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect*

1 Peter 3:13-15

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

v. 12

*Then they left the presence of the council,  
rejoicing that they were counted worthy to  
suffer dishonor for the name.*

Acts 5:41

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

v. 12



Pastor Wang Yi

*Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and my family — the authorities are capable of doing all of these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith; no one can make me change my life; and no one can raise me from the dead.*