

L.4 - Standing For The Truth - Thursday: Cheered By Hope

1. I want to ask 2 questions as we look at Christian martyrs.
 - a. WHY DID THEY DIE?
 - b. HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

2. WHY DID THEY DIE?
 - a. WHY would ANYONE do something hard/painful/perilous / almost certain to result in ?
 - The reward is greater than the sacrifice
 - b. How is it possible to endure persecution AND THEN go to your death REJOICING? / SINGING?
 - Literally acting out – **Matthew 5:11-12** – *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, FOR great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
 - c. The lesson points us to **Hebrews 2:14-15** – *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*
 - The Reformers essentially did not fear death.
 - Their mentality OF FAITH was: **“You have no authority over my life.”** – WHEN I am standing for the truth.
 - d. They took hold of God’s Promises:
 - **Colossians 3:3** – *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*
 - **John 5:24** – *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*
 - **John 11:25-26** – *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*
 - **1 John 5:11-13** – *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.**
 - JOHN WROTE these words AFTER he saw Christians BEFORE him go to their death.
 - The Reformers stood boldly on their “hope” AFTER they saw others burn before them.
 - e. The reward is already assured – For the Christian, there is no “Risk”

3. HOW SHOULD WE LIVE?
 - a. We hold our lives too closely, as if to lose life or money or popularity or acceptance – for the sake of Christ – would be a loss.
 - **Mark 8:35** – *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.*
 - **Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists, 233** – Written in Europe while touring the Waldenses valleys: *“God does not give us the spirit of the martyrs today, for we have not come to the point of martyrdom. He is now testing us by smaller trials and crosses. And at*

times when it seems that the billows of temptation will go over our heads, let us remember that the eye of God is watching over us, and let us be willing to endure all the trials He sees fit to send.”

- **Philippians 3:8** – *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ....*

b. The Reformers died because they valued the Word of God.

- Who is going to die so that the unreached people of the world can hear the Word of God?

Great Controversy 141.2 – *Luther was not blind to the tempest about to burst upon him; but he stood firm, trusting in Christ to be his support and shield. With a martyr’s faith and courage he wrote: “What is about to happen I know not, nor do I care to know.... Let the blow light where it may, I am without fear. Not so much as a leaf falls, without the will of our Father. How much rather will He care for us! It is a light thing to die for the Word, since the Word which was made flesh hath Himself died. If we die with Him, we shall live with Him; and passing through that which He has passed through before us, we shall be where He is and dwell with Him forever.”*

1 Peter 3:14-15 – *But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

John 12:24-26 – *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*

Mark 8:34-35 – *When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.*