

SACRIFICING FOR JESUS CHRIST

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Jesus taught us through His example that true love is sacrificial. He said, *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13 NIV). True love is sacrificial. It is selfless. It is a giving love and not just receiving. Many Christians definitely will shout out loud that they love Jesus Christ, but are not willing to let go of some things in their lives that they cherish and desire to keep though it hurts their Saviour and Lord. True Christianity is all about sacrifice.

Matt 10:17-42

17 "Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, 20 for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

21 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 23 When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

24 "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!

26 "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.

34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn

*"`a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-
36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'*

37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

NIV

Taking up your cross

- The cross is the place where man dies to the flesh.
- The cross is the place where self dies.
- The cross is symbolic of man's sufferings, pains, sorrow and hardship.
- To carry your cross therefore, is to die to self. It is to die to the flesh. It is to continue following the master faithfully and in full loyalty no matter the challenge, suffering and pain that you are going through.

Matt 16:24-28

25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. 28 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

NIV

Mark 8:35-38

35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

NIV

Luke 17:31-37

31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. 32 Remember Lot's wife! 33 Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. 35 Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left."

37 "Where, Lord?" they asked.

He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

NIV

THE GREAT QUESTIONS

What are you willing to give up for your Saviour? What are you willing to sacrifice in the name of love and affection for your Saviour? Apostle Paul sacrificed a lot in his life, Apostles Peter, John, James and Thomas sacrificed their lives for the Saviour, what are you willing to sacrifice to make Him known and promote His kingdom? Apostle Paul sacrificed marriage, to serve Him, what are you willing to sacrifice to enlarge His kingdom? Apostle Peter sacrificed his fishing career to win souls, what are you willing to let go to promote His kingdom? These men had no houses to their names, bank accounts and properties. All they cared about is their Saviour and their assignment. What do you care about?

In the Old Testament, Moses sacrificed his position in Pharaoh's palace to identify with his people and stop the injustice against them. He wandered in the desert for many days until he got to Median and married Jethro's daughter and started a family. Forty years later, God called him to rescue His people from the same Egypt he ran away from. What position, worldly wealth or connection or friends are you willing to sacrifice to honour and please God?

Heb 11:24-28

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

NIV

Jeremiah sacrificed his comfort and happiness to speak as the oracle of God to His obstinate people. He suffered many terrible things to speak for God. What are you willing to suffer for the kingdom of your Christ your Saviour, Lord and Judge?

Jer 20:7-10

7 O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. 8 Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. 9 But if I say, "I will not mention him or speak any more in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot. 10 I hear many whispering, "Terror on every side! Report him! Let's report him!" All my friends are waiting for

me to slip, saying, "Perhaps he will be deceived; then we will prevail over him and take our revenge on him."

NIV

Jer 38:6

6 So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

NIV

Hosea had to marry a prostitute against his wish to honour and obey His God that Israel may know the mind of God and understand how God feels. He suffered terribly emotionally in the hands of his unfaithful wife because he made up his mind to please his God. What are you willing to suffer for God's cause?

Hos 1:2-3

2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD." 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

NIV

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah sacrificed their portion of the king's rich food for vegetables to honour God and show their unhappiness in the fact that the Temple of their God lies in ruins. They were all willing to die for their faith in Babylon than to bow before an image or pray to a man as god. Daniel was thrown into a den of lions and God saved him; Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were thrown into the burning furnace and were saved by God. What are you willing to suffer for your Saviour? Read Daniel 1, 3 & 6.

From the Old and New Testaments we have seen that followers of God must through many tribulations, deprivations and great sacrifices please God, make His word known and expand His kingdom here on earth. What have you suffered and are willing to suffer for Jesus Christ?

Acts 14:22

22 confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

ASV

2 Cor 8:1-7

*8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 **Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.** 3 For I testify that **they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.** Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they*

gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel in everything-in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

NIV

CONCLUSION

What are you willing to suffer or sacrifice in love for your Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ? The answer is with you. Love is not in words but in deeds. Prove your love by your sacrifice, and more sacrifice as it is demanded and necessary. Sacrifice your time, talents, gifts, skill, training, money, property, and conveniences for your Saviour. And you will gain it here and in the life after.