

The Cause Of Christ

Why would a person voluntarily give up their life? Why would a normal, healthy person choose death over life? Some people turn themselves into bombs and kill not only themselves, but others also. Why did Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and others fight at the Alamo knowing that they would die? Why did the Spartan 300 fight to the death rather than surrender? Why did Polycarp [and millions of Christians throughout the ages] embrace martyrdom rather than deliverance? Why?

The only reason to choose death over life is because a person believes in a cause greater than themselves. They have a vision of the future that they want to see accomplished even if they are not there personally to enjoy it. Having their cause succeed is the thing of uttermost importance to them.

This total dedication to a cause can be good or evil depending both on the cause and on the method of achieving victory. Giving one's life for a cause can be an act of fanaticism or it can be an act of courage. Truly courageous people may submit calmly to death or they may fight the enemy to the end, but they do not kill innocent people. The method is as important as the end.

When it comes to Christian martyrs, it is amazing to see the results of their sacrifices. It has been said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church" [Tertullian]. One would think exactly the opposite. You would think that in times of persecution, nominal Christians would abandon ship and people would be afraid to join the Church. While it is true that the uncommitted Christians [were they really Christians?] will jump ship, persecution seems to attract people to Christianity. The numbers grow. Why is that?

It comes back to the greatness of the cause. Everyone needs a cause that is greater than their life. If they don't have it, then their life is meaningless and frustrating. One of the problems with youth boredom and getting into trouble is that no one has given them a cause bigger than themselves, a cause worth dying for. As has been said, until we have something worth dying for, we have nothing worth living for. Persecution spotlights the Christian cause. People begin to realize that there is something worth more than their individual lives. Many embrace it, and begin to truly live.

I know the majority of Christians in the world are facing persecution, but what about those of us who are not under physical threat at the moment. Do we not have a cause worth dying for? Of course we do. Not every soldier is called upon to die or be on the front lines, but each is to be totally involved in the war. [Although, I suspect there would be a lot more active persecution in the so-called free nations if the majority of Christians in those nations caught the vision of a cause larger than themselves.]

Persecution is not necessary to have a cause bigger than yourself, it only spotlights to others that you do. It is not a question of outer circumstances, but a question of inner resolve. Do you believe in your cause and are you willing to support it at any cost. Will you sacrifice your time and money to work toward the victory? Will you promote it at every opportunity? Will you urge others to join your cause? And of supreme importance, are you willing to lay down your own ideals, beliefs, and desires to embrace the cause?

Many Christians today say they are committed, but they still carry their old belief system from the world. They are not willing to leave the old ideas behind. They are not willing to lay down their personal beliefs on abortion, capital punishment, political objectives, moral choices, creation, and a million other things for what the Bible teaches on these subjects. They do not go to the Bible to see what they should believe or do but they go to the Bible to try and support what they have already decided to believe and do. If a person truly has a cause greater than themselves then everything they have or hold dear is on the line.

This is the level of commitment that Christ demands from each of His followers. No one is to be passive. Discipleship is not an option. Christ demands everything. Since He is Lord of lords all thoughts, beliefs, and actions are to be laid at His feet. No whining on how difficult His orders may be. The question is simply obedience or disobedience. If the cause of Christ is actually larger than yourself then there is no choice: unquestioning obedience is the only option. If you are bigger than the cause of Christ, then you have to decide whether to obey or not. You might as well quit pretending before persecution drives you out.

Any activity can be working toward the success of the cause of Christ. A Sunday School teacher, for example, can be doing the job out of guilt or duty, they can be doing because they get a sense of self-satisfaction from helping others, or they can be doing it in obedience to Christ and to advance His kingdom. From the outside it may be impossible to tell, but they and God know their heart. The same is true of the homemaker, the CEO, the janitor, or any human activity whether it be so-called religious or not.

So what is the cause that Christ is calling us to? What is His goal? It is simple, but breathtaking: That the entire world in all its aspects would be in voluntary obedience to Jesus Christ BEFORE He returns. Impossible? Then leave because that is what the disciples of Christ are committed to achieve. This is a cause worth dying for. It is a cause bigger than ourselves. It is a cause that demands our all and more. It overrides our national loyalties, personal prejudices, comfortable lifestyles, and cherished beliefs.

This is not a cause that you can choose for yourself. Unless the call of God is on your life, you cannot choose Him. If this short writing has provoked thought, or stirred your heart, then the call of God is on your life. The next question is: Will you accept it or not? If you are indifferent or hostile, then God is probably not calling you at this time. Fall on your knees and beg Him to call you before it is too late.

Only in total commitment to the cause of Christ can anyone truly live. You may never face physical persecution or martyrdom. That is not the issue. Your commitment to the cause of Christ and willingness to cheerfully follow His commands is the issue. It is also encouraging to know that the success of our cause is ultimately guaranteed. It will happen, the only question is whether you will be a part of it or not.

One mistake that disciples working for the cause of Christ often make is that they think that everything must be accomplished quickly. We would all like that, but we have to take a long time perspective. We have to build solid foundations. It may take another hundred years or even a thousand years before our objective is achieved. We have the time to prepare and do the job right. Buildings quickly built, quickly fall.

Another thing to keep in mind is that this has nothing to do with personality types. Some people are loud and forward, others are quiet and retiring. It makes no difference to your commitment to the cause. Jesus Christ designed YOU for this time of history. He will call you from your comfort zone, but He is not going to require anything from you that He has not already given you. There are all types of assignments leading toward to ultimate goal. Elijah was confrontational with the wicked king Ahab, but Obadiah [1 Kings 18:3-4] was "undercover" and worked within the system. Both were necessary. Both required courage. We should never despise someone working for the victory of the cause of Christ in a different way as long as they are not in violation of the Word of God.