
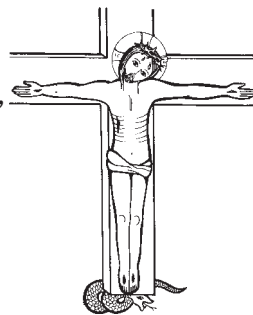




# John and Mike

*(A fictional story)*

 Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us that true love is when one can sacrifice himself for his friend. He said, “A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us, His friends. It was the same with the martyrs, those who died because they loved our Lord Jesus Christ more than anything in this world.



The following is a story about two friends who loved each other and were willing to die for each other.



There once lived two very good friends, John and Mike. They had been best friends since they were children. They trusted each other like brothers and each knew in his heart that there is nothing he would not do for his friend.

One day there was an argument about our Lord Jesus Christ in the street. Some people said that our Lord Jesus was a good man, but not the real Son of God. Others were saying that our Lord Jesus was not even a good man, but a person who lied to everyone.

John could not take this and began to say, “The Man named Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Son of God. No other man could do the miracles He did such as creating new eyes for the blind, healing the demon possessed and raising the dead.”

It so happened that the king of the land did not believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and was very angry with John. In a fit of rage, he summoned the two friends.



“What do you think you’re doing?” he demanded. “You are spreading unrest among the people.”

“I am only telling the truth,” said John. “Jesus of Nazareth is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.”

“This kind of talk is treason,” yelled the emperor. “You are making the people go against their gods and against me, their king. Take back what you are saying or you will regret it.”



“I will not take back what I said,” replied John.

“Then you will die. Do you have any last requests?”

“Yes. Let me go home just long enough to say goodbye to my family and to put my household in order.”

“Do you think I am a fool?” the king laughed scornfully. “If I let you leave, I have no doubt I will never see you again.”

“I give you my promise,” John said.

“A promise! What makes you think I will believe you?” demanded the king.

Just then, Mike who was standing silently next to John spoke up. “Keep me here as your prisoner until John comes back. Our friendship is well known to you. You can be sure that John will return as long as you have me.”

The emperor studied the two friends silently. “Very well,” he said at last.

“But if you are willing to take the place of your friend, you must also be willing to die if he breaks his promise. If John does not return within a month, you will die in his place.”



“He will keep his word,” replied Mike. “I have no doubt of that.”

John was allowed to go free for one month and Mike was thrown into prison. After several days, when John did not return, the emperor became curious and went to prison to see if Mike was sorry he made such a bargain.

“Your time is almost up,” said the ruler. “It will be useless to beg for mercy. You were a fool to rely on your friend’s promise. Did you really think he would sacrifice his life for you?”

“He is only delayed,” replied Mike. “The weather may have kept him from sailing or perhaps he has met with an accident on the road. But if it is humanly possible, he will be here on time. I am confident of that.”

The emperor was startled at Mike’s confidence. “We shall soon see,” he said and left Mike in his cell.

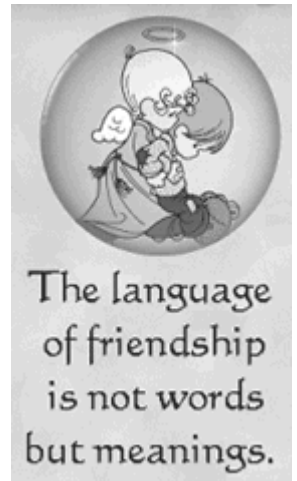
Finally the month was over and Mike was brought from prison to be executed. The king met him with a smug smile.

“It seems your friend has not turned up,” he laughed. “What do you think of him now?”

“He is my friend,” Mike answered. “I trust him.”

Even as he spoke, the doors flew open and John staggered into the room. He was pale and bruised and half-speechless from exhaustion. He rushed into the arms of his friend.

“You are safe, praise God,” he gasped. “It seemed as though everything was going against me. First my ship was wrecked in a storm and then bandits attacked me on the road. But I refused to give up hope and



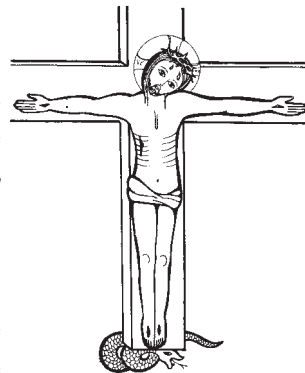


at last I've made it back in time. I am ready to receive my sentence of death."

The emperor heard his words in astonishment. His eyes and heart were opened. It was impossible for him to resist the power of such friendship.

"How is it you have such a worthy friendship?" he asked. "How did it happen?"

"It is through the grace we were given by our Lord Jesus Christ," replied John. "He taught us by His life how to be trustworthy. He gave up His life for us even when we did not deserve it. We only copied His holy example."



Then they began to tell the emperor all about our Lord Jesus Christ. The emperor began to see how wrong he was. He revoked the sentence of death and sent out a decree to all the land that there is only one God and His Son is our Lord Jesus Christ and that Jesus of Nazareth is truly the King of all Kings. Later the king was baptized and became a Christian.

