

Persecution

- From our earliest memories, rebuke and rejection meant we needed to change.
- When rebuked by a parent or teacher, we accepted it as a clear indication we were wrong.
- Chastening has always been God's way to force submission and give wisdom.
- *“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him” (Pr. 22:15).*

Submission vs Rebellion

- Commanded to obey our parents (Eph. 6:1-3) the government (Rom. 13:1-5), and our employer (1Pet. 2:18-21).
- Chastening and negative responses have always made us feel we are wrong.
- Parents, teachers, coaches, preachers and elders used this to lead us to repent.
- A very fine line between being punished for what is right and being punished for what is wrong.

Jesus Revealed a Paradox

- *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Mt. 5:10-12*

The Conflict is Not about Us

● *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” Jn 3:19-21*

● *The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. Jn. 7:7*

● Jesus is the light of the world and that light is reflected through us. When we are mistreated because of him everything turns upside down.

The Conflict did not Begin with Us

- *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. Jn 15:18-21”*

These Rebukes are Because of Jesus

- *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; 36 and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. Mt 10:32-39*

The Lot of the Evildoer Becomes Ours

- *Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. ... 26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets. Lk 6:22-26*
- *Marvel not, brethren, if the world hates you. I Jn 3:13*

Must Keep Things in Perspective

- *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

1Pet. 4:12-16

Only One Way to Set Aside the Norm

- First, it is only for “*those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.*”
- Second, they must “*revile, persecute, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.*”
- Third, when “*hated,*” “*excluded,*” “*reviled,*” or given an “*evil name,*” it must be “*for the Son of Man’s sake.*”
- Can’t “*suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters,*” that’s sin
- “***If anyone suffers as a Christian,** let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter”*
1Pet. 4:15-16

Jesus used Paul's Life to Expound

- *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Cor 4:7-11*

Jesus used Paul's Life to Expound

- *Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Cor 12:9-10*

Jesus used Paul's Life to Expound

- *But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra — what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 2Tim 3:10-12*

Not Just Paul, All the Apostles

● *For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. 1Cor 4:9-13*

We Do All we Can for Peace

- *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Rom 12:18*
- *Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. Col 4:5-6*

Final Thoughts

- *I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Jn. 17:14-16*