

### **Living For Christ**

***“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”***

It was Tennessee Ernie Ford who made famous an old mine workers ballad called, “Sixteen Tons.” You remember how it goes. “You load sixteen tons, and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt. Saint Peter, don’t you call me, ‘cause I can’t go; I owe my soul to the company store.” Merle Travis first sang the song in 1946 based on the difficulties of his family in the Kentucky mines. It sounds like the miners’ whole existence revolved around the mining company, being in paid in script that could only be spent in the overpriced company store. They didn’t live their own lives. They lived only for the company.

What is the difference between owing your soul to the company store and Bill’s confirmation verse I just read to you? The miners existed for the company. We don’t live for ourselves; we live for the Lord. Everything in the miners’ life revolved around the company. Our whole existence revolves around the Lord. What’s the difference? The company didn’t die for the miners. The Lord died for us.

***“And he died for all, ...”*** Martin Luther once said that he was so glad that nowhere in the Bible did it say that Jesus died for Martin Luther. Then he would always be in doubt. Did God mean him or another Martin Luther. He died for ALL. When Bill heard this verse, he knew God was speaking to him. He did because all meant him, too.

Of course, that Jesus died for all means that all needs saving. Let share with you another “all” passage. ***“All have sinned and fall far short of the glory of God.”*** If someone thinks he or she is for sure going to heaven, without Christ, of course, share this verse with him or her. It is the observation of an objective observer, God, as he watched mankind over the centuries. No one is good enough for heaven. All fall short because of sin. Sin never measures up. You love your neighbor, but not all the time and not all your neighbors. Your love falls short. So does mine. All are lost and worthy of condemnation.

But Jesus died for all. He did for our sins. I still remember driving a member to the courthouse back in my days in Colorado. She was a single mother on welfare and had to appear before the judge over a couple traffic violations. It looked like she was going to lose her license. When we got there, the bailiff told her to go home. They never filed the charges and the case was dropped. She just about did a cartwheel coming out of the courthouse. What a relief.

What a relief you and I have, and Bill. When we appear before the judgement seat of God, we know God will tell us that the charges of sin have been dropped. They are because Jesus died for them, the sins of all. We should be doing cartwheels right now. Well, maybe not, but what can such relief do for us?

***“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”*** Because Jesus died for all, we live. Notice that it doesn’t say go on with our lives. We don’t go on living as though he never died. When Zacchaeus the tax collector met Jesus, he stopped cheating people in collecting taxes. He paid them back with interest and gave his half of his possessions to the poor. He didn’t go on living. He started to live a new life. When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he stopped hunting down Christians for trial and execution. He instead went out to share the gospel to as many people as possible. He didn’t go on living. He started to live a new life.

Because he died for all, we start living, not for ourselves we live for Christ. How can we tell if someone is living for Christ? It is easy with someone like the Apostle Paul. He had a home and family in Tarsus, but he was rarely ever there. He was on the road constantly, even all the way to Rome, maybe Spain, because he was sharing the gospel of Christ to as many as he could. He was living for Christ. He often took on a night shift job to help pay for his own expenses. When they whipped him, he kept on preaching. When they mocked him, he kept on preaching. When they tried to kill him, he would walk back into town and keep on preaching. He even died for Christ. It is easy to see people like that living for Christ.

But how can you tell if a John Deere mechanic in Sibley County named Bill is living for Christ? He didn't sail to Africa to do mission work. He didn't enter school to become a pastor. He looked like any other John Deere mechanic. But Bill did live for the Christ. He lived a new life for Christ even as a mechanic because God gave him a new attitude.

Once a person took a walk past a construction site and asked what they were doing. One worker said he was laying brick. The next worker said he was helping to build an apartment complex. The third said he was making \$45 an hour. Each worker was doing the same job, but for different reasons. We have a perfect summary of what it means to live for Christ in the book of Corinthians. In chapter 10 it says, "***So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.***"

We work the same jobs as others, we raise our families like others, we have hobbies like others. The difference is the believer does it to the glory of God. Bill worked like any other mechanic, but he did it to God's glory because he understood that God wanted him to help out his boss and customers by doing the best job he can. He did it for God's reasons. If you asked a Christian construction worker what he was doing, he might say he is serving God by using his gifts and talents to serve others.

But we live in one other special way. "... ***those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.***" Notice whom we are living for? Christ, of course, but how he is referred to here? He is known here as "***him who died for them and was raised again.***" We live for a real live Savior. He died for all, but he rose and lives again and we rise, too, into a new life in heaven. The thing is, that life has already begun in us now in faith.

Bill loved his Savior. Bill lived for his Savior. Sometimes I would walk through the hallways of the nursing home. It is not Bill's turn for a visit, but I knew I had to sneak past his room because if he saw me, he would cry out, "Hey Pastor, I have a question." He always had questions on the Bible and loved to hear more about it. Christ lived and died for him. Bill lived with Christ and is now living with Christ. The coal miner may have owed his soul to the company store, and that sounds rather bleak, but owing our soul to Christ sounds so refreshing, free and exciting. We owe him our very lives. May we live for him he died and rose again. Amen.