

## GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 5

### Question 1

- a) The gospel is the gospel of peace for Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Christians can be peacemakers in the sense of sharing that message of peace: **2 Corinthians 5:17-19**.
- b) However there is no indication in our passage that peace-making is restricted to the gospel message but applies in its broadest terms.
- c) We must always look to bring about a righteous conclusion where there is conflict; particularly where we are involved in the situation.
- d) This ties in which the theme of meekness in verse 5 and mercy in verse 7: **Romans 12:16-18**.

### Question 2

- a) Jesus does not mean that God will call us a child as a result of peace-making for we are that already when we become Christians; peacemaker or not: **John 1:11-13**.
- b) This is a reference to what other people will call us. There is a saying 'like father like son' that is appropriate here.
- c) Peace-making is a characteristic of God, for He is our peace: **Ephesians 2:13-17**.

### Question 3

- a) The characteristics are:
- In response to our righteous living (v10). This rubs against the grain of the world's values and morals.
  - False accusation and misrepresentation. This is how they dealt with Jesus: **1 Peter 2:22-23; Matthew 26:59-61**.
  - Those who had gone before: i.e. the prophets suffered the same persecution.
- b) Paul promised Timothy that everyone who wanted to live a godly life would be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12). Jesus therefore speaks about 'when' in verse 11.
- c) Verse 11 expands this last beatitude; it is that important.
- d) Notice that the tense changes from the third person to the second person: i.e. 'they' to 'you'.

### Question 4

- a) Those described in this verse are those who are determined to live as Jesus did. Persecution only brings blessing when it is as a result of righteousness: **1 Peter 3:13-17**.
- b) If we deliberately break the law when we do not need to then the result is not persecution but retribution.
- c) We are not to be objectionable or deliberately wind people up.
- d) There used to be a challenging poster which read: *"If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"*

### Question 5

**Before this question is discussed, acknowledge that believers in other parts of the world suffer in ways that up until now we have not needed to contemplate in this country. The sort of things that we struggle with as persecution do not in any way trivialise what the suffering church is enduring.**

- a) We can be ridiculed by our family and ostracised by family and friends for being a Christian.
- b) We can be accused of bigotry because we uphold the word of God.
- c) Notice that persecution is expanded in verse 11 to include insults and malice.
- d) The Christian lives in a sinful world and if we live a genuine life of following Christ then we will be rejected by many.

### Question 6

- a) Joy and gladness is not the first reaction that comes to mind. However, the apostles proved it in **Acts 5:41**.
- b) Jesus only gives one reason to His followers to rejoice under persecution. It is a sufficient reason. There is a great reward in heaven; the kingdom.
- c) Temporary struggle will give way to eternal glory: **2 Corinthians 4:17**.
- d) In the meantime our lives can be a strong witness: **1 Peter 2:12**.