

June 22nd – Rejoicing Over Suffering

“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” (Acts 5:41)

There are many things in life that cause us to rejoice and celebrate. We rejoice when two people marry. We rejoice when a sweet little baby is born. We rejoice when a child graduates from school. We even celebrate trivial matters – when our team wins the game, when our favorite pizza is on sale, etc. Of all the things you could celebrate, there’s probably one that’s not on your list – suffering. No one wants to suffer for any reason, and we certainly don’t see it as a reason to rejoice.

And yet, today’s passage reminds us of an occasion when the apostles actually celebrated over their suffering. Acts 5 tells us that the apostles were arrested because they continued to preach the Gospel of Christ, even after they had been warned by Jewish leaders not to do so. After they were incarcerated, a miracle occurred – “an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out” (Acts 5:19). They were instructed to go back and start preaching again, and that’s just what they did.

The religious leaders apprehended them once more, and after they questioned them, they released them. But, the apostles were not released until they had been thoroughly beaten. How did the apostles respond to their suffering? “Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” If you are suffering for the cause of Christ, you shouldn’t let it discourage you. Instead, you should wear it as a badge of honor and thank the Lord that He’s using you for His glory!