

# The Reward of Standing Alone

by Gladys Eileen MacLean (ed. C. Besson)

It is human to stand with the crowd. It is divine to stand alone. It is natural to think like the majority. It is supernatural to be gripped by the Word of God until you learn to think God's thoughts after Him. It is natural to compromise conscience for materialistic gain and the praise of man. It is supernatural to put these on the altar for Christ's sake.

Obedience to the Word of God has never been popular. Noah preached and voyaged alone. Abraham tented and worshipped alone. Daniel obeyed God and went to the lion's den alone. Elijah took on the false prophets of the Baal alone. Jeremiah wept in the dungeon alone and the sinless Son of Almighty God wept and died alone. Christ did not bring His message down to please the religious majority. His unconditional proclamation was, "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14).

He didn't say, "Follow me and you will be prosperous and popular and live happily ever after." He said, "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12). Christendom has always lauded the saints in heaven and persecuted the saints on earth. The Jews of Moses' day persecuted Moses and praised Abraham. The Jews of Christ's day praised Moses and persecuted Christ. Now the religious crowd praise the reformers and call their churches and children after them but they condemn those who are trying to be faithful to God's Word today as intolerant, fanatical isolationists.

The majority of evangelical Christians are content to settle for pious, passive, ritualistic, church-centered lives, without becoming involved in the Lord's battles. This isn't something which God leaves for us to

decide. We have no vote in this matter. If God has chosen us, then He has called us to be soldiers (II Tim. 2:3-4). My dear reader, there is more to being a Christian than listening to a few sermons a week. There is more to being a Christian than enjoying — "food, fun, and fellowship." There is more to being a Christian than sentimental comfort and a free ticket to heaven.

There is a great gulf fixed between head faith and heart faith. Head faith is content merely to agree with truth. Heart faith acts upon it. See Hebrews Chapter 11. Faith is not a feeling. Faith is acting on the Word of God. Head faith loses its courage when it leaves the church building. Heart faith dares to look the world in the eye and declare, "If the whole world is against Christ, then I am against the world." Heart faith assumes personal responsibility to obey God's Word, to contend for God's Word, to suffer for god's Word, and if need be to die for it.

Perhaps you are thinking, I would like to stand militantly on the Lord's side, but I lack the compassion, courage, and concern. The Bible says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." (II Cor.5:17). If you lack the motivating compassion and conviction to stand alone for God and His truth, perhaps your faith is only head-faith. Open your mind and ask yourself, "Am I living in a state of self-deception?" Do I have "a form of godliness without the power thereof?" Perhaps your faith is based upon some church ritual, or upon something which you have done. Perhaps you have never been regenerated by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:4-7).

If this is your condition, God is waiting to be gracious. He hath made Christ, who knew no sin, to be made sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in

Him. (II Cor. 5:21). This is an exchange transaction. We bring Him our sin and He gives us the seamless robe of His perfect righteousness.

Cry out to Him to make you a new creation. Confess to Him that you have been a church-centered Christian. Ask Him to make you Christ-centered. Ask Him to enable you to daily mix His Word with faith. (Heb. 4:2). Ask Him to give you compassion for others who are living in a state of self-deception. Drive down a stake of faith. Put up your flag. Let the world and the Devil and namby-pamby Christians know that you mean business with God. Declare yourself on the Lord's side. Paul, the battle-scarred warrior who had put his life on the line for Christ, knew what it was to stand alone. At the end of his pilgrim journey, he sorrowfully but triumphantly asserted. "No man stood with me, but all men forsook me, notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." (II Tim. 4:16-17). History bears witness to the fact that one with God is a majority. Take the long range view. Do not sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the temporary. When "all the trumpets sound for you on the Other Side," and the Captain of your salvation welcomes you home with, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:21), the joy of that glorious moment will be ample reward for all the loneliness, all the misunderstanding, and all the suffering, which you encountered while fighting His battles here below.

Are you ever conscious of: A secret spirit of pride – an exalted feeling, in view of your success or position; because of your good training and appearance; because of

your natural gifts and abilities, An important independent spirit, Stiffness and preciseness?

Love of human praise; a secret fondness to be noticed; love of supremacy, drawing attention to self in conversation; a swelling out of self when you have had a free time in speaking or praying?

The stirrings of anger or impatience, which, worst of all, you call nervousness or holy indignation; a touchy, sensitive spirit; a disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted; a desire to throw sharp, heated flings at another?

Self-will; a stubborn, unteachable spirit; an arguing, talkative spirit; harsh, sarcastic except with God?

Selfishness; love of ease; love of money?

These are some of the traits which generally indicate a carnal heart. By prayer, hold your heart open to the searchlight of God, until you see the groundwork thereof. The Holy Ghost will enable you, by confession and faith, to bring your "self-life" to the death. Do not patch over, but go to the bottom. It will pay.

Oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord.  
Oh, to be lost in Thee;  
Oh, that it might be no more I,  
But Christ that lives in me.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10).

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