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| **Song: "Shake It Off" -- Taylor Swift****THE MUSIC OF "IT'S ALRIGHT"** |

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| The Gospel | MATTHEW 5:11-12 |

**[Jesus said:] "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you."** |
| ***Gospelthink: Even when things do not go right for you, it will be good for you in light of the heaven you desire.*Do I withstand well the bad things that happen?** |
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***"I stay out too late. Got nothing in my brain, that’s what people say. I go on too many dates, but I can’t make them stay. At least that’s what people say. But I keep cruising, can’t stop, won’t stop moving. It’s like I got this music in my mind, saying ‘It’s gonna be alright.’  ‘Cause the players gonna play, and the haters gonna hate. I’m just gonna shake. I shake it off. Heart breakers gonna break, and the fakers gonna fake. I’m just gonna shake it off."***  |
| **It may be that Taylor Swift recalls the words of her Biblical upbringing in her song "Shake It Off." Jesus said to us that we are "blessed" when we are insulted and every kind of evil is said against us as we bear it in a Christian way. The author of the Letter to the Colossians also pointed out that we should "put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" as we "bear with one another and forgive one another" (Colossians 3:12-13).Taylor Swift says that the lady in the song "shakes off" the insulting words that are spoken to her. She is taking charge of her own life, not worrying about what people say. She hears the music of her mind say that "It's gonna be alright" because people are going to do what they are going to do anyway. But she will just "shake it off," and keep on cruising and moving with life. In effect, she is saying that she will not allow anyone else to determine how she is going to feel.It is very good advice but it is not easy to follow. We would much rather fight back, seek a little revenge, do some harm to those who have spoken ill of us, and only then go on with life. We may "shake it off" but we want to get back at those who insult us before we do. Or, and maybe this is the more common result, we will let the words that are said allow us to be depressed or give us a bad attitude toward living. We let insulting words "get to us" and alter our attitudes to become less joyful and thus make our living more difficult.We have all heard the expression that sticks and stones may break our bones, but names and faces will do us no harm. It is only true if we make the effort to "shake off" those names and faces in a Christian way.** |
| ***PRAYER*** **Good and gracious God, it is not easy to follow your Son's advice to bear the false insults and evil words that are spoken to or about us. Help us remember the Christian advice to "shake off" the evil, and simply move on in life. Be with us, we pray.** |
| **+++++****GUIDE FOR CLASSROOM PRESENTATION AND PERSONAL ENRICHMENTTheme: We should never allow others the right to determine how we feel. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**1. Project: the presenter may want to discuss some of the prophets and their role in Salvation History.2. In your opinion, what was the principal job of a prophet?3. What is the greatest insult that one can give to another? Judging from this passage of Scripture, how would a Christian respond to it? Why? 4. In general, why do people "say" unkind things about another?5. Text analysis: "But I keep cruising, can't stop, won't stop moving." What is the meaning of the statement?6. Text analysis: the music in the person's mind. What is the meaning of the phrase?7. Text analysis: "I'm just gonna shake it off." What is the best way to "shake off" the insults? 8. In your opinion, do most Christians take insult the way that Jesus wants them to? Yes or no and why?9. In your opinion, do most people allow others to dictate how they feel? Yes or no and why?10. How strong is the element of revenge in our world?11. In your opinion, what is the major cause of depression in our world?12. What does the song "Shake It Off" teach young people?      |
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