

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026

Joy in the Midst of Suffering

Acts 5:40–42

And when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

The apostles were beaten. Their backs were bloodied, their bodies bruised. The Sanhedrin ordered them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. By any worldly measure, this was a terrible day.

And yet Luke records something astonishing: "They left the presence of the council, rejoicing." Not grumbling. Not plotting revenge. Not retreating in defeat. Rejoicing. They counted it an honor to suffer for the name of Jesus. The world's threats and persecutions could not quench their joy.

This is what Easter joy looks like when it is put to the test. It is not a fragile happiness that shatters at the first sign of trouble. It is a deep, unshakeable gladness rooted in the certainty that Christ has overcome death and the grave. If the worst thing — death — has been defeated, then everything else is manageable.

You will face suffering in this life. Grief, disappointment, loss, and hardship are the lot of every person in this fallen world. But the joy of Easter is greater than all of it. As Peter would later write, we do not grieve as those who have no hope. We have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And that hope produces a joy that no persecution, no trial, and no suffering can steal.

Discussion Questions

1. How is it possible to rejoice in the middle of suffering? What makes Christian joy different from ordinary happiness?
2. Can you think of a time when your faith gave you joy or peace even during a difficult season?
3. How does knowing that "the worst thing has been defeated" change the way you face everyday hardships?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Your apostles rejoiced even when they suffered for Your name. Teach us that same joy — not a joy that ignores pain, but a joy that is deeper than pain. When we face trials and sorrows, anchor us in the hope of Your resurrection. Remind us that nothing in all creation can separate us from Your love. Amen.

Family Action Item

As a family, write down one hardship or challenge you are currently facing on a piece of paper. Then write across it in bold letters: "Christ is Risen!" Place it on the refrigerator or another visible spot as a reminder that Easter joy is greater than any trial.

