

You Belong - July 2 - July 8

Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong— body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Memory verse: If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Romans 14:8-9

Devotional 1

“We are the Lord’s.” That is the hinge on which the door of our lives turns. To put it differently, the way the Heidelberg Catechism says it, “I am not my own, but belong ... to my faithful savior Jesus Christ.” We belong to Christ. Sometimes I wonder how much different we would all behave if we actually embraced the gospel promise “We are the Lord’s.” Would I be more encouraging to my classmate or colleague, because the comparison I like to make between myself and them falls flat on its face when I consider the better truth, “We are the Lord’s.” Would I be more willing to say “no” to the temptation, whatever the temptation may be called, because “We are the Lord’s.” Would I be willing to serve my neighbor or my spouse, my friend or my sibling, because “We are the Lord’s?” It is a staggering claim that changes the way we operate in the world. I don’t have to run around and hurry about to make something of myself in order to find the favor of God or the goodwill of other people. We already belong to Christ and so can live and act and behave with a great generosity, joy and humility. Maybe there is something on your heart and mind this week, something at work or with the family or in the neighborhood that you might do differently because it’s true, “We are the Lord’s.”

Prayer: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thank you for the remarkable gift of belonging to Christ. Give us courage to live like its true. Amen.

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Devotional 2

“For to this end Christ died and lived again...”

The remarkable reality of belonging to Christ is accomplished by the work of Christ. Jesus left the eternal communion with the Father and the Spirit and entered into the limited realities of humankind. He suffered so as to know every kind of suffering we might ever experience. He died for the forgiveness of sins so that whatever wrongs we've committed don't get to define us ever. He rose from the dead to overcome the power of sin and the power of death. By his life, through his death and from his resurrection he not only accomplished the redemption of the world and our own salvation but he also accomplished something more. In this life, and in the next, we belong to Christ. Christ did this for us. Christ accomplished this. So we don't have to work so hard achieving Christ's interest in us, and favor on us. We don't have to fill our days and busy our lives to gain credibility with the Almighty. Our neighbor's success is wonderful and our colleague's promotion is great and our friend's accomplishment is outstanding because “Christ died and lived again.” There is nothing that matters more in all the world than that you belong to Christ. That belonging is not achieved, it is not earned, it is not accomplished by anything we do, it has already been accomplished by Christ when he died and rose again. So offer yourself graciously and compassionately, offer yourself willingly and sacrificially, offer yourself with kindness and gentleness to those around you, “you are the Lord's.”

Prayer: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we praise you for Christ who loves us and gave himself for us, who accomplishes belonging for us. Amen.