

Killed in Action

Romans 6:5-11

INTRODUCTION

- A. War is a costly affair.
1. Forget the cost armor, bombs, tanks, ships, & planes; that cost can be calculated.
 2. But, there is really no way that we can calculate the cost of all the deaths war brings.
 - a. In World War II, nearly 55 million people were killed. Poland lost over 6 million people, about 22% of her total population.
 - b. The greatest death toll in a battle took place in the Soviet Union during WWII.
 - 1) During the Battle of Stalingrad, over 1.1 million people were killed.
 - 2) 750,000 Germans were killed or injured during the battle.
 - 3) 478,741 Soviets were killed or missing.
 - 4) Before the battle, about 500,000 people lived in Stalingrad; after the war, only 1,515 civilians were found alive.
- B. Because of the high human toll in war, our nation has set this week-end aside as “Memorial Day” to remember all those who died to preserve our freedom.
1. It’s right & good that we do so.
 2. Jesus says, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13).
- C. Yet, the greatest battle of our time is not taking place in some foreign theater.
1. The greatest battle is the spiritual battle being waged all around us: “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).
 2. In that war, there are great casualties.
 - a. Perhaps some of those casualties are your friends & family – People who were once strong in the faith, but have now wandered into the world.
 - b. Yet, prayerfully, each one of us has been “***Killed in Action***” – taken our former self – our sinful self – and crucified it with Christ.
 - 1) That is the death of which Paul speaks at lengths in this morning’s text: READ TEXT.
 - 2) Paul has written about God’s great grace back in chapter 5.
 - a) The Apostle could well envision someone’s saying, “Since God is so full of grace, I’ll just sin & sin & sin, and God will forgive me.”
 - 2) In opening chapter 6, Paul says, “Not so fast! We killed those former selves & we dare not take them up again”: “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (Rom 6:1-2).
- D. In this morning’s passage, Paul elaborates on dying to sin.
1. He says that our former selves were “***Killed in Action***.”
 2. What kind of death in this war was it? We were KILLED IN AFFILIATION, KILLED IN ASPIRATION, & KILLED IN ANIMATION.

KILLED IN AFFILIATION, v 5

- A. “If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”
- B. In World War II, there were many who died together.

1. Think, for example, all those who died simultaneously at Hiroshima & Nagasaki.
 2. Likewise, when our sinful selves were “***Killed in Action***,” we did not die by ourselves, but we were “*Killed in Affiliation*” with Jesus.
- C. Why is it important that we were “*Killed in Affiliation*” with Jesus?
1. There is absolutely nothing I can do to save myself from my sin. The burden of my sin is far too heavy for that.
 2. The only way for me to be forgiven of my sin is through the death of Jesus.
 - a. “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Heb 9:28).
 - b. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet 2:24).
 3. Jesus took my sins upon himself & when I die to sin, I am placing my sins upon him.
 4. Yet, the text declares that in dying to sin my death is “like is.” How is my death to sin like his death on the cross?
 - a. Jesus died **for** sins & I am dying **to** sin.
 - b. Jesus’ death was an extreme example of sacrifice.
 - 1) In the Garden Jesus prayed, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:39).
 - 2) When I die to sin, I am sacrificing my own wants & desires to do as the Father wills.
 - c. Jesus’ death was a once-for-all-time event.
 - 1) “He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb 9:26).
 - 2) When Jesus died for sins, he never again needed to offer himself for the sins of the world.
 - 3) When we died to sin, we died to sin once and for all; we should never go back to sin.
 - d. Jesus was resurrected to a new life after his death for sin.
 - 1) It seems to be unmistakable that Jesus’ body was drastically different after the resurrection – He passed through walls (something we don’t read about before), the disciples on the Way to Emmaus did not recognize him, Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus when he appeared to her.
 - 2) We are to be drastically different after we die to sin: “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4).
- D. Have you killed yourself in affiliation? Have you died to your sin through Jesus Christ?

KILLED IN ASPIRATION, vv 6-7

- A. “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.”
- B. We were “*Killed in Aspiration*” – with a hope, a purpose.
- C. That aspiration is that the “body of sin might be brought to nothing.”
 1. The KJV does a better job than the ESV with verse 6.
 - a. “Brought to nothing” literally means “destroyed” or “rendered useless.”
 - b. This is the term, for example, used twice in 1 Cor 13:8 where prophecies & knowledge are to be said to cease.
 2. The idea, therefore, is that we get rid of sin; we die to the sin in our lives.
 - a. To the Colossians, Paul puts it this way: “Put to death . . . what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5).
 - b. His first name was Bill.

- 1) At an early age he began to drink and live in the depths of sin.
 - a) Sometimes he was referred to as “Old Bill.”
 - b) One night in a drunken brawl, a man hit him so hard that he was often referred to as “One-eyed Bill.”
- 2) But something happened to that wretch of a human being.
 - a) Bill was told about a Savior who could save him and give him a new life.
 - b) He was baptized into Christ, and his life was completely changed.
- 3) For many years after that, Bill worked around a soup kitchen in Evansville, Indiana.
 - a) Because of the remarkable change in this man’s life, many of his old friends began to speak of him as “New Bill.”
 - b) In fact, he actually went by that name for the rest of his life.
- c. That man’s life was so drastically changed that those around him saw that change & called him “New Bill.” How drastically has your life changed in Jesus Christ?

KILLED IN ANIMATION, vv 8-11

- A. “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
- B. When we were “***Killed in Action***,” we were “*Killed in Animation*” – we were killed in order that we might live with Christ.
- C. This is yet another reason it’s important that we die with Christ – in order that we might live with him.
 1. In this passage, there is a dual expectation of living with Christ.
 2. One: there is the expectation that we shall live with Christ in the future.
 - a. When this world is over, if we have died with Christ we shall live with him in glory.
 - 1) “The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him” (2 Tim 2:11).
 - 2) “The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord” (1 Thess 4:16-17).
 - b. In one of the churches in Rome, a picture tells a story about an aged saint.
 - 1) Coming close to the conclusion of a noble race run for the Master, the saint was comforted by Christ, who appeared to him.
 - 2) Jesus then says: “Well done, good and faithful servant; what wilt thou that I give thee as a reward?”
 - 3) The aged saint, with his face toward the beautiful City of God, cried out: “Nothing but Thyself, Lord.”
 - c. What a glorious thought! When this life is over we shall be with the One who died for us! Shall you be with Christ in eternity?
3. Yet, this text also teaches that we were “***Killed in Action***” to live with Christ in the present.
 - a. Paul says that the life we now live, we live to God & that we must now consider ourselves “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
 - b. There are two aspects to being alive to God.
 - 1) One: We have fellowship with him.
 - a) “Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:3).
 - b) As we have fellowship with God, we know that he hears our prayers & that he aids us on this difficult journey of life.

- 2) Two: As we live for God, we make it our aim to please him, not ourselves.
 - a) We have given up our way of thinking, we have given up our lives, in order that we might honor our God.
 - b) “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1).
 - c) Have you been “***Killed in Action***”?
 - i. Have you died to yourself in order that you might live for God?
 - ii. Paul tells us how we die to self: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3-4).
 - iii. Do you need to come this morning, killing your former self, bury him with Christ, & be raised to walk in newness of life?