

April 8, 2022

The Lord wants you to experience real and abundant life:

Mt. 5:11-12 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, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (NIV)

Hate, exclusion, insults and rejection. These are all things that Jesus said we would face if we follow Him. Doesn't sound like the best recruiting video does it? And when you stop to think about it, all of these things happened to Jesus and His followers. But notice how Jesus puts this forth to His disciples. Blessed are you. Now there are many instances in scripture that don't exactly seem pleasant to our ears. How can we be blessed when people treat us with hatred, with exclusion, insults and persecution? The key here is Who we are connected with: the Son of Man.

All of these things happened to Jesus and even worse. Crucifixion. Even this word by itself brings out the worst in mankind's ability to be cruel. The Romans were masters at hurting others. This method of death was so heinous that no Roman citizen would ever be put to death in this manner. Add to this the scourging by the 'cat of nine.' The beatings that took place before. The ripping out of his beard. And ultimately being nailed to the cross through His wrists and His feet. Death on the cross did not come by loss of blood or by dehydration; although there was both of these. It came by suffocation. Ultimately, the one being crucified could no longer push up on his feet that were impaled to the cross. And because of this, they could not exhale. Have you ever had the breath knocked out of you? You can't breathe. It is a horrible feeling. This is what the evil one tried to accomplish through the death of Jesus. He wanted the Word of God not to be able to speak. But, the breath of God not only continues to speak, but by His Spirit, He speaks through millions.

Jesus knew all of these things would happen, and yet He faced it all so that we could have real and abundant life through His sacrifice. So that we could live in communion with the Father. So that we could enter the Holy of Holies. So that we can be with Him forever. And that is why we are blessed: ***great is your reward in heaven!***

Dear LORD, You have done everything that we needed to be in communion with You. We truly are blessed. We've been set free from the bondage of sin and death forever! Oh praise the name of Jesus! He gave up everything for us because of His great love. In Jesus Name, Amen