Dear Open Door Family,

Carol and I had the wonderful privilege of staying with Corrie and Bethamy Anderson for a week while we visited them in Guadalajara, Mexico. It was a joy to see them and to and be a part of their ministry for a few days. They are doing some amazing things in their ministry to young people. One of the things that Carol and I were reminded of was that life is often harder in small ways which can add up over time. There are many things which are simply harder to do. Please understand they never complained or even made it seem like these things were hard. They accepted them as part of life. People who don't know the Lord would think that they were throwing away their lives and their education and putting up with these things for no good reason. Yet Corrie and Bethamy know that God has called them and has given them the privilege of serving Him and His church. So they see the hard things as coming from God's hand for His purposes and something to be received with joy and thanksgiving. Here are some verses to encourage all of us in this way.

Luke 6:22-23 (NIV) Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. [23] "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

Matthew 5:11 (NIV) Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Look at what these verses say. Jesus said I am Blessed IF I am - hated - excluded - insulted - rejected - persecuted - and falsely accused because of Christ. How in the world is that a blessing? Two separate sources shed light on this: ***Blessed*** *is a state of well-being in relationship to God that belongs to those who respond to the message of Jesus.* (ESV St. Bible) First, we are blessed because we can call Jesus our Lord and Savior. What an amazing thing; the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe is our Lord. ***Blessed*** *means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances.* (Life App St. Bible) Second, we are blessed no matter what the outward circumstances may be - so if I am treated badly *because of the Son of Man*. If we are treated in these ways simply because we are following whole-heartedly after our Lord Jesus, then we are blessed. If as we live our lives representing Jesus to the best of our abilities we are mistreated or put down in some way because of our faith in Him, then He promises that we are Blessed! How? We are blessed because we have God's strength in us giving us the ability to continue to do all that God asks us to do. His blessing also means that Jesus gives us the comfort we need to face the difficulties that come with standing firm in our faith.

PRAYER: Lord God, help me to Hang on to You no matter what the situation or outward circumstances may be. Please help me to see the hard things that may come my way as a blessing from You and may I honor You by how I respond and react to them. Help me Lord to Trust You even when things are hard and I may not feel like it. Lord, that is when I need Your help even more.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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