

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

May 24, 2009

Are You Willing To Die *And Live* For Him?

An interesting comment concerning Peter was made in our auditorium Bible class this past Wednesday. In John 18:10 we find Peter boldly drawing a sword to defend His Lord and Master in the Garden. Surrounded by trained warriors likely bristling with weapons, Peter showed not the slightest hesitation in offering his own life to stand by Jesus against this overwhelming force. Thomas showed much the same courage in John 11:16. Jesus was determined to go back to Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead. The problem was that the Jews in Judea had determined to stone Jesus when they saw Him. Thomas could only conclude that Jesus' return to Judea would result in His death. Note the courage in his words. **“So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’** If Jesus were going to die, Thomas was determined to die right along with him. I suppose the difference between Thomas and Peter was that Thomas, when he had the opportunity to make good on his words, chose rather to flee the scene. Peter likely *was* a dead man had it not been for Jesus' immediate healing of Malchus, the man whose ear Peter struck off in the Garden (John 18:10-11). However, Peter's fearlessness faded when it became apparent that he was not going to be called on to *die* for Jesus at this time, but to *live* for Him (John 18:15-18, 25-27).

All of this caused me to think about some things. Scripture makes it clear that the ultimate demonstration of faith in the Lord is to remain steadfast even if it leads to our death. **“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life”** (Revelation 2:10). While sacrificing one's own life for the cause of Christ is the ultimate confession of faith in Him, is it always the hardest? Is it possible that *living* for Him is more difficult than *dying* for Him? Quite simply, yes. When a faithful saint faces the moment of their martyrdom, the forfeiture of their life for the cause of Christ, they are facing a terrifying moment. Historically, this is a moment of physical agony, blood, and horror. Yet it is but a moment and what awaits on the other side mere seconds away has been able to get them through these horrible moments, as evidenced by the recorded testimony of eyewitnesses who listened to the immolated, crucified, or otherwise tortured saint die with a prayer of thanksgiving on their lips through the whole agonizing event. The saint willingly offering up his life for the Lord is but moments away from having his faith turn to sight! We love our family and friends, but does not the thought of being able to offer our final moments on this earth in sacrifice to the Lord cause us to long for what we'd see just moments afterward?

However, you and I do not face anything even remotely resembling that form of persecution in our country today. It has been said that being a Christian in America is easier than it is in any other part of the world. I vehemently disagree. While we American Christians share a freedom in this country sadly unknown by our brethren in other portions of this world, and should thank our God for

such freedoms, we live in a society as godless as any in this world. While many of our foreign brethren live in a religious atmosphere full of tyranny and oppression, we live in a religious atmosphere saturated with compromise and carelessness. It is not easy being a faithful Christian in America.

This brings us back to our thesis: it can be more difficult living for Christ than dying for Him. This society is doing everything in its power to *force* you and I to compromise our faith and soften our moral stance. Our religious society is doing everything in its power to *force* you and I to compromise God’s doctrine and accept as brethren anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ without regard to belief or practice. I cannot help but think of Peter’s exhortation from Acts 2:40. **“And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’** Timely instruction for you and I today, isn’t it?

So, how are you holding up against *this* crooked generation? Likely we will never be called upon to die for Jesus in this country. However, each day we are called upon to *live for Him*. Yes, this can be a daunting task at times. However, through the eyes of faith, I can see the finish line. What about you? **“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God”** (Hebrews 12:1-2).

In Need of Prayers	General Information
<p>Sister Kimberlin has some health problems and needs our thoughts, prayers, and calls.</p> <p>Sharon Tirey is set to begin her treatments. This will be a difficult process lasting a few months. She and Ron need us now. Let’s be there for our brethren!</p> <p>Adam Daniels’ friend, Will Markem, has come out of his coma. Praise God for His mercy! Let’s pray now that he considers his soul.</p> <p>Kristy Kidd, Ron Tirey’s niece, is in the midst of a high-risk pregnancy and having some trouble.</p> <p>Kristen Osterling, friends of the Thompson’s, is having tests done on her unborn baby boy.</p>	<p>The Summer Bible Study Series will be here before you know it (July 20th-24th). We need members who are willing to teach or to assist in the children’s classes. Classes will be held for ages toddler through pre-teen. If you are willing to volunteer we would very much appreciate it as we hope to have the teachers for each class in place soon. Please let David Collins know if you would be willing to teach. Thanks!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peter and Judy McPherson 323 Lindan Ave. Peterborough, Ontario K9L 1KL Canada</p>

In Need of Prayers

General Information

