

Fije and Eelken at Leeuwarden (1549)

Narrator: "In the year 1549, about three weeks before Easter, two men, named Fije and Eelken, were apprehended at Boorn, in West Friesland. They were brought before the lords, where they boldly confessed their faith. The lords first interrogated Eelken."

Lord: "Who has authorized you to assemble the people to teach them?"

Eelken: "God has authorized me."

Lord: "What have you taught?"

Eelken: "Ask those who heard it; for you have arrested a woman who heard me."

Narrator: "They then asked the woman what she had heard from Eelken. She told them: 'He read the four Evangelists, Paul, Peter, the epistles of John, and the Acts of the Apostles.'"

Lord: "Eelken, what do you hold concerning the sacrament?"

Eelken: "I know nothing of your baked God."

Lord: "Friend, take care what you say; such words cost necks. What do you think of the mother of God?"

Eelken: "Much."

Lord: "What do you say; did the Son of God not receive flesh and blood from Mary?"

Eelken: "No: with regard to this, I believe what the Son of God himself declares concerning it."

Lord: "What do you hold concerning our holy Roman church?"

Eelken: "I know nothing of your holy church. I do not know it; I never in all my life was in a holy church."

Lord: "You speak too spitefully; I am sorry for you and fear that you will lose your neck. Are you not baptized?"

Eelken: "I am not baptized, but I greatly desire baptism."

Lord: "What do you think of these false teachers who run about and baptize the people?"

Eelken: "Of false teachers I think nothing, but I have greatly longed to hear a teacher sent from God."

Lord: "But we have heard that *you* are a teacher?"

Eelken: "Who made me a teacher?"

Lord: "We don't know."

Eelken: "If you ask me what you don't know yourselves, how do you expect me to know it? I know of no one who has made me a teacher; but God has given me all I have asked him for."

Lord: "We have now written down all the articles about which we have interrogated you on this occasion; if there is anything of which you repent, we will gladly strike it out!"

Eelken: "Do you think that I should deny God?"

Narrator: "Eelken and Fije were then both sentenced and brought together; they embraced each other, kissed one another's hands and feet with great love, so that all who saw and heard it were astonished. The beadles and servants ran to the lords and said: 'Never did men love one another as do these.'"

Eelken: "Dear brother, do not take it amiss, that you have been brought into suffering through me."

Fije: "Dear brother, do not be concerned, for it is the will of God."

Narrator: "Their execution was deferred until the third day after the sentence was passed. Eelken was first executed with the sword. When Fije's sentence was read, he did not listen to it, because of his great joy; and, ignorant of what had happened to Eelken, he sang and leaped, praising and thanking God, saying:"

Fije: "This is the only way."

Narrator: "They led Fije into the boat in which Eelken lay beheaded, and beside him the wheel upon which Eelken was to be placed, and the stake at which Fije was to stand to be burned. In the boat Fije's hands became loose, but he sat still nevertheless. The monks then said: 'Bind him again.' The hangman replied: 'You bind him.' But the castellan ordered him to bind Fije again. Some women who saw this wept bitterly. But Fije said:"

Fije: "Don't weep for me but for your sins." (to the executioner): "What are you going to do to me?"

Narrator (as executioner): "That you will see."

Fije: "Do what you will; I have committed myself into the hands of my Lord."

Narrator: "The brethren went out with him, together with the common people, and when Fije saw some of his acquaintances, he cried out:

Fije: “Friends, rejoice with me over this marriage feast which is prepared for me.”

Narrator: “When he arrived at the place of execution, some brethren, who greatly rejoiced with him, spoke to him, saying: ‘This is the narrow way; this is the Lord’s wine press; from this depends the crown.’ But when the castellan heard this cry, he called out: ‘Let no man lay his hands on him, on pain of life and property.’ The executioner had forgotten his instruments, and ran to the town to get them. In the meantime, the castellan and the two monks had Fije in the confessional, greatly tempting him with bread and wine; but they could not prevail upon him, for Fije did nothing but sing and speak, praising and thanking God. When they could not prevail on him, and the executioner returned, they said to Fije: ‘How is it that you are so obstinate, when you say that you are a member of Christ? Why then will you not receive this bread and wine as bread and wine, for our sakes?’”

Fije: “I do not hunger for your bread and wine; for there is food prepared for me in heaven.”

Narrator: “When they could not prevail upon him, they said: ‘Begone, you heretic, begone!’ The castellan said: ‘I have seen many a heretic; but in all my life I never saw a more obdurate one than this.’ Fije, standing prepared for death, said to the executioner:

Fije: “Master, have you finished your work?”

Narrator (as executioner): “Not yet.”

Narrator: “The executioner then went up to Fije, tore open his shirt, took the cap from his head, and filled it with gunpowder. Standing at the stake at which he was to be strangled, Fije exclaimed:”

Fije: “O Lord, receive your servant.”

Narrator: “He was then strangled and burnt, and thus fell asleep in the Lord. The common people cried out: ‘This was a pious Christian; if he is not a Christian, there is not one in the whole world.’”