

Read: Luke 6:20-23

Rejoice in Your Defeat

Luke 6:23

“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever been a team captain and gotten to choose your teammates? Whom did you pick? If you were picking a basketball team, did you want the slowest players? Did you want the worst shooters? Did you choose the people who will help you lose the game? Or what about on a review day in school? Which side did you want to be on? Did you want to be teamed up with your classmates who never pay attention? Or with the ones who are really quiet and never answer questions? Did you want to be on the side that never wins?

Probably not. You want to be with the best. You choose the people who are going to help you win. You want to win. Even if you yourself are not the best player on the team or the smartest person in your class, you want to be on the side that wins.

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus tells us that the life of a Christian may sometimes feel like being on the losing side. Jesus upset people with his teaching. Many responded with hate, angry looks, and cutting comments. Followers of Jesus can expect to be treated the same way. It can be embarrassing. It can be painful. It can be sad. It can be really hard.

In those times when being a Christian feels like being on the losing team, Jesus says to rejoice. Rejoice in your defeat. How can Jesus say that? How can you believe it? Remember, being a Christian means that you know you are a sinner. You cannot do anything to earn heaven. Heaven is a gift that God has given you. Because Jesus gave up everything for us, we gain everything.

So when you suffer because of him, it puts the focus where it belongs: on Jesus. He takes all of the embarrassment, all of the pain, and all of the sadness that you and I feel and brings it to the cross. And at the cross, Jesus earned for you a life without pain or embarrassment or sadness. Rejoice in your defeat. It puts the focus where it belongs: on his victory for you.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name one thing that you are really good at.
- God's Word tells us no matter how good we are, we can't ever be perfect. Who makes us perfect? How?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Have you ever felt embarrassed because of being a Christian? How does today's devotion help explain why it happened?
- Through faith, you actually are on the "winning team" with Jesus. How can you invite others to join the "Jesus Team"?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How do you deal with situations where others hate, exclude, and/or insult you because of your faith?
- *Agree or Disagree:* God wants us to be happy during our lives on earth.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, keep my eyes fixed always on your victory for me on the cross and at the empty tomb. Amen.