

All or Nothing

Introduction

On the 6th of February 1968, I enlisted with the Royal Australian Airforce for 6 years (later extending my contract for an additional 6 years... totaling 12 years). I was aged 18 when I enlisted, and was 30 when discharged.

At present, the Australian Defense Force (comprising of Army, Air Force, and Navy) totals 59,000 permanent personnel and 29,000 part-time personnel (full-time personnel refer to the part-timers as “Weekend Warriors”).

At the outbreak of war, the Australian government has power to bolster its number of active personnel through **conscription**... forcing *select* civilians into military service. And so, at certain times the Australian Defense Force can be made up of **enlisted** full-time personnel, **enlisted** part-time personnel, and **conscripted** full-time personnel. Which of these three groups do you think is the strongest option?

As Australia is not presently at war, it's number of fighting personnel is made up of enlisted full-time and part-time personnel... No conscripts!

Are you aware that God is presently at war... and His “true” followers are His military personnel? Paul says in the Book of Ephesians... *Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places*” (6:11-12).

Unlike the Australian Defense Force, God's Defense Force is made up of strictly **enlisted** full-time personnel... No part-timers--No conscripts!

A person gets into God's Defense Force by their free-will decision—their period of enlistment is the duration of their lives--their enlistment is an “All, or Nothing” affair!

In New Testament times, 60-70% of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. There were different classes of slaves; Conscripted slaves, Enlisted “part-time” slaves, and “Doulos” slaves. Doulos is a Greek word in the Bible that means “slave.” It literally means to *willingly be owned by someone for a lifetime*. This word is found at least 127 times in the New Testament.

Paul began his letter to the Philippian church with these words, *“This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus”* (1:1). Everyone at the time understood that Paul was testifying that he had freely given himself to Christ as a full-time, life-time doulos slave... a bond servant. A Doulos slave would submit themselves to their owner for ear-piercing with a stud as a public sign of their chosen life of service. Paul gladly lived and died for Christ... because Christ gladly lived and died for him.

This is what the sacrament of the Holy Communion stands to remind us each time we observe it. Firstly, that Christ lived and died for each one of us, that we may live and never die!... and secondly, that we now live as Christ's Doulos... until we die!

From the Book of Romans, Paul appeals to each of us today for an “All or Nothing” commitment to Jesus. Paul says, *“Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect”* (12:1,2).

In the Book of Luke, Jesus said to crowds of people who were attracted to Him, *“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me”* (9:23).

Friends, unless our Christian lives is an “All for Jesus” full-time affair, we are living for nothing!

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