

Articles and Sermons :: A PRIVILEGE TO DIE FOR CHRIST

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The Apostle Paul was convinced that whether alive or dead, Christ is gain. This enabled him to minister amid severe hardship and persecution. It also helped him face the potential of premature death without fear and concern. When Christ is everything, life and death are left in His hands.

Bad news interrupted the Standing Strong Through the Storm (SSTS) training for pastors in a rural town of Colombia clouding the happy spirit felt in that meeting.

A letter was received from Pastor Manuel who explained that he was prevented from attending the workshop. Guerrilla leaders found out about the event. They told him that because of his insistence on preaching the gospel, they would not let him travel out of the village.

The amazing thing is that in spite of the continuous threats against Pastor Manuel, the guerrillas have not been able to carry them out against him. On repeated occasions, the army has come just in time to save him from some guerrilla attack.

While participants were grieving from this news about Pastor Manuel, another pastor, Hermes, told about two attempts against his own life by the same subversive band the previous month. Immediately participants expressed their desire to continue their ministry in places where the gospel is prohibited.

However, seven days later, the guerrillas brought together all the leaders that participated in the SSTS workshop and told them, "We are tired of the Christian's disobedience. We do not want to kill anybody; the only thing we want is that you stop telling the people about the Bible. We will have to execute you. Tell Pastor Hermes that we will take drastic measures against him since we know that he is the one who encourages you..."

Pastor Hermes reported that instead of frightening the believers, this difficult situation generated a more intense plan of spiritual and ministerial action. The leaders want Open Doors seminars to come to places where it is impossible to preach.

How are they going to do it? Pastor Hermes said that a network of prayer was established during the time they were together. He believes the only way is through personalized training, or delivering a booklet and training to only one person at a time. For now it is the only way to use this tool to strengthen the believers. The training will take longer, but it is very dangerous to meet and to preach in houses because the guerrillas have cleverly infiltrated the area.

He concluded, "Materials from Standing Strong Through the Storm have been the driving force for us to continue preaching...Others also are striving to follow Christ and we have to do the same to prevent our church believers from losing their fervor.

"Besides prayer and fasting, we have to take action...God has protected us up to this moment, and if one day we die for preaching Christ, it will be a privilege."

RESPONSE

Today I will live in such a way that Christ is honored and glorified. If it takes all my strength or even my death, I will sacrifice all for Him and consider it a privilege.

PRAYER

Pray for strength and endurance for pastors in rural Colombia facing death threats daily.

Open Doors Ministry