

Speaking to the soul



Insults

Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a

blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. 1 Peter 3:9

If you have ever been insulted, you will know that the immediate reflex reaction is to want to even the score. In the pain of the moment, we are all inclined to cry out for justice because it's just not right that people should get away with insulting us. It would seem that Peter's readers were well used to being insulted. Christianity was a new phenomenon, and its teachings stood in sharp contrast to the thinking of the time. Christians faced verbal and physical attacks on a regular basis.

Christians have been under attack throughout the past 2,000 years. There are horrifying stories of the ways in which the Salvation Army was attacked in this country in the latter part of the 19th century. There are distressing accounts of dead animals, some set alight, being hurled at passing Salvationists as they processed through the streets. Others threw stones, paint-filled eggs, burning coals and rotten fish. Chamber pots were emptied from upper windows over the heads of men and women below. Thousands of people were injured, and some were killed. And in our own day there are many Christians around the world who live with continual abuse and persecution because of their faith.

Facing insults is incredibly tough; if you are experiencing this at the moment then you have my heartfelt sympathy. It's understandable that you would want to fight back. But Jesus shows us a completely different way. He calls us to respond with blessing. That's easy to say, and incredibly difficult to do but that is the way of Christ. This proves to us once again that it is absolutely impossible for us to live the Christian life in our own strength. We need to ensure that

we depend completely upon the strength that God gives us. Only as we allow his Spirit to fill us can we possibly live in this way.

QUESTION

If you have recently been insulted, how are you going to bless that person? And if you haven't had such an experience, how will you be able to equip yourself to respond to any future insult with blessing?

PRAYER

Lord God, I recognise that I need your strength every moment of every day. Amen

Window - St John's Malone side-chapel

