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✎✎✎First must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.✎✎✎1

As Jesus was rejected, we to will be rejected who seek to follow after Him. Rejection comes from picking up our crosses daily and following Him. However as we are obedient He through the working of the Holy Spirit brings others from the darkness into His kingdom through the new birth. I write this as an encouragement to us in Christ to march forward in Him and through Him. For He seeks through us to set more captives free, and reveal Himself through us to the world.

✎✎✎Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message.✎✎✎2

I. Responding to Rejection

✎✎✎Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracized you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.✎✎✎3

Count it as a blessing when you are rejected, excluded, and insulted for Christ name. Let it up lift your spirit brother or sister, since Christ tells us to act in such a way concerning these things! Yes it is true that we have been called to a new purpose in Christ Jesus, and we are now alienated from this world. However we have been pulled into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ! Amazing love that He would die for me, and all my sins cleansed away, and by His hands we've been set free! ✎✎✎Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.✎✎✎4 However Christ has promised that our reward as we follow His orders is to be great in Heaven. So when we are rejected for His sake let us be glad and leap for joy dear brethren. Praying at all times that those who know Him not, would come to know Him personally and be set free as well. For Christ said, ✎✎✎there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.✎✎✎5 Is this not amazing to think over brethren, and our Father in Heaven allows us to be apart of this wonder!

II. Beware of Success and Acceptance by Many

✎✎✎✎✎Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.✎✎✎6

Beloved if all mankind accepted us, then we would need to fearfully acknowledge that we are not following Christ, but someone else! For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.7 The Spirit who lives within us brings conviction on the world. ✎✎✎This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.✎✎✎8 The light through Christ Jesus reflects through us, and unto this fallen world where most want to stay hidden from Him. So be of good Cheer for the saints before us went through the same things.

III. The Two Sides of Being an Obedient Christian

✎✎✎If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ✎✎✎A slave is not greater than his master.✎✎✎9 If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.✎✎✎9

✎✎✎Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.✎✎✎10 Why, because He lives within us. Since He lives within us we have been changed inwardly,. This Change reflectively brings conviction on those who know Him not. Since most hate Him, wanting their deeds to stay hidden they want no part of us being around them. They are simply rejecting Him and persecuting Him through us as we continue to follow our

Lord. So let us not grow weary in good works, but be of good cheer knowing that since we are not of them anymore, but of Christ that this is why we are rejected.

IV. Mistreatment Comes From Those Who Really don't Know God.

But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, "They hated Me without a cause." 11

V. Our Comfort is to be Supplied by, God the Holy Spirit.

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning. 12

As Christ sent the Helper to the apostles so also He sends Him to live within us at conversion. Though I believe there is a greater empowering within this life for us to seek through Him. When we are born again this transformation occurs. Our Helper takes up residence within us. He the Holy Spirit testifies concerning Jesus within us through deeds and words. As we follow His leading we become stronger and stronger in Christ Jesus. Ever more so redirecting the light that comes from Him onto this fading wicked world.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort. 13

With all sorts of sufferings and afflictions also comes comforting for us and let us not forget maturity in our precious salvation. I certainly want to mature in our Lord as much as He will allow me to while we are down here as His witnesses! I know though that means we are going to go through all sorts of trails, tribulations, and rejection. Christ will be with us in the midst of them though. However like Paul we must press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 14 These sufferings and afflictions we go through can also be a big help to our brethren in Christ. As we share from them encouraging our brothers and sisters to persevere through them, by and through God's empowering, promises, and continually looking to Christ as their prime example.

VI. We Will be Persecuted by the Religious Crowd

These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. 15

Examples

A. Our Lord's Example

... came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 16

... And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?" And He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself!' Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to

hrow Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way.â€•16

B. Paulâ€™s Example

â€œSo Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, â€œMen of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, â€œTO AN UNKNOWN GOD.â€™ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, â€œFor we also are His children.â€™ Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked these times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.â€• Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, â€œWe shall hear you again concerning this.â€• So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.â€•17

C. Our Great Cloud of Witnesses Exampleâ€™s

Our beloved brothers and sisters through history have themselves been rejected by those who do not know our Heavenly Father. We have books upon books verifying the ever growing great cloud of witness that have followed our Lord in His rejection, and eventually death. Gladly accounting their lives and the things of this world as nothing compared to knowing Jesus. â€œWe also must â€œcount all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus Lord â€œcounting them but rubbish so that we may gain Christ.â€•18

VII. The Way of The Cross Leads Home

I must needs go home by the way of the cross; Thereâ€™s no other way but this. I shall never get sight of the gates of light. If the way of the cross I miss. I must needs go on in the blood sprinkled way. The path that the Savior trod. If I ever climb to the heights sublime, where the soul is at home with God. The way of the cross leads Home. O the way of the cross leads home.â€•19

Luke 17:25
Acts 15:32
Luke 6:22-23
2 Corinthians 4:3
Luke 10:15
Luke 6:24-26
Hebrews 4:12
John 3:19
John 15:18-20
2 Corinthians 5:17
John 15:21-25
John 15:26-27
2 Corinthians 1:3-7
Philippians 3:14
John 16:1
Luke 4:16-30
Acts 17:22-34
Philippians 3:8
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