

They Loved Not Their Lives

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Revelation 12:10

In the final spiritual conflict of this age, a great persecution will come upon the church. The Bible says the body of overcomers who triumph over Satan during this intense warfare will have one distinguishing mark: “They loved not their lives” when faced with death. This indicates true Christians will die in this final conflict rather than forsake their bold testimony of Christ. It also indicates the final test of our faith in this end-time persecution will be our willingness to lose our lives for Christ’s sake.

The Holy Spirit is calling this generation to prepare as soldiers of Christ for this end-time battle. However, we will only overcome Satan and his legions if we train in peacetime the way we will fight in wartime. Since our fight is not against mortal men but against the spiritual forces of evil, we won’t win this battle with earthly weapons. Instead, we will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. This is the basis for laying down our lives. This is the key to victory. The blood of the Lamb speaks of the triumphant work that Christ accomplished by His death on the cross. Just as Jesus Christ conquered Satan by laying down His life on the cross, we also will overcome the devil by laying down our lives through the power of the cross. Not only did Christ die on the cross for us (Romans 5:8), He also included us in His death (Romans 6:8). Therefore when Christ died, we died with Him (2 Corinthians 5:14). By the power of Christ’s crucifixion, God removed our sinful nature and replaced it with His Son’s life (Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:11; 3:3). Therefore Satan no longer has any power over us to make us sin (Romans 6:7; 1 John 3:8).

If we believe this to be the gospel, then we should lay down our lives everyday for Christ. This is how we can prepare for both the end-time

conflict and the age to come when we will reign with Christ. Jesus said if we do not lose our own life and even hate it for His sake, we cannot be His disciples (Matthew 10:38-39; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 14:26-27). The Greek word for “life” used in these gospel accounts is *psyche*, which means soul-life. This is the life that originates from our natural personality and encompasses our attitudes, affections and abilities. What does it mean to lose our soul-life for Christ? It means we lay down our self-will and natural personality and preferences to Christ’s authority. When we lay down our soul-life to Jesus Christ, we prove our faith in His Sovereignty and His completed work on the cross. We also demonstrate our love for the brethren (1 John 3:16). This is what the Lord meant when He said we must carry our own cross if we want to follow Him (Luke 9:23).

Although the ultimate test of losing our soul-life may be to die for Christ (since this goes against the natural instinct of self-preservation), we will have many other daily opportunities to practice dying to self when Christ’s authority crosses our natural desires. For example, we may be routinely challenged to lose our soul-life to serve our family. Or we may have to suffer a difficult affliction that presses us beyond our natural endurance. Or we may have to resist a temptation that is beyond our natural self-control. Or we may have to love a dedicated personal enemy who is impossible for us to naturally love. The only way we can triumph in these trials and temptations is to believe our sin nature has died and been removed by Christ’s death. Then we can choose to overcome sin and die to our soul-life by faith in the power of Christ who lives in us.

. There is yet another aspect to losing our soul-life for Christ’s sake. When we know we have died with Christ, we will want to serve Him in the Spirit and not trust in our natural ability. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said, “we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3).” Unfortunately, many Christians are unwisely

encouraged to use their natural talents to serve God without proper discipleship in losing their soul-life for Christ’s sake. For example, believers with musical talents are urged to lead worship. Or those with natural leadership and speaking abilities are pressed into pastoring and preaching. However, most Christians have not been properly established in a foundation of Christ crucified (we died with Christ so He might live in us). Nor have they been properly trained in living by the power of the Spirit rather than the power of their soul (their natural personality). The tragic outcome is that many Christians are fulfilling their soul-life through ministry rather than losing their soul-life to gain Jesus Christ. This is not just harmless; it is hostile to the Spirit of God (Romans 8:12-14; Galatians 5:17).

Many Christians also mistakenly think they can submit their natural man to Christ through self-discipline. But this only strengthens their soul-power (their natural personality) and separates them from the grace of God. It is impossible to lose your soul-life if you do not believe you have been crucified with Christ. But when you know your sinful nature is dead, God will reveal how your unsubmitive soul quenches the power of His Spirit. Then you will see the need to always identify by faith with Christ’s death on the cross to receive His spiritual discipline and training.

The final conflict of this age is soon approaching. It’s time for every Christian who hears the call of the Spirit to report for duty to our Commander-in-Chief, Jesus Christ, for spiritual warfare training. Our Lord Jesus has already secured the victory for us by including us in His death. If we know we have died with Christ, let us train by laying down our lives now so we will be ready to lay down our lives for Him in the coming war against the saints.

“Suffer hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier entangles himself in everyday life, so that he may please his commanding officer.” 2 Timothy 2:3-4