"Worthy Is The Lamb Of God!"

By Lois J. Stucky

The Lamb upon the cross is now the Lamb upon the Throne. The most noble and beautiful words of language are not too great as all Heaven attributes praise to Him: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12). And all creatures of the universe join to echo Heaven's praise: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13).

Gladly do our voices join the chorus as we think of what Christ did for us as He died on the cross of Calvary and was raised again. What a full and eternal salvation was provided for us there! But do we not think more soberly when we learn we must take *our* place on the cross, dying there with Christ, before we are raised to walk in the fullness of the blessing? Are we ready to yield up what is perhaps the greatest of all idols of our hearts -- ourselves, that the fullness of the blessing might be ours? This could well be the blighting of cherished hopes and plans, again and again, as we choose God's will and pleasure above our own. Are we willing for this?

Calvary was looming very near and Christ was well down the road to the cross, when He opened His heart to His disciples perhaps more than ever before, and urged them to abide in Him and to let His Word abide in them -- "That My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full," He said (John 15:11). Could He actually have possessed and proclaimed *joy* in an hour like that? Yes, the Bible tells us that He "for the *joy* that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

When I first came to Herald of His Coming in 1960, some of us workers were finding spiritual help and blessing in some of the writings of Watchman Nee. We were lifted into spiritual heights. Then one of the workers pointed out that at that very time, Watchman Nee was suffering in prison in China. "Death" was working in him, but "life" in us. The Apostle Paul tells us it was the same with him (2 Corinthians 4:12).

Jesus clearly tells us, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). We need our Lord so greatly in order to live the crucified life victoriously. And it is when we need Him greatly and seek Him intensely that we "find" him, and oh, what a "find!" To know Jesus more intimately, to experience closer fellowship with Him -- it is that which satisfies the heart most fully and which spurs us onward in the way of the cross.

God help us not to evade the cross but to embrace it, not to stagger beneath it but to accept it in faith, to thank God for it, to praise Him for it, even to rejoice in it. The Apostle Paul said he gloried in the cross (Galatians 6:14). Do we mean it when we sing the words, "In the cross of

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Christ I glory" or "my glory all the cross"? That includes rejoicing in it.

At times we cannot but bow in silent wonder and sorrow as we read in that marvelous Messianic Scripture about Christ: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him," or "crush Him" says one translation. We go on to read that because he "poured out His life unto death," He was given a portion with the great (Isaiah 53:10-12). There is heavenly reward for bearing the cross.

And there are gains in this life, one being the power to live a life impossible for us to live in the natural. For example, how can we love one another as Christ loved us? He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34) -- always patient and kind, preferring others before ourselves, etc.

In his article on pages 6 and 7, J. Gregory Mantle tells us how the Christian's appropriation of the victory of the cross makes possible the Christ-like life that many a Christian aspires to and finds it difficult to come into and impossible to achieve in himself. How blessed it is when one sees in oneself, the actions and reactions that are from the new life in Christ and not from the old life of the flesh. How aware one is that this is through the crucifixion of the old and the appropriation of the new. It is God at work within us. Oh, what a salvation this -- "Not I, but Christ who liveth in me."

Robert Coleman in the opening article, brings to our attention that it is the cross operating in our lives which sets us free from selfishness to serve God. Our commission is to go into all the world with the Gospel of Christ. It was a cross that provides the Good News of salvation and it takes, as someone has written, a crucified man to preach a crucified Saviour. It takes a heart set free from its own plans and desires, to be available to God for wherever He has need of him or her.

Our calling as Christians is to honor the Lamb of God, who resigned His own will to do the will of the Father, the meek and lowly Lamb who did always those things that pleased the Father. And we are to give honor to this Lamb and follow Him in a society that honors self-assertiveness and independence and self-indulgence.

Oh, young people, watch yourself against self-indulgence, when Christ calls us to a life of self-denial. I was driving through a Christian college campus when the students were arriving to begin another year of study. It was surprising to see how many davenports and easy chairs and such were being unloaded and carried into the dormitories from pickup trucks and vehicles of various sorts. In years past, dorm rooms had a desk, straight chair, bed and dresser. It seemed to me these young people were bringing with them quite a temptation to divert themselves from the purpose of their being there, to study and apply themselves to learning in preparation for serving the Lord.

And certainly young people are not the only ones who must guard against self-indulgence, when it is self-denial that will enable us to serve God fully. It is not only a day-by-day, but an hour-by-hour, even a moment-by-moment watchfulness that we need.

According to the *Washington Times*, many military trainers of this country, surveyed by a

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government commission, were pessimistic about the caliber of young people currently in boot camps training for service in the military. Trainers find them "selfish, out of shape, undisciplined, lacking in morals, challenging every order or decision or rule, having no respect for authority." What a distressing report!

It makes one wonder, though, what our divine Captain sees in those who volunteer for His ranks. Have we counted the cost, and are we willing, by His grace, to meet the demands our Lord Jesus Christ sets before us?

It is heartening and challenging to read reports in *Frontline Fellowship News* (P.O. Box 74, Newlands 7725, Cape Town, South Africa), of courageous soldiers of Christ, who brave almost impossible conditions and dangers to minister in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. There the Islamic government is endeavoring to subjugate the people, including Christians, and Islamize or eliminate them. Destructive warfare has long been carried out against the people. Frontline Fellowship takes in direly needed food and supplies and holds gatherings to preach to the lost and to nourish the Church.

A recent issue of *Frontline Fellowship News,* tells of a young lady, age 20, converted to Christ only a little over a year, who felt a great burden to minister to God's people in Sudan when she learned of the terrible suffering there. She flew to the area, but every effort to enter Sudan proved unsuccessful. When advised to join Frontline Fellowship, which ministers against great odds in Sudan regularly, she did so. Though very eager to go to Sudan, she submitted to the apprenticeship training they require -- described as "intensive Biblical instruction and practical outreach."

Their requirements to be a field worker are of necessity high, and require self-sacrifice and self-discipline. At the same time, workers must be a "team player." Hardships on the Sudan field are many. Ministry there involves trekking rugged, mountainous terrain in unbelievably high temperatures, carrying kits of food and water and other personal supplies, needing to be constantly watchful for land mines or ambushes or aerial attack from enemy forces, withstanding the stress, discouragement and depression that threaten the worker in this decimated and barren area, etc.

The young missionary lady, Delia, after training was counted ready to go with the team. She delighted the women and children in the mountains when she offered to hold services especially for them. Women are ordinarily in the homes or fields working while the men gather for ministry. One elderly African woman recalled that it had been 40 years since a lady missionary had ministered to them. How God has need of selfless laborers as Delia!

God gives to each of us tests to prove our devotion to Him and our willingness to deny ourselves in order to serve Him in that particular niche where He has need of us. How few of us could meet the strenuous tests as do the gallants-for-Christ mentioned above! But in the measure in which we are tested, for the sake of the self-sacrificing Lamb of God, might we prove to be those willing and obedient, counting even cherished things but loss for His sake, and loving not even our lives more than we love our dear Saviour.

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