

***A Reading of Romans 10:8-13.....***

MY LIFE BROKEN DOWN INTO SEGMENTS



A few days ago a friend sent me this “pie chart” that is entitled “*My Life Broken Down Into Segments.*” I was quite impressed with its apparent accuracy.

For according to this, we spend about a third of our lives sleeping, ...about a fourth of our lives working, ...

about a twelfth of our lives eating, ... and about a third of our lives [point to lower section] “looking for things [we] had just a minute ago.”

While some of you may find some humor in this, I can assure you that some of us find it very reassuring... especially since I thought **I** was the only one who could lay something down to answer a telephone call... only to realize that by the time I had finished this conversation with someone I probably really didn’t want to talk with anyway, I could not remember what I had done with what I had in my hands just a few minutes before this!

How is it that inanimate objects can go into stealth-mode when you are not watching them? Why is it you just cannot see what you know has to be somewhere in your immediate area? And why is it, ... if you encounter another person in the midst of your search, they will **always** ask, “*Well, where did you have it last?*” [Pause] Why is it the words, “*Justifiable homicide,*” cross my mind?

Paul would not have asked this... as he would have simply encouraged us to re-discover and know for ourselves what we have so often professed to be true.

As in the case of their struggling with what they believed to be true of their faith in Christ, Paul reassured the Romans, “*The word is near you, on your lips, and in your hearts.*”

What they were looking for – what they were seeking to understand – was there before them the whole time..., and before all people – Jews and Greeks, those like ourselves and those who appear to be completely different from us – as our Lord had come for all so long ago.. even as He still comes unto all who will but believe in Him... as “*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*”

And what is it to be saved?

To put it simply, it means we have come home... and into the family of the one who created us, who breathed into us the breath of life, ...the one who has loved us from the very beginning, ... the one who welcomes us and encourages us to draw ever closer unto Him... even as we draw closer unto one another through the love of the one we call Jesus the Christ.

To be saved is to live and love as Jesus did... and as he does. It is to live each day with thanksgiving unto God... unto the one who has never abandoned us even when we have turned away from Him... unto the one whose love for us and for all people is far greater than we will ever understand.

Thus in the busy-ness of our lives... in the midst of the demands and influences this world seems to place before us, ...we need to stop and remember... to remember where we have been... and the one who will lead us through the rest of our lives... if we will but follow.

Where will he lead us? We will never know the answer to that until we allow him to lead us... until we allow him into our hearts and lives... into the very core of our being!  
But this I do know: our God did not place us here on this earth to live alone... nor without a purpose. For even before Paul was ever led to write what he did in his letter unto the Roman Church, another sought to help his people remember what God had done in their lives as well as the lives of those who had gone before them... and for their nation... and for all peoples of all nations... even those who were aliens amongst them.

For as we hear in these words of the Deuteronomist.....

***A Reading of Deuteronomy 26:1-11 (NRSV).....***

As I read these words, I found the irony overwhelming.  
400 years ago, our ancestors came to the new world and were aliens in this land. Today we consider those people who were here long before us to be aliens in what was their land to begin with!

Like the Hebrew people unto whom the Lord's word was addressed, we too need to remember where we have come from... and from whom we have received everything we have... and unto whom we need to give thanks... and to know what we have has only been given to us for the benefit of all of God's people.

In this passage we are reminded that it's of the "first fruits" we are to share... to give the Lord the best... right off the top, rather than from what is leftover after we have taken what we have wanted.

We are to remember that the Lord has never given up on us nor has He ever abandoned us... even in the worst of times. And though we may be tempted to say, "*See what I have done and accomplished... see what I have earned and what I have made of myself,*" let us remember we could not have accomplished anything without what the Lord has provided us to begin with!

With the Hebrews we too should proclaim,  
*"He brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now [we] bring the first of our fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given [us]."*

But do we?

Do we "*confess with [our] lips that Jesus is Lord,*" but have not faith enough to offer unto Him what is due the one who has given us everything?

Do we warmly welcome family and friends to worship and celebrate with us, sharing our bounty of blessings with each other..., but find it difficult to seek out and welcome the strangers who reside among us?

Wherever Jesus went there were no strangers... only brothers and sisters to be welcomed home into the family of God. He never asked what another might offer him... as he did not come to be served, but to serve... offering others not what they always wanted, but always what they needed:  
a meal, healing, comfort, hope, forgiveness, a second chance – and an invitation to follow Him... and to know for themselves what it is to truly live and to know God's love for them as well as for others whose lives they too would come to touch.

And know this: what the Lord offered them then, He offers us nonetheless today!

Will you confess Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?

Do you *truly* believe this with your heart?

Do you truly desire to give the Lord our God all of your thanks and praise?

If you have not, then why not today?

And if you have, are you ready to reach out beyond your comfort zone unto those beyond these four walls... be they family, friends, or even strangers?

And if not, then when?

Are you still “tipping” the Lord from the “spare change” of your lives instead of giving him his due?

And are you willing to do this with praise and thanksgiving rather than regretting what you could have used that money for?

As a friend of mine once shared with me: He never had enough money to do what he wanted to do when he felt he could only give God a little. But when he began to tithe, to give to God first what was due to Him, my friend said he had more money than he ever needed.

To sum all of this up in one sentence, I am led to say:

Let us remember where we have come from...

and all that the Lord has given us...,

so that with thanksgiving and joy and the love of Christ, we too may share with all people the many blessings we receive day after day.

For until we do, these words will remain but empty readings from an old book!