

Treated as Impostors

We have just had an amazing couple of weeks... the culmination of much preparation beforehand... many phone calls, letters, emails and sms messages. But most of all we felt God's hand at work in blessing our attempts to spread the Good News... attempts that without God's help may have proved futile.

We were so uplifted by things falling into place to spread the gospel... but then our feelings turned to despair when our own brethren sent messages to those we are preaching to that we are impostors, or that some of us are not in fellowship, or that money given to help poor brothers and sisters would not get to them. Others are warned that we are not teaching the right message and worst of all sending evil reports about us, not only to Brothers and Sisters but also contacts, warning them to have nothing to do with us, and that as far as being Christians is concerned, we are impostors.

We can only assume this is the work of those who monitor our websites or any mention of our preaching as we know they do, many times during the working day and into the night. By using the internet to search for any mention of our names on the websites of others to warn them of us... if this fails they send them evil reports.

Our encouragement has been that the prophets were also persecuted by their own brethren. That Jesus endured more of this from His brethren than we have, and that Paul also said in 2 Cor 6 v 8

“through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine but regarded as impostors”

We know that we are not impostors for Christ because we know our motives, others do not. We know that those we work with are also genuine in their motives and intentions because we know them. We know their zeal to help Brothers and Sisters in need, their acts of kindness done without the knowledge of others, and that if they had not done many of the things they have to help others, then they would not have been done at all. So it is all the more upsetting when converts are contacted to be told that we are impostors. Now as we preach we have to warn our contacts that there may follow us those who undermine our preaching. We only wish that the thousands of hours spent studying our websites for fault might instead be used for spreading the Gospel.

A Poem by Theodore Roosevelt seems to sum up this theme

In the Arena

It is not the critic who counts;
not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles,
or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood;
who strives valiantly;
who errs,
comes up short again and again,
because there is no effort without error and shortcoming;
but who does actually strive to do the deeds;
who knows the great enthusiasms,

the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause;
who at the best knows in the end
the triumph of high achievement,
and who at the worst, if he fails,
at least fails while daring greatly,
so that his place shall never be with those
cold and timid souls
who neither know victory nor defeat.

-Theodore Roosevelt

My only changes to the sentiments of this poem would be that those in Christ do know more than just the feeling of high achievement. They know that by God's grace they will receive the crown of life and will know the spirit of God which will be all in all. And that it is not to give the impression of good works and earning a reward, but that our work is done out of a desire to save others, that they with us, but God's grace may be saved.