

## I belong to The Lord– Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup> 2013.

**For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. (Romans 14:7-9)**

Beloved in the Lord,

Who do you live for? This is a very important question, as it points to our eternal destiny. If you live for God, if you live for The Lord Jesus Christ, if your life is surrendered to Him, then you will spend eternity with Him. If, however you are not living for God, with your life surrendered to Jesus Christ, then you will spend eternity without Him, you will be alone forever.

Paul writing to the Christians in Rome wrote: **“For not one of us lives for himself,..”** If you are truly a Christian, if your life is surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then these words are true of you. You are not living for yourself, but you belong to The Lord and you live for Him. A Christian has crucified the ego, the old self and put on Christ Jesus. Paul wrote to the Galatians (2:20): **“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”**

Paul here describes the true Christian life. A true Christian no longer lives for self, but lives for Christ Jesus. A true Christian lives trusting in Jesus and understands that salvation is a gift from God's grace; it is a gift not earned by us, but bought for us in Jesus blood. Jesus gave up His life, shed His blood, surrendered Himself to death, so that we may live a life surrendered to God. He did it because He loved us. Without Christ, we cannot draw near to God, because God is Holy and we are not. God is completely and perfectly Holy, and we are sinful. Sin and Holiness cannot abide together. God's Holiness consumes sin.

There is only one way that sinful man can come to Holy God, and that is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Only Jesus blood can wash away sin. When we are in Christ, then we are protected by His blood, saved by His blood, made righteous by His blood.

Back in the time of the Exodus, when Israel was about to be led out of Egypt by Moses, God gave a command that all of His people were to slaughter an innocent lamb, take some of the blood and smear it on the doorposts of their houses. That night the death angel would visit the land of Egypt, killing all the firstborn in every household. Only, he would spare those households where the blood was applied. The blood was a sign that the house contained God's people and he would pass-over. Where there was no blood on the doorpost, the firstborn died that night.

That night not a single one of God's people had a death in the family, because they had applied the blood. By obeying God, and doing things his way, they were saved. It was the blood that saved them. This was a powerful symbol and lesson from God, that pointed directly to Jesus who would come and shed His blood to save all who trust in Him. Jesus came as the innocent Lamb of God and shed His blood to save us from eternal death.

As it was then, so it is now, it is the blood that saves us. When we surrender ourselves to Christ in faith, then His blood washes away our sin and we are saved eternally. He has bought us, redeemed us with His blood and we are His. We belong to Him. If and when we get a clear understanding of this, we are truly blessed. It changes the way we live. When we are saved by Jesus blood we are no longer slaves to sin, but God's free children.

Paul wrote: ***"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. "(Romans 6:23)***

A sinful life, a life without Jesus gets paid the reward it deserves, death. We are not speaking about the cessation of life at physical death, but about eternal death. To be alive, but dead in hell forever, in total isolation, total darkness, with no God, no hope, forever.

God does not desire for us to spend eternity this way, and that is why He gave us Jesus, He gives us an escape through His Son:

***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. <sup>18</sup> He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. " (John 3:16-18)***

I have often taught you, and do so again today, that we can exchange the word "world" and put our own name in its place. For God so loved YOU.

God loves you. He grants you eternal life, but you must receive it from Him. I taught you at our memorial service a few weeks ago that Jesus has signed and issued our visa with His blood, but we must come and receive it from His hand in faith. We need to do this before we leave this world as we will not be able to get it on arrival. If we leave without it, there is no hope.

We return to our original question: Who do you live for? Have you surrendered your life to Jesus? If you haven't; do it today, don't put it off. He is waiting for you, with His arms outstretched. He loves you. Come as you are, He is waiting.

If you have come, then today as we close this Church Year, and remember our loved ones who have passed on before us; let us thank Jesus anew. Let us remind ourselves that we belong to Him. Let us do a check of the state of our heart. Is there anything that is not right?

Is there anything we are withholding from Him that we have not fully surrendered? Can you say with Paul:

**“<sup>8</sup> 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. “**

Oh, how I desire that we would all be clear on this. So many are living in fear, with doubts. What if?, maybe, I hope....

If you are in Christ there is no place for such thinking. A Christian says I know! Not I think, or I hope, No, but I KNOW.

Paul thinking about death wrote these very powerful words:

***“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, <sup>3</sup> inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.***

***<sup>6</sup> Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— <sup>7</sup> for we walk by faith, not by sight— <sup>8</sup> we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” 2 Cointhians 5:1-10***

Can you say Amen to all that Paul writes here? Do you know? Are you sure that when your earthly tent is taken down you have a building in Heaven from God? If you belong to Jesus then the answer is YES. I did not ask if you feel like you know, but if you know. Feelings, nice as they are, can be deceptive. There are days when I feel saved, and there are days when I don't. There are days when my feelings tell me that I am condemned to eternal hell. At those times I remind myself that my feelings are lying to me.

I need to base my faith and knowledge on God's Word and not on my feelings. God's Word tells me that God loves me, that Jesus shed His blood for me and that by faith in Him, His blood has washed me clean and my name is written in The Book of Life.

His Word tells me that nothing can separate me from His love, not even death. He is greater and more powerful, than even death itself. God's Word tells me that He is Lord of both the living and the dead. God's Word tells me that once saved, always saved. Not my feelings but His Word. His Word is truth. His Word is eternal and therein is my security.

Who do you live for? If you live for Christ Jesus, if you trust in His Word, then you must not use language like “I hope I will get to Heaven, but you must confess everyday “I know; I believe”.

As you begin each and every day you should remind yourself of today’s text and make it your personal confession:

**“for if I live, I live for the Lord, or if I die, I die for the Lord; therefore whether I live or die, I am the Lord’s.”**

To whom do you belong? To your Lord! Remind yourself of this everyday! Live with this confession, die with this confession.

We close this 2013 Church Year with this great confession:

**For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.”**

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.