

Message of Hope for the Week
New Life Christian Fellowship

Have you been insulted, laughed at, made to look like a fool, bullied or worse because of your Christian Faith? What should you do?

Jesus makes a surprising statement about how we should react to such treatments, saying: "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way."

Now I don't know about you, but if people did these things to me the last thing I would feel like doing is celebrating – such a response would not come naturally to most people! Jesus' statement does not mean to say that we should not address people's unacceptable behaviour; it is more about our inner attitude to challenging situations. Insulting names hurt and make us feel horrible; perhaps if we consider these words from Jesus we can look at things differently?

Life has seasons, sometimes we laugh and sometimes we cry, but God's Word says we should always rejoice.

The early Christians were first reported to have been a close knit community who lived together in harmony, sharing all that they had with each other. They were full of gladness and rejoicing. Later, in the letter to the Philippian Christians, Paul writes about the challenges of keeping harmony, loving one another; giving instructions for Christian living.

In conclusion Paul wrote: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippian's 4)

We may think this request to rejoice is ridiculous, but Paul writes from a position of experience. He writes from a prison cell, imprisoned for his faith in Jesus.

Note that in the same statement about rejoicing Paul speaks about anxiety; a problem many of us face. Could rejoicing in the Lord be key to combating anxiety? Paul says by rejoicing in times of trouble, praying and giving thanks to God we can gain God's Peace in our hearts.

Next time we face anxiety and challenging situations we could try this. Start to re-train our minds by challenging the anxiety, combating it with God's Word; praying about things and remembering God's promises. Focusing on Psalm 23 helps me combat fear with faith.

Rejoicing is the way forward to peace.

If you want to talk or would like us to pray for you call: 01834 812839/01834 831533.

New Life Christian Fellowship meet: Kilgetty Community Centre, 10.45am Sundays, all welcome.