

How to Rejoice When All You Feel Is Pain

They're always listening.

The world is constantly watching when God's people go through disasters, experience heartaches, and deal with bankruptcies and setbacks.

How will the so-called "God people" handle these trials? Will they grow angry and curse, lose their temper and drown their sorrows in the bottle? Or will they live up to this heavenly rhetoric they've been spouting?

The world wants to know whether our faith in Jesus Christ is just so much talk, just another religious alternative or the real deal.

God is going to give us the opportunity to convince them.

This might not be pleasant. But it will be worthwhile.

The Lord was preparing His disciples for the mistreatment many would receive in the future as a result of their faithfulness to Him. Expect to be slandered, jailed and beaten without due process, and put on trial for no other reason than preaching the Good News of heaven. And when that happens, you must not panic. You must not accuse God. You must not allow your fears to get the best of you. God is as much there with you as He has ever been. In fact, more so—He is using this.

"You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:18).

Now, when that happens, do not worry. Do not fear. Stay calm. God is about to do something very special through you.

"But when they deliver you up, take no thought of how or what

you will speak. For it will be given you at that time what you will speak. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks through you" (Matt. 10:19-20).

Caesar ain't coming to your revival, friend. So, we have to get the gospel to him in the only way available, in the courtroom where he sits as chief justice. You will be brought before him and he will say, "Tell us what you have been preaching."

When that happens, there is your opportunity. The entire court is listening—which is why we don't need any of your speeches. The Holy Spirit will do the preaching.

Your job is to remain obedient, to keep your cool, to stay calm and carry on. Your job is to remember whom you have believed, knowing that He is able to keep what you have committed unto Him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12).

The Christian on trial may never know—will probably not know in this lifetime—the effect his testimony had that day. In fact, it is highly possible his life will come to an abrupt end soon after that courtroom appearance. It's been known to happen through the centuries, and still goes on today, all over the globe.

But we're not just talking about preaching missionaries being jailed and put on trial. We're talking about all of God's people who go through terrible experiences in this life. The world will be watching and listening to see how you handle this.

They watched Job. In one day, he lost all 10 of his children and his vast holdings. Everything dear to him—well, almost everything—gone, in one 24-hour period. How would he handle that? Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21-22). We read that in all this, Job did not sin. Nor did he blame God.

Job's friends thought he was in denial. Some may have thought he had lost his mind. But neither was the case. He knew something.

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He will stand at last on the earth" (Job 19:25).

Listen closely, children:

Your heavenly Father will sometimes allow His special children to experience great loss and heartache in this lifetime. Far from being cruel or uncaring, He is demonstrating to the world that among them are still a few people—like you—who are anchored to the Rock of Ages, whose testimony rings forth of a living Christ and a true salvation.

Paul was one such suffering disciple. He said, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).

The early disciples returned to tell the church how they had been beaten without cause and threatened. And they were "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

"What are you going to do with such people?" asked the frustrated magistrates. "They don't surrender to beatings and threats. The usual punishments don't work on them."

Ask any high school student. It's a basic law of physics: *Fire burns brighter under pressure.*

The world does not get it. Never has, never will. They keep trying the old remedies that have only caused the gospel message to flourish and spread like wildfire.

But God's people have to rejoice in the midst of their pain. That's the secret: Not rejoicing by feelings but by faith. "I know. I know that I know."

The world will accuse you of being crazy or in denial. But here and there, one by one, people will see that you are the real deal. That's when they will know that you know someone. And many will turn to Him and believe.

In heaven—because you will probably be there before you see it—you will know it was all worth it.

Will you be faithful? In the midst of your pain, will you still sing? Will you remain true and steady?

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10b). {eoa}

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