

WOULD CHRIST DIE FOR HIM?

Al Brown

He was the third of five children born to poor parents a year before the great stock crash. The fifth child was stillborn. During the depression his father came home occasionally, but seldom with any money to support the family, so his mother worked extremely long hours—from before first light until midnight, seven days a week—to provide food and whatever shelter she could for her children. Obviously, the children were left alone most of the time to shift for themselves. She tried to instill Christian principles in them and to take them to Bible study and worship each Sunday, but the road was hard and lonely, and it seemed her task was thankless. No one stepped forward to help lighten the load.

So, the boy grew. He started to school and became a discipline problem. He reached the age of accountability and sinned and sinned and sinned. Sinning was fun! It was exciting! It was also soul-shrinking. The lure of far-off places and wild escapades drew him into the Air Force where his “emancipation” from all his mother had taught him became complete, and he wallowed in the slimy, putrefying filth of debauchery.

His feet could have walked on higher ground—but they didn’t, for he embraced the gaudy, deceitful facade of worldliness and indulged the passions of the baser, courser lusts of his fleshly nature. Hence, instead of standing on higher ground, his feet were mired in the wasteland of sin and rebellion and estrangement from his God.

Finally, after several years, he came to his senses, as men sometimes do. How he wanted to climb out of the horrible slime pit he had made for himself, but how could he—so unlovely, so repulsive, so covered with the nauseating filth of sin—hope to even approach the presence of the holy God whom he had despised and blasphemed?

Filthy beyond description—stained with sin—ugly! Yes, he was all these things, yet his heavenly Father loved him as only God can love His creature. Even while the man still was extremely hostile and rebellious, and an outspoken enemy of God, the heavenly Father had sent His Son to do for the man what he could not do for himself. The sentence of divine justice for man’s sin and rebellion was death, but the Son of God had come to earth and given His own life in this sinner’s place in order that the divine demand could be satisfied. He not only made the ultimate sacrifice for the man but also told him the one way by which, unworthy though he was, he could return to the good grace of the God he had forsaken. There was no pressure to get the man to take the generous offer, but he jumped at the opportunity, and now he walks on higher ground!

Except for the details, this is the story of every human. We all have gone our own way; we have cast off the restraints our benevolent heavenly Father would have put on us; His warnings of impending disaster have gone unheeded, and we

have found ourselves sliding precipitously down the well-greased superhighway to hell.

Our Father wants us back. He has done all that can possibly be done to provide a way for us to return. No matter how dark the night of sin that surrounds us, the depths of vileness and filth to which we have gone, or how many innocent people we may have hurt in our downward plunge toward the pit of hell, the way is provided for us to come back to God (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11 ; Eph. 2:1-10).

Our Father will not force us to return, but if we do, it will be that we might once more walk with our God on that high and holy road for which we were created, and we must understand that we no longer are to live our lives for ourselves. In fact, we are to deny ourselves and live our lives as a living sacrifice for this One who loved us and gave Himself for us (Mat. 16:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1-2). To the rebellious worldling, this may seem too great a price to pay, but what such a deluded soul never realizes is that, after all, this was the purpose for which we were originally created, and it is the only way men can have the rich, full, happy life our Lord intended us to have.

When we consider the alternatives, and especially the destiny at the end of each, it would seem that man, with the marvelous ability to reason that God has given him, would not have such difficulty making his choice. Perhaps the fact that the vast majority chooses which leads to heartache and pain, anguish of soul and the filth of sin indicates how incredibly stupid and gullible he can be, and usually is. What about you? Which alternative have you chosen?~

Deceased