

Martyrs' Memorial

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—Philippians 1:21

One of the most popular sites in England is Buckingham Palace. But for me the most moving site was not the crown jewels. It was a simple brick cross sunk in the road in Oxford England.

The front of the bulletin this week contains the image of Martyrs' Memorial which depicts the 16th century martyrs (3 statues) Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley.

Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley were believers in salvation through faith in Christ alone. They did not believe that a person had to keep the manmade rules of the church but an individual could be guided by the Holy Spirit directly from the Holy Scriptures. They believed that a man could go straight to God in prayer. For these beliefs, these three men were burned at the stake.

The actual site of the execution was just outside the old city walls a short distance from the present day memorial. The inscription states: "To the Glory of God, and in grateful commemoration of His servants, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, Prelates of the Church of England, who near this spot yielded their bodies to be burned, bearing witness to the sacred truths which they had affirmed and maintained."

As I stood at this spot and thought about those men who chose to be burned at the stake rather than renounce their faith. I wondered what my faith had cost me. Had I been quiet when I should have been bold? Had I chosen the popular rather than the righteous? Would I have had the courage to lay down my life for my faith?

I wondered what these men might have been thinking as the flame began to consume them and I thought of the statement of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:21.

