

Weekly Devotions: TO LOVE GOD IS TO OBEY HIM 10

Are You Ready to Pay the Price to be Faithful?

Throughout the bible, the people of God were commanded to love God wholeheartedly and to be faithful by obeying His commands. Someone said that true faithfulness will endure inconvenience, withstand temptation, and do not cringe when tested. Our love for God is measured by what we will sacrifice and suffer in order to remain faithful to His will and word.

Read Acts 4: 1-31; 5: 16-42

Before His ascension, Jesus had commanded the early disciples to be His witnesses and to bring the gospel to all peoples and all nations. We see in Acts that testifying about who Jesus is and what He had done for our salvation would always be followed by persecution. But the early apostles did not allow obstacles and imprisonment to deter them from talking about Christ.

Persecution often came from the Jewish religious leaders who wanted “to stop this thing (message of Jesus’ resurrection and who He is) from spreading any further among the people...” (4:17 NIV) The disciples were warned and forbidden to speak, teach and even mention the name of Jesus (18). In response to their threats, the disciples prayed that God would grant them three requests; that God would bear these threats in mind; that He would enable them to speak His Word with great boldness; and that God would empower them with spiritual power (29-30).

Each time the disciples were persecuted, they would pray for God’s empowering that they would be faithful witnesses or ‘*martys*’ from which we have the word martyr. To them suffering for Jesus was a privilege.

Questions to ponder

1. Why were the Jewish religious leaders upset with the apostles (4: 1; 5: 17, 28)? How did the apostles respond each time the religious council charged and threatened them not to talk about Jesus (4: 19-20; 5: 29)?
2. What did the apostles do after the angel set them free from prison (5: 18-21) and after being beaten and charged not to talk about Jesus (5: 40-42)? Why do you think they were ready to risk their lives to tell people about Jesus?
3. What are some reasons why we may be afraid to tell our unbelieving friends and loved ones about who Jesus is and what He had done for our salvation? What does it mean for you to be faithful to God’s call for us to be His witnesses? What sacrifices are you ready to make to be faithful?