

October Greetings!



Richard Ondicho's Newsletter 5/2024
4.10.2025

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. Acts 5:41-42

Peter and some of the other apostles had been preaching the gospel all over the city of Jerusalem. But the Sanhedrin were upset about this and arrested them and brought them in for questioning. The arrest was ill motivated because they were beaten to silence them. Note, that the only people who were beaten like that were those who had done something wrong. The apostles had not done anything legally wrong, other than upset the leadership of the temple, and that was not a legal thing.

After that they were released with a severe warning to stop speaking in the name of Jesus. The Bible text above states that the disciples left rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus and so they continued to talk about Jesus to everyone they met.

What you face today can be a source of joy. The Bible tells us, **These men rejoiced because God considered them worthy to endure this hardship so that Jesus would**

become visible. Jesus clearly became visible through the life of these men. Jesus will make himself visible to our friends and neighbours through us too if we can do what Peter and John did. They remained faithful, and they obeyed their authority. Strange combination, but it made Jesus visible and gave them great joy.

Rejoice when people ridicule you for believing in Jesus. Your words, actions and reactions are being a witness of your love for Jesus. It is showing who Jesus really is. Have the right attitude in suffering.

My prayer this day is that you and I will be a bold witness of who Jesus is; that we will not fear any ridicule for believing in Jesus; that God will strengthen us in times of suffering for Jesus; and that you will be the right witness in suffering for Jesus.

September has passed very fast, and the weather remained relatively warm at least here in Southern Finland. Our weekly Bible studies and Divine services have been going on well. By God's grace we have had several members of our international Congregation getting the asylum permits. This has also brought other challenges of organizing for the family re-union of others because each family one has to pay 2300€ and if there is a child who is 18 he or she the father should pay another 2300€. At the same time thinking what to do the new members of the family who will get some cultural shock. Bearing in mind that most of these families do come from an Islamic environment where women dress differently.

For the case of those who have managed to get their families here, there are complications like a woman cannot go out alone to do shopping or even go to school alone with the husband escorting her just like they do in Iraq. It has been difficult for the new family to join the worship service because they are not yet converted and so they are hardened towards Christianity. I have been compelled at times to visit families privately in order to get to know them and discuss on personal level what is in Christian faith. This kind of visits are sometimes characterized by misunderstanding, and it is hard to visit frequently.

For the past years I have established connections with some Arabic translators who are in Iraq. Just an example, one girl was asked by her friend to help in translating me from English to Arabic because her boyfriend was in the baptism class at Luther-Church. This lady is an English teacher in one school there in Bagdad. After interpreting as I was teaching for four months, she got changed

according to her own testimony that she understood Christianity so well and that she was ready to be baptized at together here at Luther-Church. After finding out on the procedure it became impossible for her to travel alone to Finland besides the fact that immigration office would not issue a travel visa based on baptism. In the end the girl asked if I could baptize her online which is impossible too. This is not the only challenge that this ministry brings about, but several people have been converted as they have been helping in interpretation.

However, I count it joy to be able to witness to others who are still in their Islamic mind about Christians and Christian faith. I have been thinking that this is a difficulty school as I sometimes feel that I have done nothing. But in every way God has blessed me with this kind of job to share good news in public and in private.

Please continue to remember the Muslim work in the capital city

In Christ I remain His servant and yours

Riku

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