The story of Saint Perpetua and Felicitas is more than just a historical account—it's a testimony of unwavering faith, self-denial, and the cost of following Christ. Their martyrdom teaches us deep truths about the Christian life, especially the call to suffer for Christ's name, regardless of status, age, or relationships.

Historical Background

Perpetua was born around 182 AD in Tunis, North Africa. She came from a wealthy and noble family. Her father was a pagan, but Perpetua became a Christian—evidence of God's saving grace reaching into every class of society. The exact time of her conversion is unclear, but her transformation was evident in her total surrender to Christ.

At that time, Emperor Septimius Severus had outlawed Christianity and Judaism across North African provinces. The persecution was intended to preserve Roman religious unity by suppressing "foreign religions." This mirrors Jesus' own warning:

> *John 15:18–19*
> "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it

> hated you... because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

Perpetua was arrested while undergoing catechism (Christian instruction) and was baptized shortly before being imprisoned, along with four other believers. She was also a young mother, still nursing her infant child. Among those arrested with her was Felicitas, her servant, who was pregnant at the time.

A Test of Faith

When her father came to visit her in prison, he begged her to deny Christ to save her life. But Perpetua responded:

> "Can this water jar be called anything other than what it is?"
> "No," he said.
> "Then neither can I be called anything other than what I am—a Christian."

This statement reflects her understanding of identity in Christ:

> *2 Corinthians 5:17*
> “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

To Perpetua, being a Christian wasn’t just a label—it was her very nature. She couldn’t deny Christ without denying her own existence.

Her father returned a second time, this time broken and pleading, saying:

> “Have pity on me and your family… just say you’re not a Christian!”

But again, Perpetua held firm. Her boldness reminds us of Christ’s words:

> *Matthew 10:37–39*
> “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me… and he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

The Final Trial

At their trial, the group stood before the Roman governor. One by one, they confessed Christ and refused to worship the emperor. When Perpetua was asked, she boldly said:

> “Yes, I am a Christian.”

Her father, still hoping to save her, held her child and begged her again. But she would not compromise. The governor sentenced them to die in the arena.

There, wild animals were released. The men were thrown to leopards and bears; the women—including Perpetua and Felicitas—were thrown to a wild cow. Despite being injured and

bleeding, Perpetua rose to help Felicitas.

This act of love and perseverance is a picture of Christian fellowship and bearing one another's burdens, even in suffering:

> *Galatians 6:2*
> "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Eventually, Roman executioners were brought in to finish them off with the sword. Perpetua died at the age of 22. Despite her youth, wealth, and noble status, she chose Christ above all. She counted nothing in this world worthy to be compared with knowing Him.

Perpetua's life reminds us that true discipleship costs everything. Jesus Himself said:

> *Luke 14:27–28*
> "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost...?"

She exemplified the faith described in Hebrews:

> *Hebrews 11:35–37*
> "...Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings... they were stoned, sawn in two, slain with the sword..."

These are the heroes of faith—the "cloud of witnesses" who surround us and challenge us to run our own race faithfully:

> *Hebrews 12:1*
> "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."

A Personal Challenge to You—Especially Women of Faith

How do you value your salvation?

Perpetua gave up everything—status, comfort, and even her child—for the sake of Christ. Yet many today find it difficult to let go of things like revealing clothes, worldly entertainment, or the fear of people's opinions.

You might say, "But I'm young." So was Perpetua.

You might say, "But I come from a struggling background." She came from wealth—yet didn't cling to it.

You might say, "But I'm a mother." So was she—and she left her baby in God's hands.

The truth is, we often make excuses. But Jesus calls us to deny ourselves:

> *Mark 8:34–35*
> "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it..."

Conclusion

Perpetua and Felicitas were not superhuman. They were ordinary women, just like you and me, who simply chose to obey Christ no matter the cost.

> *James 5:17*
> “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours…”

What set them apart was their willingness to die to self. They remind us that this world is temporary, but Christ is eternal. One day, we will all stand before Him. What will you say?

May the courage of Perpetua and Felicitas inspire us to love Christ above all—above family, reputation, youth, or fear. Let us run our race faithfully.

> *Revelation 2:10*

> “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Be blessed. Let your faith be genuine. Let Christ be everything.

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