

I Owe My Life to Christ

Romans 8:12~14

The “**WAY OF THE CROSS...**” leads home... (#151 in our Hymnal)
According to scripture, there is no other way to God... but by “**Way of the Cross...**”

There’s nothing I enjoy more, than “*The Preaching of the Cross...*”

(1 Co. 1) ¹⁷For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. ¹⁸For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Paul says, that in the cross, is contained the very *power of God*. (Ro. 1:16) I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, ***for it is the power of God*** unto salvation to everyone that believes...

¹⁹For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. ²⁰Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

The Message of the Cross on one hand is a SIMPLE message...but at the same time, it is one of the most PROFOUND statements ever uttered on the face of the earth! God has chosen to use the SIMPLE message of Christ crucified, one so simple a child can understand, yet at the same time, a message that confounds the most intellectual men of the earth...

(1 Co. 2) **It was Paul’s central message...**¹And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ²For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

My utmost prayer to God is...that He would help me to better understand the Cross...

God gave us the Cross...and the Cross-gives us God.

In John 14, just hours before Christ was arrested and crucified, Jesus makes a declaration that when understood, would be the determining factor of where a man or woman spends eternity! Jesus said “I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE...no man comes to the Father but by me...”

The good news of the gospel is, that “*anyone*” who will come by ***way of the cross***, can come to Him! There’s no restrictions, no respect of persons, what you have done or haven’t done doesn’t matter... Eternal life is offered to all who will respond to the CALL OF CHRIST, and follow Him!

“If any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up the cross and follow me...”

Nowhere is that statement better understood, than here in Romans 8:12~14... Here in Romans 8:12~14, Paul explains what it means to “*deny yourself*”, and to what it means to “*take up the Cross*” and follow Christ... Paul explains “*denying oneself*” as turning from what he calls the *flesh*... And to “*take up the cross*” is that of “*walking in the Spirit*...”

Here, Paul puts everything he has been teaching up to this point, into a very simple statement...

¹²***Therefore, brethren, we are debtors***... You don’t need me to explain what being a debtor means, for all of us understand what it means to be “*in debt*...” The simplest definition is “*to owe someone!*”

Each month, Teri and I are reminded that we are debtors... Each month we are graciously reminded, that we are indebted to someone for “*serious rendered...*”

The blessings that we enjoy:

Things like running water... I thank God for running water.

Electricity... I thank God for lights, water heater and a good hot shower.

The Food... I thank God for food.

I THANK GOD for those things... **But, these do not come without a price! I thank God for them, *but is man*, that I render payment too!**

I am thankful to God for them, but I am indebted to man for them...because those things were done for me, those *services were rendered* to me by men, thus I am indebted to them!

Paul says...¹²*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors*... Now, I know...as well as anyone... That “*Theologically...*” there’s nothing I can do, or could for God, to ever attain heaven! There’s no amount of Good that I could do that would acquire it! I also know that there is absolutely nothing that I can do or ever will do to pay back what Christ has done for me! But even so...that doesn’t change the fact that I am indebted to Him!

Because of what Christ did on the Cross, of dying for my sin, dying in my place... I am FOREVER INDEBTED to Christ! It’s one thing to OWE for an electric bill, giving someone MONEY for the services they provide, and quite another what Paul is saying here...

If Christ had not done what he did...I’d have no hope of heaven!

He saved me from certain death...I Owe My Life to Christ!

Literally! My financial decisions, my family decisions, my work, my hobbies, my leisure time...it all belongs to Him!

It’s important to understand what Paul means here when he says... *we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*¹³*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

He is referring to what we “*yield*” ourselves too... It helps us to remember, he’s speaking to his fellow countrymen, the Jews, and still speaking in the context of the Law. It could be stated... If you think that by your obedience to the Law, you think you’ll gain entrance to heaven...your sadly mistaken! If you think that way, if you walk after the flesh...you’ll die! No one is justified with God on the basis of his/her adherence to the Law...

The JUST shall live by Faith! Those who no longer have confidence in their own goodness, that is their flesh! But rather have turned from themselves, and now go the way of the Cross! Those who have turned from themselves, and have taken up the Cross, those who walk after Christ... (Vs 14...THEY are the SONS OF GOD!)

It is the “*people of the Cross*” that are God’s true children!

¹³*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

Paul says basically the same thing that Christ said... Whosoever shall “*Save his life*” shall loose it...and whosoever shall “*lose his life*” for my sake, shall find it!

God demands that our hearts be yielded to Him! And the only way to do that, is that they be not yielded to ourselves! It is impossible to serve the Will of God and serve our Will at the same time... One of the two must be put to DEATH!

Beloved... that is what the Cross is all about! When we take up the cross, we literally “crucify” our WILLS! Rendering unto God a human body in which for him to dwell and carry out HIS WILL! The Cross is a call to come and DIE...that we might Live!

Turn with me to Galatians 2...¹⁹*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* ²⁰*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* ²¹*I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

God’s not simply interested in that we “DO RIGHT THINGS!” To simply do what is RIGHT does not make us Right! Whether or not a man/woman is right with God is determined by whether or not died to **his/her self, and the heart** is YEILDED to God!

Paul is speaking to his brethren the Jews...which outwardly appeared righteous...but their hearts were far from God! They walked after the flesh, they need to come to the cross and “Crucify the “Self-Will” that they were walking in...

Galatians 5...Speaking of walking in the spirit in contrast to flesh...

²⁴*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.* ²⁵*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

The Way of the Cross **CRUCIFIES** our SELF WILL! That’s what the Cross is all about! That’s the same thing that Paul is saying here in Romans 8...when he says...

¹³*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die...*

... **but** *if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

The Cross is our only hope because the Cross is the only thing that demands we die to self will!

The message of the Cross goes beyond doing “*Right Things...*” to a “*Right Heart!*” And that simply is one that is turned from self-will, to the pursuit of God’s will.

¹²*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors...* Christ paid a horrific price for us on that cross!

(1Co.6) ¹⁹What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you*, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰**For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

(1Peter 1) ¹⁷And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear: ¹⁸Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your **vain conversation** (empty behavior) received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

¹²*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, **not to the flesh**, to live after the flesh...*

I am forever indebted to Christ, to the one who died for me! I **owe my life** to Christ! God forbid that I spend the rest of my time here on earth, living to my self! I long to spend the rest of my days, yielding what time I have to Him, living for Him who died for me!

Look at 1Peter 4... ¹Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; ²That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. ³**For the time past of our life may suffice us** to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

In verse 14 Paul speaking to the “*Self Righteous Jew...*” the one who trust in his adherence to the Law...

The True People of God, are the People of the Cross!

¹⁴*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

The Cross makes it possible for “ANYONE” to be right with God...

But it demands that one surrender his will to God, his heart... All of us are in bondage to a sinful nature...

The Gospel simply proclaims that turn from it, and yield our hearts to Christ, and follow Him!