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Taking the Stigma of His Name—P9

“You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved” (Matthew 10:22).

Once married, a woman was traditionally united with the identity of her husband and all that his name stood for in the world.

Sometimes this union resulted in glory, as when a woman of lowly birth was married to a Prince and she became a Queen when he inherited the throne. Other times, a woman might marry a man whose political enemies destroy his life and hers by association. Inextricably, as “one flesh” wives often suffered their husband’s lot. Even so, a wife who felt her husband’s name brought her difficulty or shame in life might still be tempted to associate with her former life through her previous identity (her maiden name) to alleviate some persecution.

From the world’s perspective, Jesus is someone they can’t despise enough. He is the true King, but *“his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us’”* (Lk. 12:14). The enemies of Christ are many, including every opposing religion to His gospel of salvation. They are all driven by the *“god of this world”* (2 Cor. 4:4b), Christ’s enemy, the usurper satan. As a result, the name of Jesus is scorned throughout the world, equated to the meek, lowly, and worthless. It is considered an embarrassment—a humiliating association.

The Church should not be surprised if the world tries to dishonor her husband’s name and make it shameful, because they hate Him. What is more, this hate comes to her because His enemies now see Her identity is in Him. She is persecuted by satan and her former family (unsaved man) because she belongs to Jesus now. These are the people who Jesus said *“will lay their hands on you and will persecute*

you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake” (Lk. 21:12), and they *“will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name”* (Matt. 24:9). Yes, *“all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me”* (Jn. 15:21). But *“blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man”* (Lk. 6:22).

It is not because of who we are or what we do that makes the world hate and persecute us, but rather our union with Jesus that draws their hatred. *“Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?”* (Js. 2:7).

The Church is tempted to be ashamed of how the world sees her Husband, and her by extension, but as Jesus said, *“whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory”* (Lk. 9:26a). Yet, to appease the world, the Church may even undermine Jesus’ authority in their marriage by allowing her relationships from her unsaved days to influence her. She may even invite them into Christ’s house as guests, or perhaps undermine Jesus’ purpose in the world entirely by uniting with them in ecumenical relationships. *“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”* (Js. 4:4).

May we be people who are *“not ashamed of the gospel”* (Rom. 1:16a), a Bride with a heart like those *“who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 15:25-26), *“for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’”* (Heb. 13:5-6) Even so, Amen.

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