

# Dedication—A Noble Example for Young People

By Andrew V. Ste. Marie

A bit of honest soul-searching is often good for us. Young people sometimes have the idea that they can be lukewarm in their devotion to Jesus Christ and get serious and holy when they are older. This is a tragic mistake.

On page 182 of *Martyrs Mirror*, we find a record of forty young people whose dedication to the LORD JESUS puts many of us to shame:

When the East as well as the West was exceedingly disturbed on account of the violence of the persecution, there manifested themselves in the East, namely at Antioch, forty pious youths, as valiant champions of Jesus Christ, inasmuch as they openly and boldly confessed the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as their Savior.

Notice that these forty “openly and boldly confessed” Jesus Christ. Boldness is a characteristic lacking in many people today. We need to break out of our “comfort zones” and do what Jesus Christ wants us to do. We need to take seriously His final command before leaving this earth: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Mt. 28:19-20 This command is given to all followers of Jesus, not just missionaries, elders, or evangelists, and we young people need to obey it as well as older ones! These forty young people from Antioch seem to have been doing just that.

We continue reading in *Martyrs Mirror*:

Thereupon, the Governor of that place, after they had been apprehended, strenuously exerted himself to move them from the faith; but when all his efforts proved unsuccessful, he had them stripped naked, in the coldest part of the winter, and cast into a very cold pool. But as they were still alive the next day, he caused them to be burned to powder.

This kind of dedication to the Lord Jesus is what He wants from us; it is what *Martyrs Mirror* is all about. These

forty young people were so dedicated to the Lord Jesus that they were willing to forsake all—*all*—for Him. Think about it for a minute ... imagine who these young people may have been. There were young men, probably looking forward to having a business and supporting a family. There were young women, looking forward to the day when they would be mothers and keep a home. There may have been some who were courting and others who were engaged. All were probably hoping for a long life of service to the Lord Jesus, whom they loved so intensely. Yet none of this moved them when they were called upon to suffer for the Lord Jesus, and nothing could move them from Him.

Knowing how the Romans and other persecutors operated, the Governor probably tried to make these Christians recant first with fair promises, then dire threats. How many of us could stay faithful to Jesus if faced with this?

Many young people seem to have a hard time resisting the fair promises of the world, even without any threats. They seem to be allured by the “pleasures of sin for a season.” He. 11:25 We need to be like Moses, who “esteem[ed] the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” He. 11:26 We need to stand strong for the Lord against the enticing allurements of the world.

Looking at the other tactic the Governor probably used—threats—we need to ask ourselves how well we

have fared when facing petty threats, perhaps not even ones which have been verbalized to us. Have we been afraid of the thought of our friends sneering at us, accusing us of being somehow “holier than thou,” or some other such petty fear? How have we fared under peer pressure? These forty youths would have been threatened with a lot worse experiences than being laughed at. The torture methods of the Romans were disgustingly horrible, yet Christians stood steadfast under them.

Finally, having stood steadfast under the threats, these young people stood strong under actual trial. They were faithful to Christ under the most difficult and humiliating experiences. They left us a noble example. ~

*The big tests might come once in a lifetime. The little tests will come many times a day. Let us use little, everyday tests to prepare us for the bigger experiences which the Lord Jesus may have in store for us later.*

*Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might! ~*