

Are You At the Front, Or in A Trench?

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul”, Matthew 16:24-26.

Allow me to start with an anecdote, and follow it with an event that happened in my life many years ago.

A minister was stood at the door of the Church as his congregation departed after the service.

Seeing a particular man, he took the man by the hand and drew him close with the statement, “You need to join the Lord’s Army”

The man replied, “I am a member of the secret service”.

The event I am about to refer to concerned a family with two preteen age sons. Her husband who was in the army when they married, was about to be deployed in a war zone.

The husband and wife were beside themselves. The children could be left fatherless. She could be a widow. He might never see his children again.

When I pointed out that military personnel were trained to fight and protect their country, it was their answers that astounded me.

He claimed he had enlisted because of the benefits the recruiting officer had told him were available. His wife claimed she had married him after he explained what the army would freely give them!

Our Heavenly Father, our 'Field Marshall General', sent his senior officer to recruit troops to fight the common enemy of sin.

Jesus, in the lead Scripture, made it clear - TRAINING WOULD BE DAILY. Battles would be FOUGHT DAILY. Daily necessities WOULD BE SUPPLIED. His troops would be in the front line, NOT THE TRENCHES.

The above are not benefits to be received on a daily basis. The benefits come AFTER the battle has been won.

We fight alongside each other. We fight a common enemy. Our enemy was beaten at Golgotha two thousand years ago at the war front - THE CROSS OF CALVARY.

Our enemy has hidden in the trenches since, in the hope of capturing a lone 'soldier'. Unfortunately, many have looked for the lone - but missing soldier - in the hope of gaining extra benefits.

Our enemy, although a beaten enemy, has refused to admit that he is a beaten man, and continues to hand out valueless IOU's alluding to nonexistent benefits.

I have met 'Christians', who, having enlisted in God's Army have looked for a trench where they could hide from the war, and keep their benefits 'safe'.

Friend, you are not here for a trouble-free-ride-through-life. You are not here for an elite free-cabin-cruise-through-life.

Those Christians view Jesus as their trench, with Jesus above them as a shield, and are terrified of the statement, "You are not here to collect benefits FROM Jesus, you are here to be used BY Jesus in His war with Satan".

Some forty years ago, I was talking to an Army Padre who had spent time on a

war front.

During our talk he made the following statement, "The first two or three rows of trenches are always filled with the most God fearing soldiers. They are always united in their prayer. 'Lord, let these shells pass overhead to the back rows!'"

Are you serious enough to stand and proclaim Jesus as your protection, OR, are you looking for a trench where you can hide?