A Bear Hug That Saved Lives

In November 2017 in Kabul, Afghanistan, a young police lieutenant named Sayed Basam Pacha made a split-second decision that saved the lives of dozens of people.

Pacha, age 25, and other police officers were guarding a political event at a local meeting hall when he spotted a suicide bomber approaching a security checkpoint outside the hotel where several high-profile dignitaries were meeting.

Pacha shouted at the bomber to stop, but the man started running straight for him. Instead of fleeing, Pacha grabbed the man in a big bear hug seconds before the bomber detonated his vest. The explosion killed 14 people, including Pacha and seven other police officers. Eighteen people were wounded in the blast.

Police investigators say the death toll would have been far higher if Lt. Pacha had not caught the bomber in a bear hug and absorbed most of the blast with his own body. "He saved many lives by sacrificing his life," said Police Chief Basir Mujahid.

Lt. Pacha's friends and family were not surprised by his sacrifice. They described him as cheerful, brave, always putting others before himself. They knew his courage came from his commitment to his job and to his country.

Pacha's father, a police commander, said proudly through his tears, "My son sacrificed himself to save other people."

Pacha's longtime friend, Sayed Najib Asil, said Pacha "wanted to make changes in our country, especially in police. He really hated corruption, especially among police … and he felt very bad when people assumed that policemen are corrupt."

Read about the last days of Jesus' life and you'll see that He knowingly, willingly sacrificed Himself to save others. He absorbed the penalty of death in His own body so that we – that's you and me – could live.

What kind of king would give up His own life for His subjects? A King who was sent by God for a special mission. A King who was to lay down His life for the world.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16-17 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter