

Don't Chicken Out



“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

Luke 6:22-23

How many of us are ready for that one?

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you”

“Oh, but that would never happen here! Who’s going to give me a hard time for being a Christian? Isn’t this a Christian country? Maybe in Turkey, for sure in Pakistan. But not here.”

First of all, there is no such thing as a Christian country here or anywhere else on earth.

Never has been.

Never will be until the Messiah returns.

You can get away with more here than you can in Turkey. Nobody will lock you up if you go down to the town square and start talking to people about Jesus. But the real reason we haven’t been hated, excluded, and reviled on account of the Son of man is...

Because we’re chicken.

We’re afraid to stick our necks out.



Even when your best friend gives you the perfect opening to simply tell what the Lord has done for you, you clam up. We all do.

That's why nobody hates us, excludes us, reviles us.

And that's why people we know who are looking for help from above, who are lonely and discouraged, and confused ... are still stumbling around in a spiritual twilight zone.

Because we don't want to risk losing their respect by offering them a miracle.

What if the miracle doesn't happen?

What if I tell them what Jesus will do for them and Jesus lets me down?

One Sunday night many years ago - when we still had evening services down at the Church of Our Saviour- something made me announce to the congregation during the sermon that one of us would soon be proclaiming the gospel somewhere overseas. After the service Bill, who was the principal at a local school, came up to me and said, "I'm the one." And sure enough, shortly after we went to Detroit, Bill went to Chicago Mission School and then off to East Africa working as a teacher among the Massai Tribes.

One day after the land had been suffering months and months of drought and the herds of the Massai people were in danger, some of the tribesmen came up to Bill and said, "If your God is so good and so powerful, why don't you ask him to send us rain?" Bill was scared to death. They'd put him on the spot. What else could he do but say, "Yes" "Sure, I'll pray right now." So there in the presence of these tribesmen, Bill lifted his eyes to heaven and asked God to show his mercy as a sign of his love for these people and send rain in Jesus' name. Within 30 minutes the sky grew dark, thunder and lightning began flashing and crashing, and down came a deluge. Bill almost fainted. The Tribesmen were struck with fear. Bill wrote to us and told us about it. What a wonderful sign of God's love for these people and for Bill.



Years later, while I'm painting our garage door. Jean comes out and says, "Guess who's on the phone – Bill. He's in Halifax and wants to get together." We hadn't seen Bill in years. We picked Bill up at the Lord Nelson, and on the way to the restaurant, I reminded him about his prayer for rain. "That's only half the story", said Bill. "The other half wasn't as good."

When we were seated in the restaurant, he explained the other half. The Massai people were so moved by this miracle, they brought him all their sick children and begged him to heal them. "What if I pray for these kids and nothing happens? I'm not sticking my neck out on this one!" So, he sent them away. He refused. Then Bill looked me in the eye and said, "What would you have done?"

Here's a guy who's spent his life all over the world helping people. I stand in awe of this man. I don't know what I would have done if I'd been in his shoes with all those mothers bringing their children and asking me to pray for them.

But I know what I should have done.

And I know what I should have done in dozens of situations when I chickened out.

It may cost us. It may cause people to exclude us and revile us and cast out our name as evil. But who are we trying to please? Go ahead and pray for those kids and leave the consequences to God!

Do it!

Don't chicken out!

Of course, none of this is an issue as long as you think Christianity is simply a matter of belonging to a church and staying respectable.

But once you understand that **Christianity is discipleship—**

It's more than praying the "sinner's prayer" and getting saved.

It's answering the call that Christ puts on your life.



It's realizing that you are being sent to touch other lives with the redemptive power of God.

Even if you're shy, you're going to have to speak up.

Even if you keep a low profile, you're going to be put on the spot.

Just like those Massai tribesmen put Bill on the spot, sometimes the Spirit of God puts you on the spot.

You're visiting a neighbor at the general store, a big, burly truck driver who hasn't been inside a church since he was 10 years old. Something inside tells you that you should offer to pray for this guy. "This is crazy. I've never prayed out loud for anybody in my life." "Too bad", says this voice inside you, "Do it!" "What if he chases me out of the room?" "Do it!" "Ed, would you let me pray for you?" He sighs, "Please do." So you take hold of his hand and pray. You don't even know what's going to come out of your mouth. You don't know how to pray for people. But you know the Spirit of God is nudging you this way, so you trust him to give you the words *and he does*. When it's over, your neighbor's face is soaking wet and he thanks you.

Don't worry about the consequences - the consequences belong to God.

All you have to worry about is to do what God is showing you to do.

Once I was attending a death bed. The wife of the dying man took me aside and asked, "Do you give the last rites?" What am I going to say? Am I going to confess to her that I haven't a clue how to give the last rites? What answer could I give her but yes? We do the best we can - we said some psalms,

anointed him with oil, prayed. The Spirit came into that room. We felt the peace of God. Never have I experienced the presence of God at a death bed as we did that evening.

God always sees you through.

The more inadequate you feel, the better it is.

“God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness.”

When God puts you into a situation where somebody needs a word, a prayer, a touch in his name, the helping hand of the Lord....



Do what your heart tells you.... what God’s Spirit tells you to do...

.... and leave the consequences with God.

The big drawback in these special moments which God sends to each of us - the thing that causes us to chicken out - is fear.

Fear that people will hate us, exclude us, revile us, cast out our name as evil.

They might even laugh at us.

How do you get over this fear?

By accepting the fact that there will be people who will hate us, exclude us, revile us, and cast out our names as evil on account of the Son of Man.

But when this happens to us, it’s okay. It’s time to rejoice!

That’s what they did to the prophets.

That’s what they did to Jesus.

Why *not us*?

If you want to win friends and influence people, go to a Dale Carnegie course.

If you want to make it big, follow Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, or Jeff Bezos.

But if you want to be of use to the redeeming purpose of God in this crazy world.....

....follow Jesus....

Expecting the same treatment from the world that he got - and when you get that treatment....

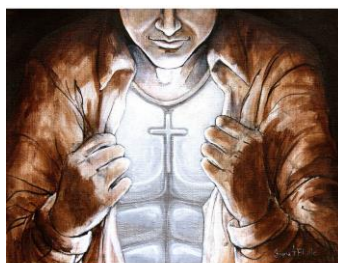
Don't cry about it - rejoice!

Now you're free - free to talk to people about the things that count because you're not worried about how you look to them.

You're free to reach out to that grouchy neighbor.

You're free to say "yes" when they ask you to pray for the impossible.

It's called boldness.



It's the freedom from the fear of man.... and it's yours and mine for the asking once we get over this one hump....

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

Prayer- Lord give us the courage, the insight, and the motivation to reach out and speak to the people we interact with. Forgive us for the many, many times we chickened out. May we take and make openings in which we can listen well to others, we can pray with them for their needs and sorrows, and we can speak to them of your tender mercy. Give us such vision, such love, such faith that we will not fear our prayers will go unanswered, that we will not fear rejection, that we will not fear being reviled or persecuted. Give us a deep trust in you Lord that you will answer prayers and meet needs in your perfect way. Give us a wonderful sense of freedom and joy because you, you are with us in this and it is our honor and joy to be the vessels that pour out your holy redemptive power to any we interact with in our daily lives. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

*Message: Richard E. Bieber 2001 Nova Scotia... slightly edited to suit the times 2023 by Maranatha Mirror
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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN