

“Blessed Are You When Men...Exclude You” (Luke 6:22)

by Bryan Gibson

Stand up for what’s right, and you won’t be in the “in crowd” very long. Soon enough, they’ll let you know, verbally or otherwise, that you’re not welcome in their group any more. You may not like it, but Jesus says you are blessed—if this exclusion is “for the Son of Man’s sake” (Luke 6:22).

“They will put you out the synagogues” (John 16:2), Jesus warned, which is exactly what happened to the blind man, when He began to express faith in his Healer (John 9:34). The blind man’s parents—they didn’t want to be excluded, and so they refused to confess Jesus (John 9:18-22). The same for certain rulers, who also knew the truth about Jesus, but wouldn’t confess Him, “lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:42).

Forms of exclusion may change, but the threat remains. You may be excluded by people at work or at school, simply because you don’t “run with them” (1 Peter 4:4), because you’re unwilling to participate in their sinful activities. You may be excluded by other “religious” people, perhaps even some of your own brethren, because you insist on going back to the “beginning” (1 John 2:24), because you refuse to participate in some religious activity for which you have no authority from Christ (2 John 1:9; Colossians 3:17). You may even be excluded by your own family members, when your obedience to Christ takes you in a different direction from them (Matthew 10:34-37). It’s a very real issue, and you need to make sure you have the courage and the “know how” to deal with it appropriately. Follow these Biblical principles, and you will be “blessed.”

Make sure, first, that your exclusion is “for the Son of Man’s sake,” and not for some misguided or misdirected zeal.

Love the praise of God more than the praise of men (John 12:42-43). Seek His approval, because when it’s all said and done, it’s to Him you must give account (Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

Realize that while some have “cast you out,” you are far from alone. For one, you still have faithful brethren standing with you. More importantly, the Lord is on your side, and He won’t ever exclude you—provided you remain faithful to Him (John 6:37; Romans 8:35, 39; Hebrews 13:5).

Hold fast to what is right, and you may just convert others to the Lord, perhaps even some who presently exclude you. It’s when you’re suffering that your light shines the brightest.

Look to the reward. “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. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven...” (Luke 6:22-23). Excluded by men but included by God. You can live with that, right?