

At the end of walking through life together, I can hear God saying, "Come on home, Enoch. We are closer to my house than to yours. There is no need for you to be out of heaven any longer. You have borne your testimony, you have lived for me and throughout the ages, men and women will look to you as a model of true godliness." Paul's death was like this also. Just before he was executed he wrote that he had fought a good fight; he had kept the faith and he had **"finished"** his race (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

The Gospel of Mark

BREAD WE CAN'T DO WITHOUT

"(Jesus said) are you going to leave Me also? Simon Peter said 'Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life.'"
(John 6:67-69)

Every husband has had moments when he wants to leave his wife, walk out the front door and never come back. That is also true of every wife. Even parents feel like this sometimes. Erma Brombek says she and her husband, vacationing with their kids, were often tempted to put them in a bus station with a ticket home.

The crowds and most of Jesus' followers who turned away from Him, were **disappointed in Him** because He would not set up their kingdom of prosperity on earth. People are often disappointed because they ask for things God has not promised to give us. An example is healing. When others die while loved ones prayed, we know Christians are not sheltered from this; but when it happens to us we sometimes take it too personally and feel God has let us down.

Some of Jesus' followers turned away because of the **danger**. They were afraid. They had every right to be. Herod, a man who killed his own sons to keep his throne, and who had just had John the Baptizer beheaded, had his eye on them. And the Jewish rulers had been making plots to have Him killed for over a year. When He left for Jerusalem Thomas said ***"let's go with Him and die with Him"*** (John 11:16).

Some great servants of God have given in to fear. Elijah won a victory for God on Mount Carmel and 450 false prophets were put to death. Queen Jezebel was not impressed that his prayers brought fire down from heaven. She said of him, ***"You killed my prophets and now I am going to kill You."*** Elijah heard this, forgot all about God and ran south into the desert like a frightened rabbit (1 Kings 18-19).

In the first 250 years of Christianity (100 – 350 AD) the Christian religion went from being a tiny, insignificant sect of the despised Jewish religion; to being the religion of the Roman Empire. So many people, from every walk of life, had embraced Christianity; that Emperor Constantine saw it as something that could unify the crumbling Empire.

One reason for this growth was the way Christians died while they were being burned at the stake; being crucified; being beheaded and being killed by animals in the arenas. People were impressed with how Christians faced death with bravery and the hope of heaven. This made more and more people want what they had and the church grew, not in spite of this but ***because*** of it. The church was like a torch, "the more the Romans shook it, the brighter it shined". Historians unite in saying, "The blood of the martyrs, was the seed of the church."

A few years ago we watched as flood waters tore through Texas like tornadoes. One horrible scene was of children from a church bus clinging to tree limbs and crying as helicopters dropped ropes to them. One little 12 year old girl's grip began to slip. She held on as long as she could before she fell to her death. Her friends, who were rescued, said her last words were: "I will see you in heaven. Tell my Mama and Daddy I love them."

***That precious child makes me glad
I am a Christian. It should
make you want to be a Christian.***