

## Sunday September 11<sup>th</sup> 2011 – Belonging to Christ.

Romans 14:7-9

**For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. (NASB)**

Beloved in Christ,

One day you decide to sell your car. The purchaser comes to your house, pays the agreed price and you hand over the keys and he happily drives off. What he doesn't know is that you have held onto the spare set of keys. After a few days you go around to the purchaser's house and you see your former car sitting in his driveway. Using the spare key you unlock the car, get inside and drive off. What have you just done? You have stolen the car. Even though it was once yours it is no longer yours. You have no right to simply drive off.

The majority of us here today, and probably those who are reading this have been baptised. If we were baptised as an infant, then our parents dedicated us to the Lord. If we were baptised as adults then we gave ourselves to the Lord. If we were baptised as infants, then probably we presented ourselves for confirmation at some stage. At that time we made a vow to follow the Lord and to live for Him. That means that our lives are no longer ours.

When we were baptised, we were bought from our sins with the blood of Jesus. Our old man, our old nature was drowned in the waters of baptism and we came out of the water with a new nature, dressed in Christ. Ownership of our lives changed hands. From that moment we belonged to Christ.

The problem is that in the passage of time many have drifted away, have not understood God's Word, have not submitted to Him and have taken control of their lives.

When we live according to our will, then we are living in sin. We have stolen or usurped authority. We are misusing what belongs to God. Our life belongs to God, and we do not have the right to lead it as we please. God paid a tremendous price to redeem us from the curse of the law, from death and sin. That price was the Holy Blood of Jesus.

This is why Paul writes in our text today: **"For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. "**

One of Satan's biggest lies is that your life is yours and that you have the right to do with your life as you please. How often do we not hear the misguided cry: "It's my body, I can do as I please." The fact of the matter is that it is not yours. You did not create yourself. You are

not even capable of sustaining your own life. If God removes His hand from you, if He takes His breath from you, you die.

If and when we comprehend this truth, and live accordingly, then we are free and we are blessed.

The father of our faith, Dr Martin Luther wrote: "I have held many things in my hands and have lost them all. But what I have placed in God's hands, that I have retained."

Herein is the paradox. What we give away we gain. Only in dying to Christ, do we live. When we surrender our lives to Jesus as His servants, we experience true freedom.

A person who stubbornly goes his way, and insists on doing things his way, will ultimately lose everything.

In contrast, the one who lets go and places all in God's hands receives life in abundance here and in eternity.

It is only when you have truly died to self, to your will, to your desires, do you begin to live, because only then can God fulfil His purpose in your life.

In this same letter to the Romans Paul writes in chapter 12:

***"<sup>1</sup> Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. "***

As I have pointed out, this is an ongoing process and not just a one off event. As we begin each day we should do so saying: Today Lord, I proclaim that I do not live for myself. My life I surrender to You. You are my Lord and I surrender all to You.

For a number of weeks now, we have been looking at prayers in the Psalms. We have seen the Psalmist pray that God would unite his heart, that God would teach him His ways, that He would be a light that illuminates the path and that He would lead in the way of truth.

All of these things are strongly related to each other. It is of utmost importance that we understand these truths and write them on our hearts.

Every single time you follow your own will and desires, when you take control of your life, you are like the person who drives off in the car he no longer owns.

Please understand that God knows best. Understand that His only motivation in all things is love, because He is LOVE. Please understand, that His thoughts, His ways are always perfect, always right, and that He always has the best interests of His children at heart. Very often we will not understand this, very often we will not feel that this is the case, but let us stand

firm in faith knowing that His way is the best and right way. Whether His course for us leads to the mountain tops of glorious ecstasy or to the valleys of human suffering, let us rest assured that it will always be for our ultimate good and His glory.

When we can reach that place in our lives when we can say with Paul: **“for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s”** then we are truly free indeed.

Jesus said: “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” He also said: **“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”** To live for the Lord means to fully submit to Him at all times in all things.

Problems arise in our lives when we do not do this. We follow our own selfish wills and desires, walk our own road, follow after the lusts of our hearts. We live as slaves to sin.

This is not what our Heavenly Father desires for us. He desires for us to be free in Him. He desires for us to live in beautiful fellowship with Him. He desires that our lives would not reflect the lies of the devil, the ways of the world, but the light of His truth and His love. He desires that we would be set free from the works of the flesh and that we would bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. In his letter to the Galatians Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit.

**<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. <sup>19</sup> Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

**<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-25**

Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its desires and lusts. When we belong to Christ we must daily put down the old Adam in us and daily submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Amen .

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.