

## SUFFERING FOR JESUS' SAKE

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True faithfulness to Christ cannot be measured apart from willingness to suffer for His sake. To put it another way, true faithfulness may be measured by how much one is willing to suffer for the Lord's sake. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said:

“BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE BEEN PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE: FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE YE WHEN MEN SHALL REPROACH YOU, AND PERSECUTE YOU, AND SAY ALL MANNER OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY, FOR MY SAKE. REJOICE, AND BE EXCEEDING GLAD: FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN FOR SO PERSECUTED THEY THE PROPHETS THAT WERE BEFORE YOU” (**Matthew 5:10-12**)

Note that not all persecution brings blessing—only that which is for righteousness' sake, for the Lord's sake, and for living like the prophets of old. Far too few Christians are willing even to undergo any inconvenience or the slightest opposition, much less real suffering, regardless of how much they may have to compromise Truth and righteousness. Lamentably, many elders, preachers, and school (both college and schools of preaching) administrators are among this number.

Call not those elders “faithful” who care more about a few doctrinally soft (or even outright apostate) members and their money than they do about sound doctrine and the man who is determined to preach it. Elders who are more concerned about losing a few weak and worldly members than they are about feeding the church the Truth are unfaithful to their charge. Faithful elders will suffer whatever is necessary to be loyal to Christ and His Word and to protect the congregation they oversee (**Acts 20:28-31**).

Are those preachers “faithful” who withhold part of the Truth to keep their positions? Every sound Gospel preacher knows that it often takes only a handful of loudmouthed, unconverted members (invariably the loudest) in almost any congregation to undermine his work and uproot his family. It takes a special kind of courage to declare “THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD” in such circumstances; call not those “faithful” who fail to do it. Currently, many of the wrong preachers are being fired, hired, and retained. When I was a young preacher, it was for the most part, the weak, shallow, soft, liberal pulpiter who would be sent on his way as soon as he was exposed. Now, these spiritual sissies are not only the ones being tolerated, kept, and encouraged; their services are actually being sought. At the same time, men who are determined to preach all of the Truth without fear or favor (as did the Lord, His apostles, and the faithful prophets who preceded them) are not desired and have been sent on

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their way in many places **because they dared preach the Word faithfully**. The number of congregations seeking such faithful proclaimers who are willing to suffer rather than to compromise God's Word is steadily disappearing—a sad commentary on the spiritual condition of the church.

And what of the school administrators who have “BOWED THE KNEE” to various modern Baalim? With rare exceptions, the current administrators of the “Christian universities” long ago swapped loyalty to Jesus and His Word for loyalty to their well-heeled benefactors. Additionally, their desire to curry favor both with those who long ago forsook the old paths and in many cases with those who never walked in them has led them into new and Bible-forbidden paths. These men, like Judas of old, have been unwilling to endure suffering for the Savior's sake. And, like Judas, they have sold and betrayed their Master to His enemies.

The schools of preaching began a few decades ago to fill the preacher training vacuum created when the colleges failed in this work. Now their direction and overseers have fallen prey to some of the same temptations to which college administrators succumbed a generation or two ago. Monetary, friendship, popularity, and perhaps other considerations have caused the directors of these schools to engage in major compromises in teaching and practice. In recent years, they have ceased opposing and have begun endorsing and defending certain doctrinal errors, in blatant self-contradiction. They have ceased opposing and have begun endorsing and defending the principal proponent of said errors, brother Dave Miller which also constitutes a self-contradiction. These doctrinal compromises have led them to fellowship not only brother Miller and those who have ignored his errors, but also many others whose fellowship they tightly rejected only a few years earlier. The directors of these schools and their staffs have been unwilling to pay the price of possible lost funds and friends for the sake of standing fast in the faith, behaving like men, and being strong (**I Corinthians 16:13**).

Were Christ and Paul now on earth, they would not long be tolerated in many of our pulpits and schools, assuming they were given an opportunity to speak. Based on the inspired record of their lives, were they among us today they would die before they compromised Truth and righteousness. Jesus calls His followers to bear their own, “CROSSES” of suffering for His sake daily, if called upon to do so. Every Christian must decide whether or not and how much he is willing to suffer for the Lord. Personal consequences, advantages, or dangers do not deter dedicated saints from faithful service.