



Jesus Christ, our All in all
CrossTalk's 25th Anniversary

22 - 28 Mar, 2020

Going with the Flow, part 3

**'The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?' Psalm 118:6**

Fear of the Lord stops us from 'going with the flow'

- † ***'Fear not, provided you fear but if you fear not, then fear' Blaise Pascal***
- † ***'There is a virtuous fear, which is the effect of faith; and there is a vicious fear, which is the product of doubt. The former leads to hope, as relying on God, in Whom we believe; the latter inclines to despair, as not relying on God, in Whom we do not believe.
Persons of the one character fear to lose God; persons of the other character fear to find Him' Blaise Pascal***
- † **The fear of the Lord, which is holy fear, always goes hand in hand with the love for God (*Dt 6:2,5*)**
- † **It is a gift of the Holy Spirit (*Is 11:2-3*)**
- † **Fear of the Lord is a pillar in our relationship with Him**

Fear of the world

- † **Fear of the world is the opposite of faith!**
- † **It is the tool the enemy, the devil, uses against us to make us miserable and destroy our lives**
- † **God wants us to walk by faith, and Satan wants us to walk by fear**
- † **When we learn to live by faith, fear will not rule**

Ambassadors for Christ have the fear of the Lord

- † **Ambassadors for Christ trust God fully**
- † **God is the reference in all their decisions**
- † **God gives purpose and meaning to all that they go through in life**
- † **In this sense, the fear of the Lord is a reverential awe and wonder at His work in both, one's personal life and in all of His creation**
- † ***'You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world' 1 Jn 4:4***

Ambassadors for Christ do not 'go with the flow' fearing the world

- † Ambassadors for Christ worship the Creator not a creation
- † No matter what the circumstances are, they sing hymns saying, *'God is with us, know it you nations and be submissive. You mighty shall be defeated. For God is with us'*

Ambassadors for Christ do not compromise

- † Compromising is not witnessing for the Truth
- † Just as a white lie is no less than a lie, so is little compromise no less than compromising the Truth

The ambassador for Christ, Paul, was bold and did not compromise

- † Before his conversion, Paul, persecuted the early church. *'For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it'* Gal 1:13
- † On his way to Damascus, the Lord speaks to Paul removing his spiritual blindness (*Acts 9:1-19*)
- † Paul, with boldness and zeal, preached the Word of God
 - During his ministry, he resurrected people from death (*Acts 20:7-12*)
 - He wrote thirteen books out of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament
 - *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'* Phil 4:13
 - *'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong'* 2 Cor 12:10

The ambassador for Christ has everything put into perspective

- † *'What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'* Rom 8:31, 32
- † *'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear'* (1 Jn 4:18a)
- † The ambassador for Christ knows that the Lord is the Almighty; God and the devil are not equal powers playing with humanity a chess game
- † Fear God and the devil will fear you; *'Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you'* Js 4:7

The Forty Holy Martyrs: fear of the Lord in action revealing the Truth

- † In the year 313, forty Cappadocians, brave soldiers who were distinguished in many battles, refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Agricola, one of the military commanders of that time and a

zealous champion of idolatry, locked them up in prison. The soldiers used this time joyfully in prayer and singing hymns. The Lord talked to them during the night saying, 'Persevere until the end, then you shall be saved'.

- † On the following morning, the soldiers were again taken to Agricola. This time the pagan tried flattery. He began to praise their bravery, their youth and strength, and once more he urged them to renounce Christ and thereby win themselves the respect and favor of their emperor.
- † Seven days later, the renowned judge Licius put the soldiers on trial. The saints steadfastly answered, 'Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God.' Licius then ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs. But the stones missed the saints and returned to strike those who had thrown them. One stone thrown by Licius hit Agricola in the face, smashing his teeth.
- † The torturers realized that the saints were guarded by some invisible power. Again in prison, the soldiers spent the night in prayer and once more they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: 'He who believes in Me, though he dies, yet shall he live (Jn 11:25). Be brave and fear not, for you shall obtain imperishable crowns'.
- † It was winter, and there was a severe frost. They lined up the holy soldiers, threw them into a lake near the city, and set a guard to prevent them from coming out of the water. In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bath-house was set up on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, one of the soldiers made a dash for the bath-house, but no sooner had he stepped over the threshold, then he fell down dead.
- † During the third hour of the night, the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs. Suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm. All the guards were asleep, except for Agladius, who was keeping watch. Looking at the lake he saw that a radiant crown had appeared over the head of each martyr. Agladius counted thirty-nine crowns and realized that the soldier who fled had lost his crown.
- † Agladius then woke up the other guards, took off his uniform and said to them, 'I too am a Christian,' and he joined the martyrs. Standing in the water he prayed, 'Lord God, I believe in You, in Whom these soldiers believe. Add me to their number, and make me worthy to suffer with Your servants.' Then a fortieth crown appeared over his head.

- ✝ In the morning, the torturers saw with surprise that the martyrs were still alive, and their guard Aglaius was glorifying Christ together with them. They led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. During this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son to persevere until death.
- ✝ They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him on the ground. His mother then picked up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton drew his last breath, his mother put him on the cart with the bodies of his fellow sufferers. The bodies of the saints were tossed in the fire, and their charred bones were thrown into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up.
- ✝ Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, and commanded him to bury their remains. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the relics of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honor.
- ✝ We celebrate their sainthood, perseverance and fear of the Lord on the 9th of March
- ✝ 'There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way'
C S Lewis

Bibliography

1. "IN MEMORY OF THE FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE-A.D. 320." Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste | The Story of The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. Accessed March 15, 2020. <http://www.fortymartyrs.org/Forty-Martyrs-of-Sebaste.html>.
2. Unless otherwise noted, all Biblical passages referenced are from the New King James Version

Legend



Refers to mandatory readings

Verse to memorize

'Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?' Mt 6:27

In my Prayer and Faith Autobiography Book

God acts

- ✝ Christ gave His life so that we may have life in abundance

My reaction

- ✝ Am I trusting God's will as the fullness of my joy?
- ✝ Am I being an ambassador and revealing the Truth to others?

During this coming week, we will lift the Armenian Catholic Church in prayer