



EXCLUDED

July 2018

Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.

Luke 6:22-23

“Leap for joy?” This is something I would never have been able to do some time back when I was excluded from something I wanted and needed to be a part of. That experience caused long-term suffering that changed my life as well as my mental health. I had never thought I would *“leap for joy”* as Jesus tells me here.

When we are hurt to that degree, chances are that it would be difficult to focus on anyone but the person who hurt us, especially if it were a person we cared about. The pain cuts deep.

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But, if we could focus on Jesus our Savior we would learn something. If we could, despite the pain, keep following him and serving him, we would sooner or later realize that God is the only One we should look to. God matters more than any human being.

Suffering like I experienced can transform you. If you stay close to God throughout such a time, you will find yourself able to serve him in ways you never could before. As you suffer, you may very well find God blessing you with brand new gifts with which to serve him. Though hurting in one respect, you can find joy in another.

When you are badly thought of and left out of something important to you, don't focus on the pain for too long. Focus instead on Jesus. Jesus did not exclude or reject anyone. Consider God's great love for you—greater than any love a human being can offer. In God's terms you are special. He will always have a place for you. A place where you can work and be a part of what he does. A place where you can share with him in joy.

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