

# How will I live my life?

## ...Going out in a blaze of glory, or like a slow burning candle...

One of my favorite preachers, Fred Craddock, once said, “To give my life for Christ appears glorious. To pour myself out for others...to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I’ll do it. I’m ready Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory.”

Then he went on to say, “We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking **a thousand dollars** and laying it on the table—‘Here’s my life, Lord. I’m giving it all.’ But the reality for most of us is that He sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, 'Get lost.' Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home. Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, **25 cents at a time**. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul.”

In the Old West, the gunslinger’s plea was, “Let me die with my boots on”. In the military, we celebrate the most those who gave their lives to save their comrades. There are many stories of soldiers throwing themselves on a grenade to save their fellow soldiers. On the other side of this blaze of glory is the statement made by General Douglas MacArthur in his retirement speech before Congress in 1951. He said, “**Old soldiers never die, they just fade away**”. An old soldier was fortunate not to die in battle, but then he dealt with the day to day grind of serving his country until his retirement. Then he slowly walked away, waiting for the day of his death. MacArthur died 10 years later.

The story of “Mr. Holland’s Opus” is a great illustration of this point. Mr. Holland was an aspiring composer, who was forced to take a temporary job teaching music at a local high school, in order to provide for his family. Day after day he worked with the children. Every night, after grading papers and dealing with his other duties as a teacher, he worked on his composing. In the beginning he was resistant and resentful because he felt a desperate need to do something big and meaningful with his music. But as time went by he grew to care for the children he was teaching, and really tried to make a difference. Time went by and he never became a renowned composer.

Retirement was at hand, and Mr. Holland was at peace with teaching, but still felt his life was unfulfilled. Yet the impact of his life was about to be revealed. Most of his students returned for a surprise party in his honor. Included was a governor, several CEO’s and a number of other successful former students. They greeted him and then came the surprise. The better musicians among his former students took their places for a surprise performance, and they played Mr. Holland’s Opus; the composition he had spent his life creating. Yet his greatest joy was not the music. It was the students he had taught through all those years of classes.

Most of us will not go out in a blaze of glory. We will rather live our lives for the Lord like a slow burning candle. And in all those little details we will be faithful...

...25 cents at a time.