

NCAC Sunday School Class
December 9, 2018
WURMBRAND: Tortured for Christ



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Session 2: Evangelizing the Invaders

I can reach out boldly and creatively, I can be a witness for Christ no matter the cost.

Introduction

Reflections and thoughts from last week's lesson:

A. Standing For Christ

- Congress of the Cults
- 4,000 attended
- “*Richard, stand up and wash this shame from the face of Christ!*”
- Only 1 stood for Christ

B. Carrying the Cross of Christ

- Consider what “privilege to suffer for Christ” means.
- Praying that God would give me a cross to bear.
- Joni Eareckson Tada’s wisdom: “...*I can truthfully say that deep affliction in a Christian’s life is what provides the most powerful platform for the success of the gospel.*”
- “If someone wanted to kill me...I would say to him, ‘*First, let me tell you the story of Jesus.*’ *If he killed me afterward, at least I’d go to heaven.*”

Today’s Video: Evangelizing the Invaders

When one Christian was sentenced to death, he was allowed to see his wife before being executed. His last words to his wife were, “You must know that I die loving those who kill me. They don’t know what they do, and my last request of you is to love them. Don’t have bitterness in your heart because they killed your beloved one. We will meet in heaven.” These words impressed the officer of the secret police who attended the discussion between the two. **He later told me the story in prison where he had been sent for becoming a Christian.**

LET'S THINK ABOUT THAT ONE

1. Talk about being a witness for Christ until your last breath! ***In what ways does this conversation differ from one you might have with your spouse, other family member, or close friends if you were in a similar circumstance?***

2. Theirs is not a typical response. *What happens and what is the process that enables a person to grow into this kind of love - even for one's executioners?*
3. *What do you think it would mean to this Christian couple to know that their commitment to love them no matter what the cost not only had an impact on the official who was with them at the time but is still having an impact today?*

I. Video Discussion: Evangelizing the Invaders - Respond in Love!

A. Video Notes: Themes

- Inspired by a passionate love for the lost.
- The nightmare begins.
- Greeting an invading army with the love of Christ
- Into the barracks to "buy a watch."
- Courage to change the subject.
- Love enough to speak in the language of the lost.
- A pastor's son prays for a second chance.
- Love the lost leads a Russian soldier to risk everything.
- Our Spirit-empowered choice; forgive and love.
- Respond with the love of Jesus in any circumstance.

B. Video Discussion Questions

1. Every opportunity we have to share the message of Jesus comes with some risk. *What do you think about the risk Richard took to go into the Russian barracks in order to share the gospel, and how willing are you to risk serious consequences in order to share the gospel?*
2. In the face of trials and tribulations, the path of reaching out with love for Christ is riddled with risk. Before the young Russian soldier ever stepped onto the train with a satchel of Bibles, he assessed that risk with these words, "If my life were my own, I would have quit already." *How important is it for anyone who desires to love the lost as God does to live in light of that same perspective?*
3. As a young Christian in Communist Czechoslovakia, Petr Jasek was afraid to speak about his Christian upbringing. But he allowed that lost opportunity to motivate him to build his faith and prayed for a future opportunity to stand boldly for Christ. *How risky was that opportunity when it came, and how powerful was his response - not only for those who witnessed his stand, but for him and for us?*

II. Growing into a More Biblical Faith Perspective

Our Study Together: *Triumph in Love!* (Matthew 5:43-47, Ephesians 5:1-2)

A. When the Russian army rolled into Romania, Richard and Sabina knew there would be trouble ahead. Yet, the Lord had prepared Richard and Sabina for the horror ahead, and Richard knew he was becoming a broken man. During his time in prison, the guards broke four of his vertebrae and many other bones. His skin was carved up, split apart, and scarred over from repeated knife attacks. Eighteen holes were burned into his muscle tissue.

However, even in his brokenness, he discovered a healing he had never before felt; a healing that resulted in anger and bitterness being replaced by love. ***He reasoned that God would judge him based not on how much torture he could take but instead on how well he could love his torturers.***

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (Matthew 5:43-47) ESV.

- ***When people hate, oppose, and mistreat us, what are the key responses of God’s love in action that Jesus says are appropriate for you and me?***

B. Of his fellow prisoners, Richard wrote, “A flower, if you bruise it under your feet, rewards you by giving you its perfume. Likewise Christians, tortured by the Communists, reward their torturers by love.”

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:1-2) ESV.

- ***What does sacrifice motivated by love, i.e., love for God and the lost, mean to God?***

III. You Can Take the Next Step (Romans 12:9-12, 14, 17-21):

⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer ...¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you,

live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The question here for us is, *how strong is the love of Christ in our hearts? Is it powerful enough to compel us to act despite our fears or objections? Will we fulfill God’s desire that we love each person as he does? How much of a risk will we take to demonstrate God’s love and make his offer of salvation known?*

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