

Matthew 5:11-12

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

When you read the Beatitudes and you come across today's verses, you may wonder how can we rejoice or enjoy "*when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake*"? But that's not what Jesus said. Yes, Jesus did say that others will (not might) "*revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.*" Yet Jesus and the bible do not tell us to enjoy or rejoice in the painful things that are being said and done against us, but rather to "*Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.*" Simply, we are not to rejoice in those coming against us, but rather we are to rejoice in our "*great reward in heaven.*"

Before the summer Olympics, the athletes do not rejoice in the pain that they feel every day as they are working out and practicing for hours every day and even being away from family and friends for several years, as they train for the Olympics. No, the rejoicing is in the prize that they will get enduring all the pain and agony of practicing and even competing in the Olympics. Paul even teaches us about this when he said:

† **1 Corinthians 9:24-25** *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

Even Jesus, when He was on the cross and they were reviling and persecuting Him, and saying all kinds of evil against Him, was not rejoicing on the cross while they were. Instead it says that *Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* **Luke 23:34a** because Jesus knew the great reward that He would receive in Heaven, and one of those rewards is you and I, as we believe in Him and give our lives to Him. Jesus sees us as His great reward, wanting that none would perish but all would enjoy eternity in heaven with the Father. We are that pearl His prize.

† **Matthew 13:45-46** *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."*

So it's ok for us to say to our Father God that what we are going through hurts. But also should thank Him for the reward that He will give us for overcoming when we enter into eternity. And I can not think of no better reward the being with my Lord and Savior, Jesus and Father God and the Holy Spirit in heaven for all eternity.

† **1 John 4:4** *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

† **1 John 5:4** *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*