

The Lord Jesus openly prepared his disciples for situations where people will reject them: *And whoever does not receive you nor listen to your words, as you leave that house or city, shake the dust off your feet.*(Matthew 10:14)

Even in our time, a certain form of rejection is not completely exceptional. And so I wonder what this dusting off might mean for us. When I observe what it did in later disciples, it seems to be a very important step! *And the Word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.* (Acts 13:49-51)

Notice: At Pisidian Antioch *they shook off the dust from their feet against those adversaries and came to Iconium.* In other words, when they were rejected somewhere, they shook off the dust, and MOVED ON! They did not carry the dust of those opponents with them! They did not feel sorry for themselves or angry with anyone. They just shook off the dust and were free to go elsewhere! And in the next verse it says: *And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.* (Acts 13:52)

I meet Christians who have had a few negative experiences in their life (or just heard stories of rejection!) and then never tell anyone about Jesus again, because „they don't want to hear“. Do you feel how they let that foreign dust to sit on them? Dust of rejection or even ridicule? But more often dust of assumptions and feelings? Suddenly I understood the principle of Jesus: *And whoever does not receive you nor listen to your words, as you leave that house or city, shake the dust off your feet.* (Matthew 10:14) I understand it in the sense: Don't keep the rejection on you! Don't go with it to other people! Do not assume the same rejection from others. Maybe, learn what to do more clearly and better next time. But most importantly, immediately go out to other villages, housing estates, towns... Then *you will always be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.* (Acts 13:52)

Where the Good News of Jesus is shared, there is usually a trouble! And when a fruit is added to this sharing in the form of new followers of Jesus, the problems usually increase. So it was in the ministry of Jesus, in the time of His apostles, and many times thereafter until today. We usually expect more problems from the „outside“ - i.e. from non-believers -



than there actually are, in our times. Some people don't like us having different opinion and that we are so sure of it. They don't even like that we have such a peace in our hearts. And what if even other people also accept Jesus' peace and joy and start following Him enthusiastically?! It just annoys them!

But it is noteworthy that when developing a new ministry to non-believers, even Jesus' followers sometimes pull out their fighting cards. One young man started going regularly to a nearby town, where a mission field opened up for him and a few people believed there. When he was sharing in his congregation and asking for prayers, one elder told him with concern, "You have enough to do here! Don't neglect the ministry in your own church." A sister heard this and a little later whispered to the young man: „Take it as adversity for the Gospel! And above all, don't be discouraged, I pray for You." Um, that happens too. Where the Good News is shared, there will be a trouble! Problems from within and problems from outside; yes, sometimes even problems in side of the church.

The Apostle Paul writes about all this: *For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18) Let it be an encouragement to us to „shake off the dust“ of any unpleasant experiences, memories and current feelings. In Jesus' empowerment, we will then go on to other people who need salvation!

*Lord Jesus, thank you for not letting anything stop you. You have completed your work of salvation! And I also thank you for the generations of Your followers who brought the life-giving message to me - to us!*