

THE MARCH INTO BATTLE

Communion Meditation

February 7-8, 2009

As far as Father Alexander Borisov knew, he would never come back alive. The black Russian night held no assurance of safety. He hoped the police would be intimidated by his flowing black and gold vestments, but there was no guarantee.

Moscow was under siege. The hibernating bear had awakened from her sleep and was hungry. Precedent promised to oppress the people once more.

But Borisov dared to defy precedence. On August 20, 1991, he and a few members of the one-year-old Bible Society of the Soviet Union stalked tanks while carrying bundles of New Testaments. If the tank crews declined face-to-face talks about Jesus, the priest would climb on board the tanks and pitch a Bible through the hatch!

“It’s better to go to battle with God’s Word in your heart than weapons in your hand,” he told the soldiers.

When Jesus marched from Jericho to Jerusalem for his conclusive encounter with the enemy, he stopped in the road and said, “We are going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die. Then they will hand him over to the Romans to be mocked, flogged with a whip, and crucified. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead.” (Mt. 20:17-19 NLT)

Forget any suggestions that Jesus was trapped.

Erase any theory that Jesus made a miscalculation.

Ignore any speculation that the cross was a last-ditch attempt to salvage a dying mission.

For if these words from Matthew 20 tell us anything, they tell us that Jesus died on purpose. No surprise. No hesitation. No faltering.

But the journey to Jerusalem didn’t begin in Jericho. It didn’t begin in Galilee, or Nazareth, or even Bethlehem. The journey to the cross began long before. As the echo of the crunching of the fruit was still sounding in the garden, Jesus was leaving for Calvary.

And just as Father Alexander Borisov walked into battle with the Word of God in his hand, Jesus stepped toward Jerusalem with the promise of God in his heart – namely: “On the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

Folks, when we have the Word of God in our hands and in our hearts, we can face every enemy that comes against us, and win!

That’s why...

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.” In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.” For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

Friends, as we come to the Lord’s Supper now, we come with the promise of God lodged in our hearts: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn 1:9 NIV)

Discussion Questions

OPEN:

1. What did your parents want you to be when you grew up?
2. What about you, what did you want to be?
3. What are some secret expectations you have for your children/grandchildren?

DIG:

4. Read Matthew 20:17-19 out loud.
5. Why does Jesus once again predict his death? Why on this occasion (you may have to back up a bit and read the context)?
6. Now read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 aloud.
7. What does this passage tell us about Jesus, the “suffering servant?”
8. Which verse(s) stand out to you, and why?
9. Find two of your favourite “promises” from the Bible and read them out loud to your group. Explain why they are precious to you.

REFLECT:

10. How significant do you feel in relation to God's kingdom?
11. In what specific ways can you serve people, using Jesus as your model?
12. How is your spiritual sight better than it was six months ago?
13. How can your group pray for your spiritual growth this week?