

Easy to Say, Difficult to Do

Matthew 5:10-12

Matthew 5:10-12 (NASB)

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

¹¹ **Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.**

¹² **Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

God’s commands sometimes defy human logic. Take, for example, the command to rejoice in persecution. It doesn’t make sense until we realize the effect of praise—it keeps us focused upon the Lord and the good things that He can bring out of hardship.

The apostle Paul faced greater abuse and suffering than most of us ever will. He was beaten, put on trial, and imprisoned, yet he looked beyond those difficulties to what the Lord was accomplishing through his life. That is, though he didn’t rejoice that he was a captive, he was able to celebrate the great ministry he had among his prison guards.

If we believe God is in control and keeps His promises, then we must trust in the principle of Romans 5:3-5.

Romans 5:3-5 (NASB)

³ **“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;**

⁴ **and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;**

⁵ **and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”**

This passage assures us that our hardships have a purpose. Specifically, they develop our endurance, strengthen our character, and solidify our hope. Two immediate blessings of suffering are the deepening of our faith and the preparation for greater service to the kingdom. We’re able to rejoice because we are maturing believers whom God can use for His purposes.

The Lord will bring good from our persecution, just as He did for Paul. But if we allow doubt to cloud our faith, we won’t be able to rejoice in what He is doing in and through our lives. And if we can’t rejoice, we are in danger of giving up before God’s good work can be completed. Rejoicing keeps us focused upon the Lord and His purpose so that we may see our trial through to the end and receive our reward.