

# Significant Lives — Chapter 13

By Jim Golden — Freedom!

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*"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is  
there is freedom."  
(2 Cor. 3:17 NIV)*

"Villains who twirl their mustaches are easy to spot but those who clothe themselves in good deeds are well camouflaged." My mind began to wander as I listened to Captain Picard. He had just communicated a greater truth to his security officer, Mr. Warf, than he realized. Warf was a proud and duty bound Klingon who lived for honor and glory. As the plot of this episode unfolded Warf was getting caught up in the investigation of those involved in an alleged conspiracy against the United Federation of Planets. Reading between the lines of this plot one could see the author's desire was to expose the freedom or bondage that can be brought on a society through the ideals they embrace. As our plot develops we find Simon Tarsus, the medical assistant, being persecuted and prosecuted for treason because of his contact with a confessed spy. The recently uncovered truth of his Romulan grandfather only fueled the fire his assailants sought to feed. At first glance everything being done seemed like the right thing to do. However, like so well-intentioned endeavors, this one was quickly turning into a witch-hunt.

When a confrontation arose between Captain Picard, the defender of the rights of man, and Lieutenant Warf, the advocate of the truth, things got a little tense. Warf's greatest redeeming factor is his willingness to confess his error when convincingly confronted with it. It is every Christian's privilege to preserve and proclaim the faith our Savior gave his life for. Yet, I fear in doing so many have turned this blessed privilege into a witch hunt, leaving many poor saints burning at the stake. Church history is one endless road of persecution. Yet the uninformed reader may be surprised to know that there has been more persecution of the church, by the church than by the "heathen".

The reason we can find so many different Christian churches is the direct result of the persecution of the faithful by the faithful. Our price for freedom is vigilance. We must be ever vigilant and faithful to expose those who pervert the gospel and freedom the shed blood of Jesus Christ purchased for us. Unfortunately, as history has shown, the ones being persecuted were usually the true guardians of the gospel! A student of Church history could easily become distraught by the atrocities wrought for the *sake of righteousness* in the *name* of Jesus Christ.

Those who draw their security from the constantly speaking of our Christian responsibilities to God and one another should be the subject of everyone's scrutiny. They often do so in order to see their vision of the Kingdom become a reality. Usually they know little of the freedom Christ's salvation brings. Many others call us to performance because they have not yet dealt with the scars and pain that motivate them at the core level of their beings. For us who have been saved by God's merciful grace through faith in his holy Son's sacrifice responsibility is better defined as *responsibility*. All we need to do to have God consider us as responsible children is respond to His voice when

have God consider us as responsible children is respond to His voice when He speaks.

The words that come from our heavenly father's mouth are certain to accomplish what they proclaim. Whether they are past tense, as promise in Scripture, or present tense, as a word impressed upon our hearts by his Spirit, they are alive. Time doesn't make God's word ineffectual-they are living and active. Jesus said that the words that he spoke were spirit and life. They were much more than simply the hollow sounds of air passing across the vocal chord of a fallen species.

His love for us compelled him to give himself over to the power of death, but it wasn't simply symbolic of his love. His death secured him the right to change those who came to him. Jesus isn't satisfied to die for us and leave us like we are. He transforms all those who put their trust in him by becoming one with them. He alone can do this and he does it in his own time and in his own way.

After his resurrection and ascension he began to do just that by pouring out his Spirit on betrayers and cowards. Those who, just weeks before, had denied him now loudly proclaimed his name publicly. "And we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Whose glory are you reflecting? The greatest way to preserve the faith is to become just like its author. However, the ability does not lie within the realm of human effort. Christ is the only one with the ability to bring about this mysterious transformation. Mystery is a word used quite often in the Bible. God does not feel the necessity to apologize for his mysteries, neither does he feel the need to explain them. He simply asks us to believe that they are; and accept them in faith.

What savior, or hero for that matter, would give his life for the maiden (or in our case the not-so-fair maiden) just so the villain could seduce her after his demise? Jesus might have appeared to have been defeated at Calvary, but in reality he was the supreme victor. He never intended for anyone else to care for his redeemed. Jesus doesn't need anyone else to teach us his ways, nor can anyone else cherish his bride in the intimate fashion that he can. Our intense desire to see every child of God become what they claim to be led of the Spirit. If it is the result of well-intentioned human concern, or ecclesiastical intimidation it is worthless. I do not believe that Scripture's entreaty for us to look on the needs of others was a license from God to begin changing each other. Rather, God's desire is for us to simply provide for each other's material and emotional needs.

No one can cure the naturally diseased state of the human heart but Jesus. Heart transplants don't have a very high success rate in the natural, yet Jesus can give us a brand new heart, successfully, every time. When we learn to walk the path of faith in the faithfulness of God we will walk on the pathway of freedom and power. Paul told us to follow him as he followed Christ. This kind of leadership is the only kind of leadership recognized in heaven. The small and insignificant titles men bestow upon themselves to satisfy their insecurities mean nothing to heaven. But, those who lead us by their example of intimacy with Jesus bring great joy to the heart of God.

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