

Not Counting Our Life Dear

Acts 20:1-38 Fear is one of the greatest enemies of every Christian. Satan seeks to paralyze us with fear. Fear is Satan's anesthesia that causes us to be frozen on his operating table where he can perform wicked surgery on our souls. One of the secrets of the early church's success in the spread of the gospel is that those early believers loved not their lives to the death. When we read Revelation 12:11, we often skip over the last part. This verse reads, "And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."

When we overcome the fear of losing our lives for the sake of the gospel, we become as bold as Paul was. Many had warned Paul that he would face much persecution and even death, but his response was as follows: "But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

Recently I read a poem written by E. H. Hamilton. This poem was found among the belongings of Betty Stem, who was martyred along with her husband in China many years ago. This poem expressed Betty's total lack of fear. She did not count her life dear to herself. Here are a few of the thoughts expressed in this poem:

Afraid? Afraid of what?

To feel the spirit's glad release?

To pass from pain to perfect peace?

The strife and strain of life to cease?

Afraid? Afraid of that?

Afraid? Afraid of what?

Afraid to see the Savior's face?

To hear His welcome into grace?

The glory gleam from wounds of grace?

Afraid? Afraid of that?

This favorite poem of Betty's expressed so eloquently her lack of the fear of death. She loved not her life to the death. Would you have such courage?

Lord, forgive me for ever being fearful of persecution or death for the sake of the gospel. May I overcome the devil because I love not my life to the death.

**READ: 2 Kings 17:1-18:12; Acts 20:1-38; Psalm 148:1-14;
Proverbs 18:6-7**