

Loving Jesus and People in the Face of Reproach and Slander

I. ALL WHO STAND FOR TRUTH WILL BE SLANDERED EVENTUALLY

- A. The purpose of this message is to help people gain a proper perspective, respond rightly when people speak negatively about them, and not be fearful or respond wrongly. To revile or slander is to share negative reports about someone to others without going through the biblical process.

¹⁶Keep a good conscience [by responding right] so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior...will be put to shame [silenced]. (1 Pet. 3:16)

- B. Every believer who seeks to be faithful to the values and message set forth in God’s Word will be persecuted, reproached, or mistreated by both believers and unbelievers who disagree with them.

¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12)

¹²Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you...¹⁴If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (1 Pet. 4:12-14)

- C. Jesus taught that God’s people will be mistreated, even hated, for standing for what God values. Both believers and unbelievers are often offended and may even betray long-term relationships when they feel mistreated or see a believer embracing something with which they do not agree.

¹⁰“Many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” (Mt. 24:10)

- D. Jesus stated that His people would be hated by “the world”—people who do not embrace what He values. The world “loves its own” speaks of those who love the world and espouse ungodly values loving and siding with others with similar values.

¹⁹“If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world... the world hates you...²¹All these things they will do to you for My name’s sake.” (Jn. 15:19-21)

- E. Even family members and friends will betray each other because of standing for what they believe is the truth. It can be complicated, because often both sides feel betrayed by the other.

²¹“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents...²²You will be hated by all because of My name...³⁵I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...³⁶a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” (Mt. 10:21-36)

- F. Jesus knew that our standing for His words and values would sometimes lead to division.

⁵¹“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.⁵²For from now on five in one house will be divided...⁵³father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother...” (Lk. 12:51-53)

¹⁹For there must also be factions [divisions] among you, that those who are approved [genuinely standing for what is true] may be recognized among you. (1 Cor. 11:19)

II. HOW TO RESPOND TO THOSE WHO SLANDER YOU

- A. **Love**: Jesus set loving one another in the context of being hated for His sake. By loving people who mistreat us, we demonstrate love for Jesus.
¹⁷“I command you, that you love one another. ¹⁸If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you...²⁵[as it] is written...“They hated Me without a cause.” (Jn. 15:17-25)
- B. **Bless and rejoice**: Jesus called us to bless and not accuse, even those who accuse us. We are to love our enemies or adversaries by our words, deeds, and prayers (Mt. 5:44).
¹¹“Blessed are you when they revile...you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” (Mt. 5:11-12)
²²“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you.” (Lk. 6:22)
⁴⁴“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Mt. 5:44)
- C. **Entrusting ourselves to God**: The Lord will vindicate His people in His time and way. We entrust the situation to God by trusting His leadership to answer in His way and in His timing.
²³When He [Jesus] was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. (1 Pet. 2:23)
- D. **Privately**: If someone slanders us, we are talk to them about it privately that we might win our brother. If we want to win the brother who is accusing us, we must talk with him in private. If we only want to win the argument, we will talk about the person in a public format.
¹⁵“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.” (Mt. 18:15, NAS)
- E. If both groups operate with accusation seeking to win an argument, they will devour each other.
¹⁵If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! (Gal. 5:15)
- F. We will surely pay the full debt for unresolved anger in us towards those who slander us. We are liberated by blessing those who mistreat us, and by repenting of bitterness when we see it in our heart. As we act in the opposite spirit of anger, our heart begins to be healed (Mt. 5:23-24).
²⁵“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge...and you are thrown into prison. ²⁶Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.” (Mt. 5:25-26)
- G. I believe there is some relationship between harboring bitterness and stumbling in immorality.
¹⁵...looking carefully...lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶lest there be any fornicator...like Esau. (Heb. 12:15-16)