



7/17/2022

Lakeland Hills Leader

Lakeland Hills Blvd Church of Christ - 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd, Lakeland Florida 33805

They Died -We Lived (August 1969)

Joe Fitch

Something dies to put food on your table. The price of every meal is the life of some plant or animal. Life is sustained by death. In awe we thumb the pages of history reading of those who confessed Jesus as Christ. They were shackled in dungeons, slaughtered in arenas, and tormented in the most horrible ways. Tradition claims that all the apostles — except John — fell as martyrs in the cause of Christ. It was a price paid so others could live. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. (2 Cor. 4:12).

Another chapter in history tells of dedicated men who labored to translate and print the Bible. They were cruelly persecuted, killed, and their bodies dishonored. All this so men could pick up their Bibles and read. They died; we live. Recent decades witnessed men who burned themselves out carrying the gospel over this land. Their lamps burned late over open Bibles; dawn found them hard at work. Their pens were worn out writing of what they learned. In volumes in my bookshelf stand the lives of selfless men —Tant, McGarvey, Lipscomb, Campbell.... Life was poured out bringing life to men. The scheme of redemption **demanded** Jesus death for man's life. Remember Caiaphas thoughtless comment, ... it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. (Jno. 11:50). Hear the ridicule at the foot of the cross: He saved others; himself he cannot save. (Mt. 27:42). That is it! — exactly! Saving others meant sacrificing self. Jesus prayed, . . if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: (Mt. 26:39). It was not possible to spare him and save man too. He died; we live.

Consider our reaction if decrees against our service to God were issued today. How many Daniels could be found serving God as he did afore- time. (Dan. 6:10). Doubtless folk who quit when they are called an ugly name or when discipleship costs them something would not long endure with their lives at stake!

We had better prepare for ... all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12). He did NOT say all church members, but all who live **godly**. This is true in any age or country. Dont hunt persecution; do right and the devil will find you. He does not have to worry with the hit-and-miss, now- and-then church member. Such already nauseate the Lord and have no good influence on anyone, but Satan cannot ignore a godly man. He will try to destroy him. Our persecution may be sophisticated (ridicule, financial and social reprisal), but don't discredit its impact. A wound to the wallet or pride may be more deadly than stripes on the back.

The martyrs block may never call us, but we must die if we are to live with God. I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me... (Gal. 2:20). The martyrs had already given away their lives. Living for Christ, we find courage to die for him.

- * "If the Lord intended for us to live in a permissive society, wouldn't the Ten Commandments have been the Ten Suggestions?"
- * "If you wouldn't write it and sign it, don't say it!"
- * "Love for enemies includes overflowing good will toward unfriendly people!"
- * "Gossip and anger are like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die!"
- * "Clean living takes a lot more than soap and detergents!"