

## How Precious Is Your Life?

‘In the [well-known] comic strip, *Calvin and Hobbes*, Calvin is at school, and his teacher is attempting to teach the class: “If there are no questions, we’ll move on to the next chapter”. “I have a question”. “Certainly, Calvin, what is it?” “What’s the point of human existence?” “I meant any question about the subject at hand”. “Oh—frankly, I’d like to have the issue resolved before I expend any more energy on this”.’

As comic strip authors frequently do, they philosophize on the fundamental questions of life. Bill Watterson, creator of *Calvin and Hobbes*, did so more than many, and even though his comic only ran for 10 years, concluding at the end of 1995, it’s had an enduring legacy. Such that the question he posed in today’s joke will resonate with godless humanity until Christ Jesus returns. Which is truly right around the corner, likely within many of our lifetimes. If we really know Christ Jesus, then we already have a fairly good idea of the point of human existence, such that we shouldn’t be puzzled as to how to value our own existence.

A Quinnipiac University poll released last week took Americans’ current “temperature”: “As the world witnesses what is happening in Ukraine, Americans were asked what they would do if they were in the same position as Ukrainians are now: stay and

fight or leave the country?” Thankfully a small majority, 55% said they would stay and fight. Unsurprisingly, 52% of democrats said they would tuck in their tails and flee. Only 40% would stay! If there was any question whether a majority of democrats are traitors, this answers that. What about republicans? Happily, 68% of republicans still love their country and would stay and fight. Of independents, 57% would also stick around.

Staying around and fighting means putting one's life in danger. I wonder how many in the above percentages would hold out even when things got really bad, with death seemingly awaiting them around every corner. This really puts things into proper perspective. For whom or what are we truly willing to lay our lives down on the line? A reverse way of posing that question is to ask what does a person love the most? What is most important to him or her, even more important than their own life?

With the current war in Ukraine, the question of what's most important in life is being clearly answered by many men and women facing Russian invaders, and even beyond. It's likely that most have no intention of dying in action, but the possibility of paying the ultimate price can not be far from any of their minds. Despite the fact that so much of what all sides are being fed from their respective governments and media outlets is plain but pleasant propaganda, depending on one's point of view, this conflict is not black and white with one side clearly and completely evil and the other clearly and completely innocent. Without going

into all the political machinations and maneuverings of the previous decade and before that have led up to President Putin's decision to launch an all-out invasion and takeover of Ukraine, we, as Christians, need to never lose sight of the fact that what we see is but a fraction of what's really going on. As previously stated, while we see physical violence and conflict, at root this is a spiritual battle. Indeed, all human wars are. For despite all the secular analysts, pundits, military strategists, and experts of this, that and the other, God is overseeing this "chess board", and moving pieces here and there in accordance with His will, and at the impetus of the prayers of His people. Since most of us can not currently see beyond what various media show us, believers must rely on God's prophets to inform us what's really happening.

What the major news outlets show us is nearly always totally devoid of the spiritual implications and influences of any and every conflict, election, uprising, demonstration, war, coup de tat, injustice, issue, fight and disagreement, in the world. It's as if God didn't exist at all. The world's media sees God's hand in anything as nothing more than that some fanatic imbecilic religious rubes, shouting the name of some God or gods in their protest marches. In the world's eyes, God doesn't exist and everything that happens is completely and totally all of mankind's doing. My, how they will be surprised when Lord Jesus shows up! But, by then, as Revelation, actually the whole Bible, has already warned us, they'll be so full of hate that they will refuse to be loved or to

love. For in Ukraine, God has been doing a mighty work in that country over the three decades of its independence. The number of believers there has exploded. Groups of believers are continuing to gather in circles to pray, even with bombs falling around them. Ukraine may be fighting for its survival, but God and His Church are fighting for the ever-greater manifestation of Lord Jesus' glory both in their midst, within Russia, and in the whole world. For the eyes of most all the world are on Ukraine these days. And when God truly does something unmistakably, undeniably, and conspicuously, supernaturally miraculous, many people in the world will take notice, and be moved to repent and turn to the Lord. And this will be largely in response to God's people laying their lives down on the line so that others may be saved!

We read in Luke that Lord Jesus and company stopped in a village as He made slow and deliberate progress toward His destination of Jerusalem. King Herod Antipas had already reluctantly beheaded John the Baptist, and now his ire had turned toward an even more irritating troublemaker, namely Lord Jesus. Some local Pharisees felt it was their duty to warn the Lord of the new danger to His life. But what was the Lord's reaction? Knowing that His time to die had not yet arrived, He brushed it aside, knowing that absolutely nothing would come of the king's orders. They were overruled by a much higher, heavenly authority!

Similarly, in Jeremiah 26, just a young man in his prime, Jeremiah prophesied the word of the Lord to the people in

Jerusalem. God promised the overthrown and total destruction of the national capital if the people did not repent, but a beautiful restoration and peaceful life if they did. The crowds did not like what they heard. Calling him a traitor to the nation, their livelihoods and their cause, they demanded his immediate execution. You see what Jeremiah put up with? Near certain death awaited him. And mark my words, it would not have been a “humane” execution. It would have been preceded by excruciating torture. But older, wiser, cooler heads prevailed. With the vocal support of a nobleman named Ahikam, Jeremiah’s life was spared.

Such was not the case for Uriah, who was another faithful prophet of God, contemporary of Jeremiah. Being faithful, one who did not consider his life more important than serving the Lord, his message to Jerusalem was necessarily the same as Jeremiah’s. For what did God want more than anything? That His people would turn from their wicked, evil, self-destructive ways. God takes no pleasure in delivering the judgement of destruction on anyone. How painful it must be for Him to have to execute judgement on anyone, even in the future upon satan himself! And in the case of Uriah, though he took the sensible course of action and tried to remove himself from King Jehoiakim’s clutches by fleeing across the border into Egypt, the king was so incensed at his prophecies that he sent a posse to arrest him in Judah’s ally Egypt, and haul him back to Jerusalem, to face execution by sword. Well, Uriah made it to paradise sooner than Jeremiah.

Quite possibly Uriah had an easier time of it than Jeremiah ended up having! But truly, the point of human existence is to love God and serve Him forevermore! And what could be more fulfilling, satisfying and pleasurable!

The Quinnipiac University survey revealed that over two-thirds of republicans are, at least on paper, willing to fight and possibly die to protect the United States. I wonder how many of them, you, would say the same to protect and advance the Gospel of Christ Jesus? Are you willing to lay your life down on the line to fight for the cause of Christ? If the orders came down, would you be a Christian soldier, like in the hymn “onward, Christian soldiers!” On all fronts, there are menacing, screaming groups of people empowered by bloodthirsty evil spirits, that while hating us, most of all, hate God Himself. As of now, we’re still useful to them living, if we both keep our mouths shut about Lord Jesus, and applaud their depravity and rebellion. Such, they assert, is how to show God’s love to them. Don’t believe that lie. Stand up for the truth. But not obnoxious about it. Christ Jesus was never obnoxious! But to those who refused the truth all the while knowing better, He dressed them down one Temple wall and up another. They spurned Him Who held out His hands in gracious love to them. In contrast, He’s promised that if we give our lives to Him, we, He, will save them. Lord Jesus told us that in seeking His kingdom, all the other things we need in this earthly life are given to us. In abundance. So, how precious is your life?

