

when I'm offended, but holding onto you more dearly. My rights are not as important as you. Jesus certainly believes that. He gave his life for us rather than hold onto his rights, making us pay. He took the pain for our gain.

Notice that's not saying you can do whatever you like and the other person must forgive you. If I'm living recklessly the loving thing to do is to tell me so that I can ask for your forgiveness. Then you can give it and our relationship is enriched.

Forgiveness is vital for living because Jesus calls us to live in community, to live with other people. Other people who

have differing ideas, habits, expectations, which will clash with mine. What wonderful opportunities we have to die to ourselves and let Jesus love find expression in the way we treat other people as more important than our rights.

So this week take some time to reflect on your prayer life, on how you've been listening to God through the bible, on how you've been living in community; not holding people's sins against them, but letting the fresh air of Jesus loving forgiveness to fill the atmosphere. This week take a few moments to reflect on how you're living this wonderful new life Jesus has given you.

Don't do this reflection in a negative way, but looking forward, following Jesus lead, rejoicing in living the freedom you have, celebrating life with God, in Jesus, through the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Jesus thank you for the new life we have. Help us to daily live it to the full as we seek to live closely with you. Give us the wisdom to set time aside to be with you in prayer, to listen to you through the bible, and to give priority to loving one another, sharing life with the rest of our family. Help to always be moving away from casual acquaintances to your loving family.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' Disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples...

24 April 2011

WHO IS THIS MAN: JESUS—9

Easter Sunday



Today I'd like to begin by asking a question. Would you live life differently if you had a billion dollars, compared to being in debt for a billion dollars? I certainly would.

What might be some of the differences? If I owed a huge debt, my life is focused on meeting the debt, or incurring some unpleasant punishment. That would shape how I used every cent, how I used every day. That would shape me.

If I had a billion dollars, what a difference. My focus wouldn't be on meeting a debt, or any fear of punishment. I'd have the opportunity to use that wonderful

gift. The opportunity to use this gift would shape me.

In a little way this reflects what Jesus has done for us. Jesus hasn't just paid the huge debt we owe, he's also gifted us. He's filled us with huge riches. Riches that we are free to use. In Jesus we aren't debtors, we're out of prison, breathing in the wonderful fresh air of freedom. But in Jesus we have more than freedom, he has blessed us with gifts. With gifts for life.

In Jesus we see the perfect example of how to live free, of how to live using these wonderful gifts.

Being set free is often only half the story.

The real challenge comes in the way you live your freedom.

The nation of Israel is an example for us. They gained freedom but struggled to live it. Often they wanted to go back to Egypt, to the familiar, to what felt secure and known. The Children of Israel struggled to live their freedom, to the point they end up back in slavery, going into exile. Their story is from Exodus to Exile. Which is a tragic story.

The contrast is Jesus, who shows us how to live. How to live the freedom we have in him. Freedom from sin, death and the devil. Freedom to share God's life with him as his loved child,

the focus of his delight. Jesus' story is from being born to living life to the full, living life in all of God's fullness.

How does Jesus live?

He lives with his relationship with his Father as the forefront of all he does. This relationship shapes his life, it is his life. Jesus life is living, breathing, walking with the Father in every aspect. To lose this relationship would be to lose life. How does Jesus live this life?

First by spending time with his Father. He prays; he makes time to share time with his Father. Other things can wait. He listens to his Father; and does what his Father says. Other opinions fall by the wayside.

We too have the wonderful opportunity now of spending time

with the Father, through Jesus. He has given us the gift of prayer. From the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught; "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7 Jesus gave us the gift of talking with God

How does Jesus live?

about life, about our needs, about our hopes and dreams as if we were talking to a loving parent. Which is what we find in Jesus, God our loving Father, all ears to his children.

Isn't it interesting that the second commandment is all about prayer. 'Don't take the name of the Lord your God in vain' is how I remember it. God has given us access to his

heart and soul. There is nothing more he enjoys than listening to his children share with him about their lives. Wanting him to be part of all they are doing. I take God's name in vain when I don't take the time to be with him, when everybody else and everything else is more pressing and more important.

I have this wonderful gift.

Jesus didn't teach his disciples to twist God's arm to get what they wanted, but to call his Dad, and then invite him into every area of their life, so that he could be involved. God, in Jesus, doesn't want to be a stranger.

We live our freedom as we live it with Jesus, regularly talking with him about all aspects of life, at any time and in any place. Our heavenly Father is all ears; wanting to

give us his good gifts, wanting to grow us to healthy, mature people.

That's also why he hasn't left us in the dark about what he thinks, about his passions, about what he considers important. The bible isn't a history book, another self-help book that if you following it's become wealthy and prosperous.

No the bible is God revealing his heart and soul, his pains and joys, so that we can know the real person. Having a real honest relationship with him.

Taking time to read and reflect on the bible has nothing to do with gaining knowledge and everything to do with getting to know Jesus better, so that we can live more intimately with him. So that we can live

this new life with him to the full.

Once I know what Jesus is thinking I then have the wonderful opportunity to join him in it.

If I don't tell you what I'm doing, how can you be part of it? That's one reason why

Jesus invests time into his relationships

communication in any relationship is vital. You can't read my mind, let alone read God's mind! That's also why it is important to know that in Jesus you have a safe relationship. You can trust him. He's not out to destroy you, but to have you share life with him.

So when Jesus talks about killing, and that our words can kill, even a simple phrase like; 'You Fool' he's

not coming down heavy on us, he sharing from his heart and soul that that's got nothing to do with his life. He doesn't go there. If I'm seeking to walk with him, to grow a close intimate relationship with him, I won't go their either. I'll trust Jesus enough to follow where he goes.

Of course sometimes I'll get it wrong. So Jesus gives us another wonderful gift; "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matt. 18:18. That's what I learnt as the office of the keys, which is all about forgiveness. I'm empowered in Jesus to forgive, to forgive, to forgive and then to forgive.

Forgiveness is me not holding onto my rights