

Soldiers Abandoned to Their King (Testimonies of Martyrs)

by Santosh Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a soldier of Christ Jesus, standing firm in our faith, and living a life that is committed to following Him, even in the face of persecution and hardship.

Duration: 46:52

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:3

Topics: "Discipleship", "Martyrdom"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the analogy of being a soldier for Christ, highlighting the need to surrender completely to God's will, not getting entangled in worldly affairs, and being at the disposal of our commanding officer, Jesus. The story of martyrs like Michael and Margarita Sattler is used to illustrate the sacrificial commitment required of true disciples, shedding the blood of self-will daily to obey God's commands and please Him alone.

Transcript

I like to think of it as the analogies chapter because you'll see in this chapter that Paul gives many different analogies, and if you count it carefully at least I counted seven of them, but I'll show you them really briefly. The analogies chapter, different analogies that Paul gives about what it means for what it's like to, what it means to be a Christian, what it means to really be a Christian. And Phil already brought out last week in verses 1 and 2, what it means to be a son, and as a son to receive that grace.

I thought as he was preaching, and I was meditating on the sermon that he preached last week, that that's the mark of a son when we realize that grace is the inheritance of a father. A son will never treat lightly his father's wealth, his father's inheritance. He'll preserve it.

Now a servant or slave, he doesn't care whether the father lost his investment, but the son cares because he has a vested interest in that, and that's grace. And I was meditating on that as Phil brought that out beautifully, that we have that grace and we treat it valuable, we don't treat it cheaply, because we're sons and we have a vested interest in the riches of heaven, in our Heavenly Father. And then he goes on to show us in verse 4 and 5, what it means to be a soldier.

Another good analogy, and if you think about, he's using earthly analogies, and that's why I like this chapter. There's a lot that we can really drill and bore out of this and derive out of this chapter, because Paul wonderfully gives Timothy some earthly examples. He says, hey, look at a son, how he relates to his father, then you'll understand grace.

Hey, look at a soldier, how he relates to his chain of command, and how he gives his life and service. That's how you ought to be in the Christian life. Then he goes on to say in verse 5, an athlete.

Paul, he tells Timothy, Timothy, pause and look at these athletes. I mean, they had athletes, they had Olympics back then too, that's where the word Olympic comes from, a marathon. You know, it's around that time, well maybe a little bit later, but they certainly had sport and they enjoyed it, and he says, watch these athletes, and we live in a generation where sports is certainly exalted, it's an idol for many people.

Look at those athletes and learn something from them. That's what Paul is telling Timothy, that's what Paul is telling us now. Watch those athletes, watch them when they win the championship, watch how hard they work.

That's in verse 5. Verse 6, he talks about a farmer. Look at a farmer and look at how he works hard. He talks about the hard-working nature of a farmer.

We're not going to look at all of these, but perhaps over the next few weeks we'll get to all of them. Verse 15, a workman, somebody who's hard at work. Look at somebody that's out there maybe tiling a roof, or building a house, or working in a wood shop, or plowing the field, or look at a workman, a workman who's diligent, and you learn something about the Christian life and how you ought to be.

Verse 15. Verse 21, a vessel. You look, go into an expensive house and you look at how, or a rich house, and you look at how they use different vessels.

Some vessels that are used for certain purposes, others that's just for scrap. He says, you ought to be a vessel for honor. A vessel for honor.

Verse 21, and finally, verse 24, a bondservant, or a slave. He says, think of yourself like a bondservant. Different analogies, because in those days they understood slavery.

They had slavery in their midst. When Paul said Timothy, look at that bondslave, Timothy could actually go into some situation and look at a bondslave, look at a bondservant and see, how does he relate to his master? That's how I'm relating to my master. So, wonderful chapter.

Now, I'm only going to look at one of them today, the soldier, because it's, I don't know, this message, I debated how to, I'll kind of share my heart a little bit, I debated how to share this message with you, and I just prayed about it a lot. I had some thoughts about what I should say, and I prayed about it more, and I prayed about it more, and I went back and forth, but the piece that I came to this morning, I went back and changed some of what I was going to share with you, because I felt the Lord laying something in my heart, and perhaps it's, it'll mean a need in your life, but that's just my way of preface. So, a soldier.

We'll look at verses 3 and 4 of 2 Timothy 2. Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

And as I thought about a soldier, my mind didn't actually go to the military and look at how our military interacts with the chain of command, and my mind actually went to a book I recently read that I just returned to film, but the story of Michael and Margarita Sattler. If you haven't had the opportunity to learn about them and learn about the lives that they lived, I encourage you to take the opportunity to do that. Michael Sattler is considered one of the founders of the Anabaptist movement.

He lived in the early 1500s, and they were persecuted like you won't believe. I mean, immense, immense persecution. And when I saw their life, as I studied their life in this book that I read, and I'd heard, I knew a little bit about their life, but I'd never really studied the story of their life and what they went through.

See, Michael Sattler was a Benedictine monk in the Catholic Church, and he was there in the monastery for many years, and he was one of the outstanding monks in that monastery, very devoted, very serious about his love for the Lord, but he saw issues in the Catholic Church, in the traditions of the Catholic Church that concerned him, that bothered him, that eventually caused him to leave and renounce that faith. Now around the same time, there was this woman whom he knew from something like a nunnery, who also had a heart for God, and was called out, and they met, and they eventually got married, but within two years of their marriage, within two years, both of them were martyred for their faith. And this is the part where I debated whether I should share with you, but I'm actually going to do it.

I'm going to read a little bit from that book that I have here, just for you to understand what it means to be a soldier. What it means for us to say that we serve the same God, that these are forefathers, that these who went ahead in us in the faith, that the freedom that we experience in churches today, is the result of the foundation and the sacrifice that so many, and this is just an example. So let me read.

This is from Saturday, May 18th, 1527. It says Michael and Margarita Sattler have both been imprisoned. They've been put into prison.

They were in prison together, and then they were sent to trial, and the trial was a complete farce. They were already presumed guilty. The judges who were up there were all already pretty much told them, we're going to find you guilty, but let's just show that we're having a trial, because the people will object to it if we say we didn't even have a trial.

But the judges were already bought, they were already paid, they were already going to pronounce them guilty, but they held a trial anyway. And after, and at the end of this trial, this is where we pick up the story. Count Joachim, who is the presiding judge of this trial, read the verdict.

He says the prisoners are condemned by the court as guilty of violating the imperial mandate. Michael Sattler, this is still the sentence, their leader shall be committed to the executioner. The latter, that is the executioner, shall take him to the square and there first cut off his tongue, then forge him fast to a wagon, and there with glowing iron tongs, twice tear pieces from his body on the way to the site of the execution.

See, they didn't just take joy in killing, they took joy in tormenting these people for their faith. Twice tear pieces from his body on the way to the site of the execution, five times more as above, and then he shall burn his body to powder as an arch heretic. You can read about this in *The Martyr's Mirror*.

Some of you know about that book and Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. I don't know if that talks about Michael Sattler, but this was common. You read the history of the church, and I believe with all of my heart, and this is the reason why I felt impressed to share this message today from my own heart, because I can't get

away from it.

All week it's just been, not weighing me down, but weighing me with a sense of reverence and awe for that which we call the church today, the bride of Christ. And I believe with all of my heart that the foundation of the church and the soil on which we are building the church today is made fertile by the blood of the martyrs. That the reason that we can have such growth and have such richness in the spiritual life is because martyrs paid their life to make the very soil on which we are building the church fertile, and we dare not take it for granted, and we dare not think that we may be exempt from that, that somehow I'm called to a cushy, comfortable life in 2012 in the Western United States where I have my car, my house, and everything's comfortable for me.

Maybe it is, and I don't know if the Lord is going to call any of us to be martyrs. I'm prepared for it, that every one of us may have to die for it. I'm prepared for not either, but I say that that will not make a difference to how I live my life.

And I believe that if we don't live our lives the way these martyrs lived their life, irrespective of the outcome. Now if you look over the last hundred years, there hasn't been as much persecution, or even in the last two hundred years, there hasn't been as much persecution as you can read about before that. But that doesn't mean it's not coming, and that doesn't mean that we don't have the same calling and responsibility to live the way they live.

You see, they were soldiers who qualified this, who lived, qualified of this verse. They were willing to suffer hardship as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, and they did not entangle themselves in the affairs of everyday life, because they had to please someone who enlisted them into the service. And that's why they could relinquish it all and say, take my life even.

Torture me if you will, but I cannot recant. Let's go on with the story. And then he shall burn his body to powder as an arch heretic.

The other men, this was Michael Sadler, the leader, and then there was about, I think about 15 or so others, I'm not sure, maybe somewhere between 10 to 20 others who were there, including some women. The other men shall be beheaded, and the women shall be drowned. And as the sentence was read, Margarita, his wife, moved to Michael's side, placing her arm across his shoulder.

She spoke firmly and clearly. Michael, my husband, God's grace will be sufficient. What would you think, you and your wife, newly wedded wife, two years into marriage.

Here you are, standing for your faith, and you have the opportunity, and you know if they recanted at any point, they would have been set free. And Michael and Margarita could have had a wonderful, comfortable, just a casual life of going to church every Sunday, and on Wednesdays too, to the brother's meeting. That would have been the life available to them.

See the issue there was whether they would join the state church. And they believed that the state church is not God's way of building the church. They believed in a free church.

I don't want to make a big deal out of that, but they were standing for what they saw as the authority of the Scriptures. And they were willing to say, and well I'm jumping ahead, maybe I'll just read. God's grace is sufficient.

To die for truth is better than to live in error. Did you get that? To die for truth is better than to live in error. Something that's completely foreign to the Christendom of today in the Western world especially.

To die for truth is better than to live in error. The death of Christ shall be our example. The pillar of fire will only end in glory.

As they walked back to the prison, Michael held Margarita's hand in his. God bless you Margarita, he said for those words and your victorious spirit before that crowd. I was still praying that you might be spared.

His concern was for her, but then they pronounced judgment on her as well. I was still praying that you might be spared and his voice choked with his emotion, but I'm proud to have a companion who shares the cost of discipleship so nobly as you. That's a marriage made in heaven.

A husband and wife who share the cost of discipleship and understand this is what it means to be a disciple. Even if it means that we're going to be separated, because we'll be reunited in eternity. Margarita looked at him through cheerful eyes.

Michael, we did not blunder into this. We didn't accidentally slip into persecution. We made choices.

We did not blunder into this. We chose his cross deliberately and together. It is his cause.

As he died for us, so we must be prepared to die for him. His grace is our only strength and his promise our hope. The fire will bring your death, because he was going to be burned, and the water will bring mine, but we will be united in glory.

When Michael Sattler was shoved into his cell and heard the gate locked behind him, it seemed that the very demons of hell gathered to torment him. This is interesting that the Lord laid this on my heart in the light of what we just studied about reproof and rebuke, and I believe that God allows sometimes the demons of hell and people around us and sickness perhaps and situations around us to torment us. But what? To strengthen our faith.

To show us that his grace is sufficient like this man and woman were saying in the midst of their prison, in the midst of their torment. And it seemed that the very demons of hell, you can see that, they gathered around. We're gonna have a feast at Michael Sattler's expense.

We're gonna torment him and tease him. They gathered around to torment him. As he sat on the stone bench in solitary confinement, slumped over under the weight of his doom, the stark horror of death suddenly gripped him.

I like how honest this story is. It doesn't imagine that, oh yeah, yeah sure I'm gonna die. No, he realized that he was gonna be tormented and this was gonna be suffering.

This was gonna be in pain. This was gonna mean the end of his existence on this earth. The fear, the stark horror of death suddenly gripped him.

From down the corridor and outside the prison came sounds of soldiers jesting and laughing about the affairs of the day, mocking the foolish Anabaptists. Something in Michael's spirit stirred in indignation. What did they know of the meaning of life, of its value and its purpose? Yet they can live and we must die? His thoughts were of Margarita in the cell with the women.

To think of her being drowned, he shuddered and broke into tears. Their life together had been so short, less than two years of marriage. They were young, probably in their late 20s or early 30s.

So wonderful and full, but so short. Never again would they be free to share life together, to enjoy the embrace of love, to sit in conversation or to walk the forest trails together. Life was closing here for both of them.

His heart beat with heavy thuds. But they had thought of this. It was not unexpected.

They had agreed to pay the price. But in the hours that followed, Michael was tempted with the weight of despair. The pressures of the day's trial, all its tensions seemed to converge on him in one moment of strain.

Alone now, he was not supported by the challenge of bravery before others. Before that, he had to be brave for the other men who were looking up to him. But now he was alone and these demons were oppressing him.

The horror of the sentence and the anguish of anticipated pain caused him to break out in a cold sweat. In his mind, he could hear the word of his tormentors. It seemed the devil himself was mocking him.

It echoed in his mind. Was it worth it? Where has it gotten you, these choices you made for a so-called God in heaven? What has it gotten you? Was it worth it? What have you gained? They mocked Jesus the same way. Come down.

Prove that you're the Son of God. Come down from that cross. Suddenly into this darkness of despair, he heard the words.

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Like a light in darkness, he sensed the presence of the Spirit of God in his cell. He was not alone in his cell.

The Lord he had come to serve would grant him grace for the trial. His shoulders shook with emotion as he prayed, Not my will but thine be done. Through teardimmed eyes, he looked up toward the dark ceiling and continued to pray.

Lord, I'm just a weak man. Called upon in this hour to give my life for thy cause. In myself, there is no strength to bear this cross.

In myself, there is no strength to bear this cross. But thou canst give me strength. By thy authority, I have walked this path.

And now in thy grace, I face its end. Help me to play the man for thee. Those words stood out to me.

Help me to play the man for thee. Help me to be the man that you need in this circumstance, who will stand as a witness for you. Help me to be the man for thee.

Be gracious to Margarita. His voice broke. Keep her from undue suffering.

Grant her strength for this ordeal and then accept us each with thee. He looked up toward heaven and said, Thank you, Lord. Thou hast said, When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.

And surely this promise includes fire as well. The next day, Sunday morning, dawned warm and clear. Repeatedly through the day, there were the sounds of conversation from the other walls in the prison.

Michael discerned that an attempt was being made to get the other prisoners to recant. Just say you'll join the free church. We'll say we'll wash water under the bridge.

We'll forget about it. You can come back and be a regular church-going member, not one of those radicals. He was concerned for several who had evidenced an emotional weakening under the pressure of the past weeks.

Some minutes later, he heard harsh voices in the corridor and the sounds of gates being opened. Evidently, several of the prisoners had broken under the strain. Unable to see the proceedings, he bowed his head and prayed for those who were compromising the faith.

Monday morning, the next day, Margarita was permitted a last visit with Michael. For some time, they did nothing but hold each other close. Then he led her to the stone bench where they sat together.

Margarita, it would be most wonderful to live out a full life with a wife like you. What a life it could be. A home, a family, love, joy.

A far-off, wistful look filled his eyes. Then he came back to the present to add, but it's also wonderful to come to the end of our pilgrimage and stand together as persons committed to live or die for our Lord. That's our commitment.

It's not on this earth. It's not to marriage. It's to live or die for our Lord, whatever His calling for our lives.

Today's experience of death will be much easier, he tells her, in knowing that we have already died to ourselves in committing our lives to the way of Christ. Doesn't that make physical death easy? You say, I've already died to myself. What can you do? You can harm the body, but you can't steal my soul.

You can't steal my spirit. It already belongs to the maker of heaven. The two sat, spent nearly an hour together.

They prayed and exchanged promises from the Word. They assured each other of the joy in the faith. In mid-morning, the officers came to the prison door to take Michael away, and he said to her, Margarita, this is the end in this world, but only the beginning for the world to come.

By His grace, I'll triumph in my hour, and by the same grace, we heard about it last week, you'll triumph in yours. She bit her lip and nodded bravely. Michael continued, I want to testify that Christ is faithful even in death.

In my last moments, I'll raise my hand in a signal of victory. Some of our group will doubtless be standing in the crowd. You'll get the details in the end in some manner.

The soldiers were impatient. Enough, one said roughly, and pulled Margarita from the cell. Michael called after us softly, goodbye my dearest until we meet in glory.

The soldiers bound his hands behind his back, throwing a rope around his neck. They led him out of the prison. Roughly, they pulled him after them through the street to the marketplace.

He hurried to keep the rope from cutting his throat. The soldiers in back of him prodded him with their swords, while others made a show of dissuading hecklers who kept coming near enough to spit at him. They were at the marketplace now.

Michael was held back while the blacksmith forged heavy chains to his ankles and wrists. The heat of the hot iron seared his flesh and the smell of burned flesh permeated the air. His body strained under the pain as he kept from crying out.

He was picked up by several attendants and his body thrown roughly onto a platform laid across a cart. His chains were now forged fast to this frame. The executioner stepped up with tongs and a knife, roughly forcing Michael's mouth open and searing his tongue with the tongs.

He pulled it out far enough to cut half of it off with a sweep of the knife. As he held it into the air with the tongs, he shouted, this will stop the heretic's mouth. Michael lay on the cart, blood running from his mouth.

He was softly praying with his muted voice, Lord, be merciful. Be merciful to them. But the torture was not over.

The sentence called for burning tongs to be applied to his body as well. A man came rushing through the crowd with glowing red-hot tongs. He handed them to the executioner with exaggerated care.

He stepped up to the cart with a leer on his face and thrust the burning tongs into Michael's stomach. His body contorted in pain as the smell of burned flesh rose from the wagon. The executioner then tore a strip of flesh from his right leg by twisting the tongs and burning away the muscle.

The crowd pressed forward in their curiosity. Michael's body lay trembling with the agony, his muscles jerking in spasms. At first it appeared that he had fainted.

Then words of prayer were audible to those near the cart. There was no crying out, no uttering of sound. One of the soldiers broke into a hard, brittle laugh.

What do you appeal to now, Saddler? The scripture? The executioner gave the order and the cart started on its journey out of town and along the highway that led to Tubingen, a town outside of there, I guess. The cart creaked and bounced over the cobblestone street. Michael's body was jostled along, wracked with intense pain.

It made him less aware of the soldiers' slander and mockery. But there was no respite. He writhed in anguish as the burning tongs were applied again and again, five times on this journey.

At about three minute intervals, the tongs were heated and the executioner would lay them on another part of Michael's body. He would let the tongs burn through the cloth to the flesh. Then he roughly tore flesh from his bones.

These tortures had Michael completely exhausted by the immeasurable agony before he even arrived to the site of his execution. But at the site he seemed to receive supernatural strength. Michael's acceptance of the torture and his calmness in this monstrous heightening of the execution were a remarkable witness to his unshakable faith and character.

As he had prayed at the marketplace when his tongue was cut off, now at the site he prayed for the executioners. Final arrangements were being made for his death. He watched without fear, praying

audibly for his persecutors.

Pulling the pins from his manacles, they pulled him from the cart and bound him to a ladder with ropes. The ladder was held by several attendants ready to push him into the fire, already burning. As he hung bound upon the ladder, he was given a last chance to speak.

In great pain and with a muted voice, he admonished the people to be converted. An odd hush settled over the crowd. His strained voice could be heard and they listened to catch his words.

You are called of God to repent, to fear God, to be converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. My greatest concern, these are the words of Michael Sadler, is that you might come to saving faith in Christ and that you might pray for my judges that they may be converted as well. Then Michael began to pray, Almighty God, thou art the way and the truth.

Because I have not been shown to be an error, I will by thy help on this day testify to the truth and seal it with my blood. The executioner summoned one of the soldiers and a small sack of powder was tied around Michael's neck as a token of mercy to hasten his death. The officers picked up the ladder and swinging it between them, threw his body into the fire.

From the fire his voice could be heard in prayer and praise. That's the thought that was running through my mind as we were up there singing this morning. Will I sing the same way when I'm being thrown into the fire? Will it be the same God that I worship no matter what trial He takes me through on this earth? Suddenly there was a moving of his body.

The ropes had burned through, releasing his hands. He raised his arm and the two forefingers of his hand pointed toward heaven. Maybe it was like this.

It's a new meaning to touchdown. Somebody burning in the fire and saying Jesus has triumphed over death in the grave. You can't do anything to this body.

He raised his arm and the two forefingers of his hand pointed toward heaven. It was his signal that his faith in Christ was adequate in death. It was his signal that his faith in Christ was adequate in death.

That's the faith we are called to have. This was a signal he wanted to pass on to his group. A signal he wanted Margarita to hear about.

A moment later with a clear voice there came ringing from the fiery pyre his last prayer. Father into thy hands I commend my spirit. The fire suddenly flared up as the little bag of powder caught.

Michael's body twitched and his hand dropped across it. He was still, still and silent. Death had separated him forever from their torture.

The next day the soldiers came for the other men. They were to be executed by beheading. The axe would be less torturous than the stake but yet it held the deepest terror for the men.

Their faces were pale and drawn as they were led down the corridor. The women wept as they watched them go. The next day Wednesday May 22nd 1527 Margarita was called from her prison cell.

They were almost tender to her in their handling of her. She held her hands before her as the officers bound them. They led her toward the river where she was to die looking over the small group.

She sought to testify to those who had gathered to see her execution. But the executioner interrupted and called for the job to be done. Quickly a large bag was stripped over her head and tied around her ankles rendering her completely helpless.

As her enshrouded body was carried to the river her voice could be heard in prayer through the muffled cloth. The soldiers threw her from the pier and waters closed over her. She was gone.

The group stood in silence watching the bubbles burst on the surface. Only a few ripples in the water gave evidence that she had been there. Her spirit had gone to join her husbands.

They had sealed their faith with their lives. They chose to die rather than to surrender the freedom they had found in Christ. Have you found freedom in Christ? What will you pay for it? How valuable is it to you? The freedom to be responsible disciples.

Having heard the call of the master to have done other than obey would have been to sin. When the option to not die and disobey is sin then you have understood what it means to be a soldier and you realize that the captain of your salvation, your commanding officer calls you to die for your faith and you say if I was to choose any other option out of this sticky situation, if I was to choose any other option out of this death would be sin because it would be disobedience. That's a soldier and you see people do it on this earth for an earthly kingdom, for an earthly cause.

They will go into those places and many of them die day after day for an earthly kingdom. How much more for us where we seek something eternal whose builder and creator is God. Having heard the call of the master to have done other than obey would have been to sin.

They paid the ultimate price. Both were pilgrims of flame. That's the name of that book, Pilgrim of Flame.

The writer writes this epilogue during the 75 years, the first 75 years of the Anabaptist movement some 5,000 believers died for their faith. In this persecution the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.

The intolerance did not crush the convictions of these committed Christians. The vision lived on and lives on today. Amen? Amen.

Today we who share in this vision are indebted to noble saints like Michael and Margarita Sattler. You know that's a lot of detail about how they suffered. But I've been thinking recently, you know we hear a lot about the blood of Calvary that Jesus, the blood that Jesus shed for us on Calvary.

I don't know if you have paused to meditate on the blood that Jesus shed in Gethsemane. See the blood that Jesus shed on Calvary was because people hid Him. And Pam was talking about the other day and how crucifixion, just the immense intense horror of it and the terror of it and the pain and how much suffering there is.

But this was blood that was caused by other people doing things to Jesus for his faith. But you know that a few hours before that he was alone in Gethsemane and nobody hit a whip across his body and nobody put a crown of thorns on his head and nobody drove nails into his hand. But he bled, it says in Hebrews 5, he bled sweat drops of blood.

You know why? Because he knew that coming in a few hours he was going to be sin. That relationship that he'd had with the Father for all eternity was going to be broken. Why? Because he became the sin that I committed.

He became sin who knew no sin that we might be called the righteousness of God. And he knew that was coming up, that if Santosh was to have a way of salvation he would have to become sin. And this weighed on him so much that he's like, Lord is there any other way that I can make a way of salvation for these people in 2012 sitting in River of Life Christian Fellowship in Loveland so that they can come and spend eternity with me? Is there any other way so that I don't have to become sin? That's what he was afraid of.

He wasn't afraid of the thorns and the nails. That didn't scare him because these martyrs went praising him to the, praising God to the grave. Jesus was afraid that he would sin.

Not that he would commit sin, but that he would become sin. And that sin would result in a separation from his father that he had never experienced before. And yet Christians today can sin casually.

And that separation be broken for hours. I can speak a rude word to my wife and I can wait for the next day or until the sun, just before the sun sets. Because I take comfort in the fact that the Bible says don't let the sun set on your anger.

So I'll wait until just before the sun sets to set things right. Meanwhile my relationship with God is so far away because I'm proud and insolent and unrepentant of my words, unrepentant of my pride and my lustful eyes. I can sit there and look on the computer on those lustful evil things.

And Jesus had to, Jesus swept drops of blood because he was gonna experience sin just for three hours. Experience becoming sin. And this weighed on him so much.

And I tell you meditating on the blood that Jesus shed for me on Gethsemane where he said, not my will father but thine. If this is the only way that that can happen then I'm willing to do it. Because coming down the road in 2012 is this sinful wretch named Santos who is gonna need a way of salvation.

Who's gonna need a land that's worthy to take his sacrifice, to take that penalty completely. So that he can be justified and stand in the presence of God cleansed and completely redeemed. And that's how I stand today justified.

I come boldly to the throne of grace. But I know that it took my Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane saying, not my will but thine. And that's the blood that you and I are called to certainly to shed today.

We may never shed the physical blood. Many of us may die, live a long healthy life and die in old age. If God wills it so be it.

Praise the Lord. But in the meantime are you and I willing to shed that blood in Gethsemane where moment by moment, trial by trial we say, Lord not my will but thine. I know it's gonna hurt.

It's gonna come out like blood. But I'm willing to do it for your sake Lord. Because the church is built on the seed of the martyrs like this.

And if the end of it is that they throw you into the fire, you'll say well what what are they gonna do? I've been given up. I've been dying. I've been shedding blood all my life.

So take my physical blood too. What is that? When people have lived, when you and I, my dear brothers and sisters, have lived this selfless dying to self every day, we're gonna break bread later this evening. And as we experience that will you think, and we're gonna drink the cup, will you think about your blood being shed? Not on the cross.

You and I are not gonna be nailed to the cross. Perhaps not. But certainly in our situations where I want my will or I have a complaint against God about why he allows this in my life and I have a demand of God that he do this and I have this other expectation and I judge other people and I backbite and slander and gossip and lust and get angry and I can go on the rest of my life like that.

My dear brothers and sisters, are we willing to shed the blood that Jesus shed in Gethsemane? That's the blood you and I all have must shed. The blood on Calvary he has shed once for all. That cleanses us and that's that we don't claim our own blood.

My flagellating myself like some people believe is not gonna make me holy. It's not gonna make me more acceptable in Christ or to God. But my dying to myself where the sweat drops pour out like blood, spiritually speaking, and I die to my will and say Lord not my will but thine.

I know I could choose this easy way out but to do that would be disobedience and sin and I can't even stand 10 minutes of sin Lord, let alone 10 days, 10 weeks of not setting things right. 10 minutes, 10 seconds Lord I feel what Christ felt that caused him to shed those sweat drops of blood. I say Lord make me a martyr for your sake.

Suffer like a soldier. This is what it means to suffer like a soldier. He says first of all endure your share of suffering as a first-class soldier.

Be a first-class soldier. Don't be one of those that was just like oh I'm one of them in the back ranks you know the front line send somebody else there Lord. Somebody who's really courageous send somebody in the front lines who's really bold.

No are you willing to pray my dear brother and sister to be the front lines guy or the front lines woman who will be out there fighting for the gospel. No matter what your personality no matter how timid you are or this and that other short coming God wants you to be a frontline soldier. Wives as well, mothers as well, children.

God wants you to be a frontline soldier for him in your schools and in your in the situations that you're in. He wants you to be that. Can you imagine the church we are and will be even more as our children grow up to be frontline soldiers.

Lord send me to the very front where the battle is the thickest. I want to be that man. I want to be that woman.

I want to be that child. Soldier does not get entangled in the enterprises of civilian life. A soldier might have to deal with civilian life but he will never get entangled in it.

It won't be the thing that he loved to talk about and tell everybody about this and tell everybody about that because that's an entanglement in the civilian life that a soldier says I can't do that because what if God calls me to go home today and I'm like well I got that other business prospect and that other money invested in there and this and this and this. A soldier a good soldier cannot get entangled in the affairs in

the enterprises of civilian life. He can use them and he can bless others through them but he will never get entangled in it.

Never get entangled in it. A soldier this is how the message paraphrase reads that a soldier never gets caught up in making deals at the marketplace. He's always like another deal yeah here's another business prospect yes I make a little bit more money here I can do that.

He never gets caught up in that. Sure the backline Christians who want to just sit in the pews comfortably and do nothing for their God who will never shed even one drop of sweat or blood for their God they can do the deals in the marketplace but a frontline soldier no. He sees them and sees Lord help me to walk unstained in this world from this mess that's going to corrupt my garment.

This love of money, this lust, this anger, this whatever it is backbiting, slander, gossip help me Lord to walk circumspectly so that I see that and say oh let me watch out for that not even go near that love of money over there. It doesn't get entangled in the enterprises of civilian life and that last I have there. Be holy at your commanding officers disposal.

That's how the New English Bible reads. Be holy at your commanding officers disposal. That means your commanding officer says go and he goes.

He's come and I come. Do this and he do that. Go here and do that and I obey instantly.

That's I realize that I'm at my commanding officers disposal. This is a soldier who's there doing something but he's always got an ear listening for his commanding officer and maybe in the distance he hears his name soldier and he's like he drops whatever he's doing says yes sir. That's a good soldier.

That's the example Paul is saying. You have to have that attitude in mind where here you are working maybe you've got a business prospect and you hope to make some money out of it and help your family and bless others through it but then you hear the call of God and you say yes sir. Enough of that.

I don't have my hand still kind of there you know as I'm trying to listen to God, trying to listen to His Word. Here I am sitting in church and I'm thinking about this thing I'm going to do this week. That's the Holy Spirit calling me and I say yes sir.

My hands are not in that mess. I can't afford to get entangled in that. That's a soldier who's holy at his commanding officers disposal.

Make it your only aim to please the one who enlisted you. That's why Paul said if you want to be a soldier of Jesus, you want to be a servant of Christ, you can't please men. You can't be popular.

In fact he says in 2nd Timothy that all who seek to live godly will suffer persecution. You will face that. That doesn't mean we go looking for it but that's the consequence of living godly.

Now if you want to be popular and everybody likes you and you're friendly and you don't raise, you don't convict sin, you don't live an outstanding Christian life. You're not an outstanding soldier. They don't see you in your workplace and in the grocery store as that man.

There's something different about him. He's a soldier. It's like he's in the military.

You know how you watch the military guys in the airport and as they walk around dressed in their fatigues and you see they carry themselves with a dignity. You don't mess with them. They're proud of their military outfit.

We ought to be like that as Christians, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and proud of the stand we take against sin and the stand we take against compromise in this world. That's a good soldier. I'll close with these words from Jim Elliot written by his wife Elizabeth Elliot actually.

She wrote in a book. The book's called Discipline the Glad Surrender. I encourage that book also for you.

Discipline the Glad Surrender. It ties in with what we were talking about earlier in the Bible study. Discipline the Glad Surrender and I realize that it's a surrender and I'm giving up and it's a discipline and it might hurt but there's a gladness behind it.

There's a joy behind it that we've talked about already because I realize I'm surrendering. I'm giving up the problem which is me. I'm giving up that problem and I get the life of Christ.

Anyway Elizabeth Elliot writes in her book. When I was in college, that's where she met Jim Elliot. You probably know about Jim Elliot right? He went down to Ecuador in South America, Central America I think and was martyred by the Aka Indians there very young.

I believe in his late 20s, 28, 29 maybe. Young life. Another one like that.

Sometime maybe we'll read his story but amazing how God called these young men and women to serve Him and they didn't live very long but the testimony that they established and the life that they lived is a stronghold for the church and for us today and I encourage you my dear brothers and sisters. I've been doing that a lot more recently. Reading the biographies of these godly men especially those who were martyred and you see how they were unashamed to stand for the faith.

Anyway so Elizabeth Elliot says when I was in college it was the custom when the yearbook came out to ask one's friends to autograph it. Usually they wrote a few words in addition to their signature and when a girl asked for the autograph of a man she especially admired she secretly hoped for some clue to his feelings towards her in the words she wrote. You get that? You're signing autograph yearbooks and if the girl likes the guy she's hoping that the guy will write something extra like a little Anyway she's brutally honest.

Jim Elliot signed, this is the guy she liked and they ended up getting married. God led them together and used them powerfully. Jim Elliot signed his name in my Wheaton Tower, that's the magazine, and added only a scripture reference, 2nd Timothy 2 verse 4, the verse we just read with this quote.

A soldier on active service will not let himself be involved in civilian affairs. He must be wholly at his commanding officer's disposal. That's the translation I read.

The message she writes now, Elizabeth Elliot writes, the message was loud and clear. Any hopes I might have entertained, any feelings Jim himself might have had for me that he had not at that time expressed must give way before the guiding principle of his life. He was not at liberty to plan the future being at the disposal of someone else.

I have a question for you my dear brother sister, young man, young woman. Are you in control of your own destiny or are you at the disposal of somebody else who determines the destiny you take, whom you will marry young people, how you will live your life. You're at the disposal of somebody else.

How you will spend your money, husband, wife, how you will spend your money, how your marriage will be, what you will spend your time on. He was not at liberty to plan the future. Oh I'm going to do this and then I'm going to do that, I'm going to invest in that.

He was not at liberty to plan a future being at the disposal of someone else. This is a martyr, this is a good soldier. Any soldier, any candidate for Christian discipline ought daily to report to his commanding officer for duty.

At your service Lord. What the soldier does for the officer is not the category of favor. That means the soldier doesn't have a choice in what he does for the commanding officer.

It's just what he says. I don't get a choice in saying well Lord please don't take me through that, please don't allow me to go through that. The commanding officer said yes and I said yes sir, amen.

That's what amen means, yes sir, amen. That's why we end our praise with amen. It shall be so Lord, I will obey.

The officer may ask anything. He disposes of the soldier as he chooses. The very thought strikes horror to the modern mind.

The very thought of this life where you're at somebody else's, you mean you allow yourself to be controlled by, you allow yourself to be controlled like that? Don't you wish you were free man? Don't you wish you were free? A lot of people are talking about the new covenant as a life of freedom but they haven't really understood that freedom means to be a bond slave of Jesus Christ. It's not freedom to do whatever I want. When I'm set free from sin and set free from the old covenant and the traditions, I become a bond slave of Jesus.

Otherwise I have licentiousness and sinful behavior and you see the result of that, that people who come out of conservative churches and think well we've been set free, now I can do whatever I want. I can go to whatever church. I can choose not to go to church.

I can dress like this or I can do that. I can mess around with this and I can do that and just live my life however I want. I'm free.

Thank you Lord for setting me free from the law. Heresy. The very thought strikes horror to the modern mind.

Nobody's gonna tell me what to do. Nobody has a right to dispose of me. You mean you would entrust yourself to a God who could then just allow you to die in a fire like that and allow them to persecute you? That's what was weighing on my mind.

You mean that God Almighty sitting there on the throne, our Heavenly Father and the captain of our salvation the Lord Jesus saw Michael Sadler's body each time they poked at him and each time they beat him and each time they pushed the thongs in and tore more flesh off and they sat by and they could have sent legions of angels to set him free just like Jesus said they could have sent for him but he said no not

my will but yours and when you can stand by my dear brother sister with your arms tied knowing that you have the authority because you're a child of God because you're a son of God to call down legions of angels to set you free from that earthly circumstance but you don't because you would rather obey and die and forgo the legions of angels who can set you free from that earthly circumstance because you are a good soldier of the Almighty God. Then you've understood what it means to build a church on the foundation of the martyrs. Then we've understood it.

This powerful thinking has its effect on Christians as well so that we have come to imagine that discipleship is somehow an extra. Yeah so-and-so Lord they're probably the martyrs I pray for the martyrs the persecuted church and I don't think that I am called to be a martyr daily in my life somehow I think discipleship is an extra yeah you become a Christian then try to become a disciple too while you're at it that's not the true Christianity that's not the gospel. We suppose that we can be Christians going to church saying our prayers singing those sweet songs about loving and feeling and sharing and praising without taking our share of the hardship.

Suffer hardship. Those who wish to make a bid for special sainthood we tell ourselves you know if you really want to be one of those real real Saints you know big Saints one of those guys they write the books about go make let be about them I don't want to be that person. It's the devil's lie.

We tell ourselves those who wish to make a bid for special sainthood we tell ourselves they might try the discipline it has its place you know there's there's certain people in the church they're the sold out they'll be there and they'll pour their lives into the church but I'm one of those guys that's comfortable just leave me give me my space as though it were an odd or fanatical lifestyle not the thing for most of us. It is as though we might be Christians without being disciples. She writes in her book.

No such thing.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Opj53763IBU.mp4>

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