

*I reckon just about every ANZAC service I've ever been to, at some point in the service, someone will quote **John 15:¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.***

And of course, Jesus was talking about himself, but what a saying, to appropriate for ANZAC day, when we're remembering those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, for the sake of our country.

And they have gone away to war, and some of them (usually young men, who have their whole life in front of them) have died, for the greater cause... For God, King and Country... To defend a way of life. To maintain freedom... To protect the 'little guy' that the bully invades... They've died for something which (sometimes arguably) was worth dying for...

But when Jesus died for us, He died for a people who were far **less** valuable than Himself.

You know, there's a few movies about, where the Secret Service agents are there to protect the president. And they are fully prepared to jump in front of a bullet, to save the one who is greater than them...

But I want you to try and imagine this: Imagine, that someone so hated the president, that they tried to assassinate him (but failed), and then, as the Secret Service returned fire, the President himself, leaps in front of the would-be assassin, to take the bullets that were aimed at the baddy....

That would be a much closer analogy, of how Christ died for us... Jesus didn't die for us, because we were greater than Him. And it wasn't because we were so 'Godly'. He died for the baddies. He died for the '**ungodly**'.

And, Paul tells us that He did it at just the right time. Why? Because we **were** powerless – we were completely **unable**, to do anything about getting ourselves right with God – at **that** time – when we were helpless – Christ died for the **ungodly**...

That,,, is an amazing sacrifice. Hardly anyone will die – even for a righteous person... But maybe, for a good person – for a valuable person – for someone they really love – for someone they're committed to... Yeah, some people might die for them...

But how much does God love us? How much does God love you????

While we were still sinners – while we weren't worth 2 cents,,, Christ died for us...

And that's what we've been hearing about (so far in Romans)...

There are 2 big objections that people give, for not becoming a Christian:

Objection number one – “I don't need to be saved. I haven't done anything to hurt anybody – I'm a good person”...

Well, if you still believe that after reading chapters 2 & 3 of Romans, you haven't been paying attention. **3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,** No one is righteous – not oneⁱ.

And the **second** big objection to becoming a Christian, seems like the exact opposite – I'm too bad to be a Christian. I could never be good enough... I'm not the sort of person that you'll find in a church... Well guess what???

Nobody is good enough to be a Christian. **I'm** not good enough to be a Christian. **I'm** not good enough to come along to church to worship a Holy God. I'm **certainly** not good enough to be a minister...

None of us **are** worthy. Christ died for the unworthy...

Jesus spent most of His time with sinners, and when He was criticised for it, he said, ^{Luke 5:31} ... **"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."** Who are the sinners???

And if you're listening to this today, and you feel that you don't belong in a church – you feel you're unworthy to be a Christian, well guess what – you're just like the rest of us. It is for you, that Jesus died – just as much as it is for me, that Jesus died...

What a wonderful truth... - that God loves us **that** much...

This morning's reading, is a matter of death-and-life...

Sounds weird doesn't it (saying it like that)? We usually talk about life-and-death. Death always follows life, but not for Jesus Christ, and not for the disciples of Jesus ... Jesus turns "life and death" on its head – life, follows death. Jesus said:
Mark 8:35 ... **whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.**

So far in Romans, we've hearing about what Jesus' **death** means for us, but what about His **life**???

The life of Jesus, is all that some people want to study. The things that He said and the things that He did, are examples that we should live by. And to some people, that's the only value they find in Jesus – That He was some wise sage, and that we should study His life, and that's it... But Jesus is so much more a dispenser of advice.

The life of Jesus before His death, was not **inconsequential**... But the life of Jesus, which is **earth-shattering**, is the life that He is living, right now...

Yeah, they killed Him alright... but now He lives!!!

And this is something that sets Jesus apart, from any other hero who might die in the process of saving us.

*We've all heard accounts of brave, self-less men and women, who have saved somebody else, but they've died in the process of doing it. By **their** sacrificial death, somebody else was saved. (and we know about this – we celebrate it at ANZAC day. We honour people with bravery awards [issued posthumously])...*

But that's where **their** help ends. They can't help us out again. It's been done. They've died, and they **can't** come to our rescue any more...

And this is what sets Jesus apart. For Jesus, He died to save us... **But for Him, life followed death**, and so Jesus lives today! And Jesus continues to save.

And this (I actually believe) is the most important part of this passage. Usually whenever I've heard this passage preached on, all the concentration is on the first part, and it's used as a message of evangelism – “Jesus died for you, while you were still a sinner – He loves you that much”... (and that's true)

But what I reckon Paul is **really** getting at here, is he's using **this truth**, to explain something, that's even **more** important... What he's saying is this:

If while we were enemies, God loved us enough, to go to the cross,,, what will He do for us now we're not His enemies any more??? Have you ever thought about it that way? Do you see the logic???

Do you think God loves you any less now that you're saved – now that you're no longer an enemy of God – now that you're one of His children??? Does He love you any less? **No**, He loves you even more (if that were possible)...

If while we were **enemies**, He reconciled us through His death, how much more, shall we now be saved through His life?

This is a message for the future:::

We have been reconciled to God through the death of Christ, and our faith in Him. ... We will be saved, by His life – (We will be saved, by the fact that Jesus lives)...

And here is a very important principal for us to grasp: salvation – to be saved, has a sense of the “now”, but the “not yet”. And throughout the New Testament, you will find these phrases: “We have **been** saved”; “We are **being** saved”; “We **will be** saved”... So, which is it? Well, it's all three.

Jesus has already done the work of salvation on the cross. He doesn't need to die again. He's not on the cross any longer. And so we can say “We've **been** saved.”. And yet, as the Holy Spirit lives in us, and as God is keeping us, and transforming us, we are **being** saved...

But the **day** of salvation – the day when we will be **completely** saved, is when Jesus Christ returns, and takes His children to be with Him. On that day, we will be saved.

But where's the guarantee? How can we be sure of it???

What if it only has as much value as a Dick Smith gift card???
(do you know what I'm saying?) If you've ever bought a gift card from a company that goes bankrupt, it's worthless... You thought you had the promise of this gift that you're going to redeem... But when the time came to redeem it, it was too late, and there was no gift to be had...

How can we be so sure, that when the time comes, we **will be** completely saved? What's the guarantee???

Well, it all boils down to what family you're in...

On this earth, there are essentially 2 family lines. One family is reigned over by death. The other family, is reigned over by life. We have the family of Adam (who are reigned over by death), and the family of Jesus Christ (who are reigned over by life). And everyone in this world, is a member of one of those two families.

When God created the world, the last part of His creation, was to create Adam and Eve. And He put them in the garden of Eden. And He gave them one rule – “Don't eat from that tree of knowledge of good and evil”... So, what did they do? They ate from the tree of knowledge of Good and evil.

And as the saying goes: God accused Adam; Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent; and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on...

But through that one act, **death** came. Adam sinned. And sin and death, is like a disease – it spreads. It wasn't only confined to Adam – it spread throughout the whole human

race. So that we have **all** sinned, and we're **all** subject to death...

But how much more powerful is the blood of Jesus???

Just as the sin of one man (Adam) brought death to all humanity,, the gift of grace, through one man (Jesus Christ) is for the many. It's for all who have faith in Jesus Christ.

And if (through Adam's sin and wrongdoing) death reigned,,,, [how] much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Do you see what's happened here? Jesus is turning back the clock...

When God created the world, there was no sin – there was no death. And on the 6th day, He looked at everything that He had created ^{Genesis 1:31} ... and behold, it was very good.

But of course, it wasn't long until Adam sinned, and everything started to unravel.

Within one generation, Cane murdered Abel.

And by the time of Noah (9 generations from Adam) ^{Genesis 6:5} YHWH saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ And YHWH

regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

Sin spread. Death spread... Death reigned...

But now, through the death of Christ, we are reconciled to God – we are not His enemies any more. And through the resurrection of Christ – through His life, life reigns in us.

We're not destined for death. We're destined for life...
Eternal life... Life now, and life forever...

Do you remember that story we heard last week – the testimony of that Christian man who had everything taken away by ISIS... And how he now counts it as a blessing, because it woke him up... And do you remember what he said about us Christians in the west??? He said, “You're more in love with life than what you are with Jesus...”

Well, let me tell you,, He's right...

Our trouble is, we tend to fall in love with the wrong life: We fall in love with the life of Adam, instead of the life of Jesus.

I pray, that we would become so in love with Jesus, and that we would be reigned over by life – eternal life – the life that God designed for us.

The resurrected life of Jesus, assures our resurrected life.

Let's love Jesus, because in His death and in His resurrected life, we reign in life.

When Jesus returns, we will be completely saved, by His life.

Amen..

ⁱ Romans 3:10