

## Living For Christ Alone

2 Corinthians 5:14 – 20

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I want to begin by asking you a question . . . **Are the things you are living for worth Christ's dying for?**

What an incredible question to ask. Who can ever know whether the life they're living is worth Christ dying for? Why did Christ die? Well Paul answers for us in **2 Cor. 5:14** . . . *"Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup>And he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves . . . but for him who died for them and was raised again."*

Not live for myself? We hardly know anyone today who doesn't live for themselves. We live in a self centered world, and in fact this selfishness has become a basic, normal, accepted feature of the Christian life.

When I share Christ with someone, it is all what he will do for them. When I go to buy a book it is about how Christ will bless -

- **my** finances or
- **my** marriage or
- **my** career
- How he will **help me** overcome the issues of my past or
- **help me** fulfill **MY** goals in life.
- How he will **do this for me** and how he will **do that** for me;

and God can do all of these things for us because he intensely wants to bless us, . . . **but the purpose of my life does not revolve around myself.**

Sometimes we act as though Christ belongs to us, as though I am the center of the universe, as though everything, including God, revolves around me. Well, I have news for you my friends – **God doesn't want to be involved in YOUR plans for YOUR life – He wants you to be involved in HIS plans for your life!**

***Christ died for all, so that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him!***

In **Jn 12:24**, Jesus said to his disciples ***"Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. . ."***

If that grain cries out ***"I don't want to die, I don't want to go into the ground, I don't want to be broken open"*** it would never bear fruit, but when it is broken open then it bears much fruit.

And this principle come home again and again in the bible – Jesus goes on in the very next verse to tell his disciples ***<sup>25</sup>The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.***

God says ***" . . . it is the one who lays down his life, the one who takes up his cross, to whom I will disclose myself."***

Only in dying to self can we live!

When the apostle Paul said in **Phil 3:7 - 9** " . . . *whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. And what is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him . . .* ", he knew what he was talking about because he had been that grain of wheat; broken, and put to the ground . . . and now he could bear much fruit, he could be that sweet perfume, the fragrance of Christ.

Someone once said **"No great advances have been made for Christianity by men and women who were unwilling to give their lives"**

Let me say that again - **"No great advances have been made for the Kingdom of God by men and women who were unwilling to give their lives"**

Unwilling to give their lives? We can't even give up a TV show that we know is not honoring to God. We can't even give up a little sleep to spend time with Jesus in the morning . . . give up my life?

Why is it that way? I believe it is because we have never settled in our hearts that I . . . DO . . . NOT . . . LIVE . . . FOR . . . MYSELF . . . ANYMORE!

**For Christ's love compels us . . .**

- **that those who live should no longer live for THEMSELVES . . .**
- **that those who live should no longer live for their PLANS . . .**
- **that those who live should no longer live for their COMFORTS . . .**
- **that those who live should no longer live for their SECURITY . . .**
- **that those who live should no longer live for their CAREERS . . .**
- **or their dreams or pleasures or goals . . . BUT that they should live for him alone!**

One of the reasons why we can't live for him today is because we're obsessed with wanting to live the safe and comfortable life. When my greatest desire is to live the safe life – then I will not risk anything - I won't risk my time, my comforts, my wealth or my treasures for the things that move God's heart.

But as has been said **"It is possible to evade a multitude of sorrows by cultivating an insignificant life"**.  
J. H. Joweth

Listen to what Gary Haugen of the International Justice Mission says . . .

*"Here's the choice that our Father wants us to understand as Christians – and I believe this is the choice of our age: 'Do you want to be brave or safe?' . . . because you cannot be both!*

*Doing God's will in a fallen world is inherently dangerous. In fact, if following Jesus doesn't feel dangerous right now, you should probably pause and check to see if it's actually Jesus you're following."*

In other words – **"If you haven't met the devil recently, you're probably walking in the same direction"**.

Can you imagine if Jesus had said to God the Father before coming to earth to redeem mankind . . .  
*"Father, I'm ready to go to Earth, but can I ask one thing . . . is it safe?"*

And God would have replied *"No my son, it is not safe."*

- *Immediately you are born, men will come hunting for you.*
- *Over 1,000 innocent babies will be killed as a result.*
- *You will have to go into hiding as a refugee to Africa.*
- *And when you return there will be a whole institution dedicated to killing and removing you.*
- *They will try to stone you,*
- *they will try to throw you over a cliff,*
- *they will shame and ridicule you,*
- *and eventually they will catch you; whip you; spit at you and crucify you.*
- *Nails will be driven through your palms and feet and you will die an excruciatingly painful death.*

*No my son. It is not safe for you to go, but will you go anyway?*

The disciples didn't play it safe . . . they were persecuted, flogged, imprisoned and exiled; but in all their suffering and persecution, they never shrunk back, and they never asked God to reduce or remove their pain . . . instead they prayed in **Acts 4:29** ". . . Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness."

Paul didn't play it safe either! In **II Cor 11:23 – 28** he wrote "*I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.*

Living for Christ alone means living brave. And -

- living brave . . . means obedience, no matter the cost
- Brave means taking a step of faith outside your comfort zone,
- Brave means trusting God for the unknown,
- Brave means not demanding that we first know all the details and plans in full before you obey.
- Brave means that God doesn't have to explain himself to you before he acts in your life, before he commands you, or before you obey
- Brave means that God doesn't have to ask you for permission before he gives you a hard commission, because if God has to ask you for permission then he is not God! You are.
- Brave is not the absence of fear . . . but it's the assurance of peace because we know that God is trustworthy.

If your greatest desire in life is to live safe, then you will never do great things for God.

One of my hero's of faith is a man who's life deeply changed the lot of thousands of little needy hungry, dirty street children in industrial England. His name was George Muller. And I'll tell you why he's my hero.

*George was born in 1805, but it wasn't until he went to university that he accepted Christ as his savior. As he began to grow he was troubled to see that so many Christians do not live a life of faith, and so were filled with tremendous anxiety . . . because they don't trust in Christ.*

*This deeply impacted George and he determined to do something about it. In his own words he said . . .*

*"And so I, a poor man with no money, have decided by prayer and faith alone to start an Orphanage to provide shelter for the little children who live on the streets of Bristol. I will care for these children, and cloth, feed and house them without ever asking anyone for a single penny. God will have to show he can provide and care for them.*

*It is my hope that I will in this way strengthening the faith of God's children, and also provide a testimony for those who do not know God, to show that He is faithful to care for his own."*

**Here are the accomplishments of George Mueller through the course of his life :**

- *And so George took a very risky step of faith for God - In 1834, at the age of 28 yrs, he founded "The Scripture Knowledge Institute for Home and Abroad". Its 5-fold purpose would be to*
  - 1) *Establish schools for children and adults to learn the Bible.*
  - 2) *To distribute free bibles.*
  - 3) *To support overseas missionaries – he was one of Hudson Taylor's supporter*
  - 4) *To distribute bible tracts and Christian books*
  - 5) *To establish Orphanages that would "house, clothe and scripturally educate destitute children who have lost both parents by death."*
- *In 1836 at the age of 30 yrs, he took in 30 orphaned girls into his own home. (Photo 2)*
- *In time the numbers became too many for his little home, so he built five large orphanages with a capacity to house 2,000 children. (Photo 3)*
- *Over his life he cared for a total of 10,024 orphans – and never once did he ask anyone but God for funds to build or run those homes.*
- *His example changed England - when he started in 1834 there were only accommodations for 3,600 orphans in the whole of England and twice that number of children under eight yrs old were in prison as street urchins. But his life so inspired people that 50 yrs later there were at least 100,000 orphans being cared for in England."*
- *Through his life he prayed in almost 100 million US dollars by today's standards, for the Orphans - never once asking anyone directly for money.*
- *He established 117 schools and educated a total of 120,000 children.*
- *By the end of his life his little organization distributed 300,000 bibles, and 1,500,000 NT. They also distributed 250,000 gospel tracts in 20 different languages.*
- *When he turned 70 he fulfilled a life-long dream of missionary work for the next 17 years until he was 87, he traveled to 42 countries, preaching once a day, and addressing some three million people.*

*Stories are told of how the children would get up in the morning, sit at the breakfast tables with no food in the orphanage at all . . . and George Muller would make them pray and thank God for the food they were about to eat, and at that very moment there would be a knock at the door as someone came to donate ton's of food because God had prompted them.*

All this in the life of one mortal man - why is George Muller my hero? Because lived a brave life, not a safe life. Because he was willing to step out and take risks for God. Because his faith was real and he wasn't playing safe. And because he dared to believe God for the impossible . . . and so God used him.

Brave means not playing it safe. We play it safe because we're afraid to suffer or to die, and yet we say and sing *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live . . ."* but dead men are not afraid to die

because they are already dead. You can put a gun to the head of a dead man and he won't flinch. You can flog him black and blue and he won't cry out – because he has truly died to self! May I suggest that many Christians, maybe even many church leaders, never really died, they just fainted.

There are some of you here that God is calling to be the George Muller's of this generation, if only you would step out and stop living for yourself . . . and stop trying to live safe – and start living for Christ alone . . .

- some of you have enough financial resources that you could singlehandedly make a difference to thousands of lives if only you would stop living for your comforts and start living for him . . . or maybe you feel you have little or nothing to give to God because they have no resources . . . but neither did George Muller, and God can still use you.
- There are some here that God is calling away from the corporate world . . . and you know it because you can feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit tagging on your heart . . . and he's calling you to leave your people, your household and your city . . . and go to a place you know not of.
- There are some here that God . . .

So let me conclude with the question I asked before . . . **Are the things that you are living for worth Christ's dying for?**

