

NCAC Sunday School Class  
January 6, 2018  
**WURMBRAND: Tortured for Christ**



WURMBRAND

Session 6: Where Did I Leave Off?

*I can experience a fulfilling life of joyful discipleship in any circumstance.*

**Introduction**

Reflections and thoughts from last week's lesson:

- **With the Lord we are fearless and strong to advance His kingdom and to take the fight to the enemy.**

**Today's Video: Where Did I Leave Off?**

*"Richard raised his voice so other prisoners lying in their bunks could hear. In the dimly lit barracks, all eyes were on the pastor....During all the years Richard had pastored in Bucharest, he had never experienced the kind of silence that permeated the cell. There were no yawns, no fidgeting, no jokes. Richard looked around the darkening room as he continued preaching about Christ. He saw in his cellmates a congregation he had never known before. Their clothes were soiled, their jaws angled, their cheeks hollow, and their eyes - wide with anticipation - revealed their hunger for the truth Richard was feeding them." The Voice of the Martyrs, **Wurmbrand**.*

**LET'S THINK ABOUT THAT ONE**

- *What does this scene help you to realize about the intentionality with which God wants each of us to spend our lives, no matter what circumstance we face?*

**I. Video Exploration:**

A. Video Notes:

- Spending our lives in ways that count.
- Gratitude to God in the midst of hardship.
  - **Continuing the work of Christ together.**
- We made a deal with guards: we could preach; they would beat.
- The honor of suffering for Christ.
- Persecuted but not abandoned.
  - God is at work during the worst circumstances.
- **Everything we sacrifice for God is worth the joy that fills our hearts.**

B. Video Discussion

1. *"The men would preach, the guards would beat, and everyone was happy."* This was the "deal" Richard and his fellow Christians struck with their guards.

- ***What do you think was rewarding about that arrangement for the Christian prisoners, and how do you think it was possible to be joyful in the circumstance they faced?***

2. We often view sacrifice as being a loss, yet in God’s kingdom sacrifice is viewed “as a good trade.”

- ***What is your understanding and experience of offering a sacrifice to God that in turn fills our hearts with joy?***

3. When the men in prison were worshiping God and celebrating Communion they used whatever scraps of bread and water they had and shared them with the least first.

- ***How important do you think it was to them that they were together?***

## **II. Growing Into A More Biblical Faith Perspective**

### Our Study Together

*When Richard was released from his long imprisonment, he made his way in prison rags toward home. When he reached his own front door, he hesitated. “They were not expecting me, and I was a fearful sight in my filth and rags. Then I opened the door. In the hall were several young people, among them a gawky young man who stared at me and burst out, ‘Father!’ It was Mihai, my son. He was nine when I left him, now he was eighteen.... I turned to Mihai. Three of our visitors - one a philosophy professor from the university who I had not met before - had told me that evening that my son had brought them to faith in Christ. And I feared that, left without father or mother, he would be lost! I could find no words for my happiness. Mihai said, ‘Father you have gone through so much. I want to know what you have learned from all your sufferings.’ I put my arm around him and said, ‘Mihai, I have nearly forgotten my Bible in all this time. But four things were always in my mind. First, that there is a God. Secondly, Christ is our Savior. Thirdly, there is eternal life, And fourthly, love is the best way.’ My son said, ‘That was all I wanted.’”*

A. When father and son met after so many years apart, each was greatly encouraged by the testimony of the other. They each had witnessed for Christ and experienced eternal victory in the midst of the their suffering and could rejoice and give thanks that their suffering and labor for the sake of Christ had not been in vain.

- ***In what ways does their example challenge you to live a life of joyful discipleship in any circumstance?***

B. Colossians 1:9-14 challenges us to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (v. 10).

*9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (ESV)*

- *What else does this text also teach us about discipleship in any circumstance?*

### III. You Can Take the Next Step

*I can experience a fulfilling life of joyful discipleship in any circumstance.*

*“Many officers of the secret police to whom we witnessed became Christians and were happy to later suffer in prison for having found our Christ. Although we were whipped, as Paul was, in our jailers we saw the potential of the jailer in Philippi who became a convert. We dreamed that soon they would ask, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ In those who mocked the Christians who were tied to crosses and smeared with excrement, we saw the crowd of Golgotha who were soon to beat their breasts in fear of having sinned. It was in prison that we found the hope of salvation for the Communists. It was there that we developed a sense of responsibility toward them. **It was being tortured by them that we learned to love them.**”*

A. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 gives us a picture of how all followers of Jesus are bound together in the privilege and joy in supporting one another in the sacrifice for suffering for God’s kingdom:

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. (ESV)*

- *In what ways does this text prompt you to take obedient, meaningful action in serving your fellow believers who are suffering?*

B. My observations over the last six weeks that help me understand what it means to, “Take the next step?”

**Week 1.** *“Who Will Stand for Christ?”: I can develop an unshakable conviction to stand for Christ in the face of any opposition.*

- **Lesson:** *If I want to be an astonishing witness of Christ, then I must give myself to God and let him use me no matter the cost, i.e., to take up my cross and follow Him daily. **Question:** How has your understanding of “taking up your cross” changed after attending this Sunday school class?*

**Week 2.** *“Evangelizing the Invaders”:* I can reach out boldly and creatively, I can be a witness for Christ no matter the cost.

- **Lesson:** *Here, I want to be as creative as Richard was in “Watch Barracks” when speaking to the lost and be not afraid to serve the Lord like Richard’s disciple was at the train station with the satchel full of the Gospel of John. **Question:** Have you thought of a creative way to be a witness for Christ no matter the cost and how ready and willing are you to step out and “love big”?*

**Week 3.** *“The Underground Church”*: I can advance God’s eternal kingdom through obedience to God’s instruction to encourage and serve other believers.

- **Lesson:** *It is important that I share in the lives of other believers; to share in their hope; to pray with them; to prepare for and support one another during times of hardships and persecution; to work for and rejoice in the advancement of God’s kingdom. Question: How will you encourage and serve other believers this year?*

**Week 4.** *“Leap Year”*: I can overcome trials through knowing and applying the living Word of God.

- **Lesson:** *I want to develop a method that works for me to keep God’s Word constantly in my heart and mind. My 2019 theme: “Trust”. A verse for every month. Question: What is yours?*

**Week 5.** *“The Pastor’s Wife”*: I can have an active faith that takes the spiritual fight to the Enemy because God is greater.

- **Lesson:** *I want to take the spiritual fight to the Enemy by stepping forward and boldly expressing my faith in prayer, diligently studying and faithfully sharing the Bible’s truth, and boldly expressing God’s love for people who don’t know him or for those who serve him faithfully. Question: How will you take the spiritual fight to the Enemy in 2019?*

**Week 6.** *“Where did I leave off?”* I can experience a fulfilling life of joyful discipleship in any circumstance.

- **Lesson:** *No matter what hardship or persecution I encounter in my walk with God, I am called to live a life that includes honoring the Lord by suffering for Christ which will make a difference for eternity. Question: How has your view of suffering for Christ changed?*

### Standing Firm on the Word of God

(Philippians 1:18-30)

*18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, 20 as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. 27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, 30 engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*