

Being Happy When You're Harassed

Scripture Reading — Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad ...”

—Matthew 5:11-12 —

As we read these words, millions of Christians around the world are being persecuted for their faith. Some will lose their jobs or face government harassment. Some will be locked up in prison cells. Some will be tortured or even killed because of their faith in Jesus.

Many of us will not face difficulties like that for our allegiance to Christ. But we might hear taunting from classmates who laugh at us when we state our beliefs. We might have to put up with people who accuse us of thinking we're “so much better than everyone else”! Family members might be angry with us for our beliefs. If we take seriously our calling as followers of Jesus, we will face insults, false accusations, or some kinds of persecution.

And for this Jesus tells us to rejoice! Know that God uses hardships to refine and mature us as his children. He also shows us that as we suffer for our faith, we participate in the life Jesus lived.

When the world saw Jesus in all his perfection, they killed him. We must include ourselves among those who persecuted Jesus: it was our sin that put him on the cross. Yet Jesus loved and prayed for all who persecuted him. When we face the hatred of a sinful world, we will enjoy the blessing of God's presence.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you know what it was like to endure the persecution of this world. When others stand against us because of you, give us the comfort and courage to persevere. Amen.

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