

He Will Not Deny His Countrymen

Hezekiah

Laos 2001

Hezekiah's life had been so transformed that he had to tell someone. When he returned to the village he grew up in, he told the thirty-five relatives and villagers who met him and demanded to know why he had converted to Christianity, "Jesus is the only way I can be saved from my sins. Jesus is the only way I can have eternal life."

They didn't like this. As Hezekiah reasoned with them about the truths he had found studying God's Word and being disciplined by other believers in the safe haven he had left to bring them the Gospel, tempers began to flare. Suddenly someone lunged out and grabbed Hezekiah. Others followed. They dragged him to the ground and beat him until he blacked out. Then they left him in the street, bruised and bleeding.

When the crowd had gone, a friend took Hezekiah to his own home, where he nurtured him back to health. It was four days before Hezekiah could raise himself off of the bed.

Hezekiah eventually left his village and to this day is still not welcome either there or in his family's homes. Instead, he now travels from village to village sharing what he has learned from the Bible and showing the way of salvation to as many as will let him. He said that he would not deny his countrymen the Good News.

Because of this, he has been beaten and thrown out of at least ten other villages. Some of the beatings were so bad that he thought he would not live through them—and some were so bad he wished he would not live through them. But his testimony remains strong: "As I have matured in my walk with Christ, I have more faith to endure these hardships. The trials I have gone through have served to strengthen my faith, as I see God's faithfulness in delivering me. I thank God I have been able to bring thirty people to the saving knowledge of Jesus."

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We often say we have school spirit or pride in our community, but how often are we willing to put our reputations on the line for others that they might also share the joy we have in Jesus?

I would gladly be placed under God's curse and be separated from Christ for the good of my own people.

Paul

(Romans 9:3 CEV)

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