

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Pentecost 17 September 7, 2008
Romans 14:5-8



One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I like to know what day it is. I don't just mean the date – but what day it is. National *something* day. Like Monday was national exclamation day. Did you know that? National exclamation day – say it loudly day – use your outside voice day! Tuesday was *VJ Day* – Victory over Japan Day – the official end of World War II day in 1945. Wednesday was *national football* day. The very first professional football game was played Wednesday in 1895 in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Today is *Bright Idea Day* – the first office building to have electrical light in 1882 was today. And Friday is *be late for something* day. It's supposed to be ok to be late Friday. I know some people who are always late! To the point that when you need them to be somewhere on time – you actually tell them the right time is ½ hour earlier – so they end up being on time for once. Do you know people like that? God's Word today talks about how different people treat different days differently. Some people treat some days as special. Some people treat every day the same. God's Word reminds us today that all that really matters is that we remember every day belongs to the Lord! God's Word today talks about living every day dedicated to the Lord! Today God's Word says very simply:

We Belong To The Lord!

- 1. We live for him**
- 2. We die for him**

Since Memorial Day – the last Sunday in May – we have been reading through the Apostle Paul's letter to the believers in Rome. We are finally getting near the end. The first part of Romans talks about law and gospel in very simple terms. The Law stings and condemns us all when it says, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God." "All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." *Romans 3:10b-18* Law and gospel are no where clearer than when God's Word says, "There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus...For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." *Romans 3:22b,23 and 28* We are saved by grace through

faith. That faith is a gift of God. And so our place in heaven is for sure and for certain because it is by grace alone!

The part of Romans we are concentrating on – then – builds on this foundation of law and gospel. The verses we are concentrating are about sanctification – applying our faith – putting our faith into action. The part of Romans we are concentrating on – is about adiaphora – about the “middle things” the things that God has neither commanded nor forbidden. That’s where Christian freedom comes in. This is where we need to be very careful – not to offend the weak – or cause the weak – tender – new believers – not to cause them to stumble in their faith because of something we do or don’t do. Christian love and Christian conscience need to be informed by God’s Word. **One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike.** In the early New Testament Church – there were believers who had spent a lifetime – literally 60 or 70 or 80 years in the Old Testament Jewish faith. 60, 70 or 80 years plus – observing the Sabbath. From sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday – was the Sabbath. This meant no work – no kindling of fire – no cooking or buying or selling – no more than a Sabbath Day’s journey to the Synagogue – for Bible reading and studying and applying. This was the LORD’s Day – the great I AM – the Holy One of Israel. Saturday – this was the sacred day – the day set apart – the day of dedication. There were no other days like Passover – no days like Yom Kippur – the Great Day of Atonement – the Feast of Tabernacles! Don’t even begin to try to persuade me otherwise! Then there were those New Testament Church believers – who said – Creation started on a Sunday. Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples to the point of overflowing on the Feast of Pentecost – also a Sunday! Isn’t Sunday – therefore – the best day to worship God? Oh, it’s kind of like today. Some people think Thursday night is the perfect time for Church. The week is almost over. And if you go to Thursday night Church – it isn’t as full. And then on the weekend – you can go to the cottage – or sleep in for once – and wake up and have brunch and read the Sunday paper – and then watch a little football! And some people say – if I don’t go to Church on Sunday – it throws the whole week off! Monday or Wednesday or Thursday just isn’t the same as Sunday! And that doesn’t begin to talk about early service or late service.

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Who is right? God’s Word says--**Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.** I have a niece who is a vegetarian. She loves Jesus very much. She just doesn’t want any animal – not one single chicken or cow or fish die to make her breakfast or lunch or supper or snack. Ever since she was very little she has felt that way. And so she never ever eats bacon – never eats hamburgers or brats – never has meat sauce on her spaghetti. She doesn’t have chicken broth in her mashed potatoes. She has lots of fruits – lots of vegetables – lots of pasta. She has cheese – because that’s from milk – no harm to cows who give milk. She doesn’t think more or less of you if you have a steak. She would just have a salad. That’s how it is with lots of things. What matters most – all that really matters – is doing what you do giving thanks to God. Some people think hunting – harvesting ducks and geese and pheasants and deer and going fishing is wonderful. Some people think fish hooks and guns – any kind of guns is just plain wrong. Some people can drink beer and brandy and wine and martinis and for some people – that first sip is just the beginning of too much to drink. And that person doesn’t take that first sip. Some people can dance and some people know they shouldn’t. Some people like to go to the movies. And some people feel in their heart that watching TV is wrong. For them it is! Some

people can play sports – and some people dasn't start any game because if they do they have to win – or they are going to become literally violently angry if they lose – and don't want to play your stupid game! Each person needs to listen to their heart and conscience and do what is right in their own mind – in the light of Jesus' love. It's not for me to judge my neighbor. It's for me to not sin against my own conscience – and then not sin in the Christian liberty Jesus has won for me.

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord This is more than the Simon and Garfunkle – I am a rock. I am an island. The point is much much more than – people who need people are the luckiest people in the world. The apostle Paul is talking about people and their relationship – their essential relationship with their heavenly Father. We cannot live apart from the LORD! Every aspect of our life has to do with Jesus. People who are literally 100 years old – when they close their eyes at night – pray, “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord, my soul to take.” Before we take that first sip of morning orange juice, that first bite of whole wheat toast with black raspberry preserves, that first sip of morning milk – we quite literally close our eyes and fold our hands and pray, “Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest...” The best clothes we own – our best modest dress – our suit and white shirt and silk tie and shiny shoes – we wear to God's House. The most precious necklace we own – is a golden cross around our neck. When we go away to college – for the first time – and we are not old enough – and somebody offers us alcohol – we will say, “No, thank you!” Because Jesus is in our heart. And if we are in a car all alone with somebody that's very very nice – and they want to have “hugs and kisses” but we aren't married to them – because we are still in high school – we will tell them no – not because it's old fashioned – but because we love Jesus so much! Because Jesus loves us so much – he will make us strong – to do what is right! When Jesus colors your life – you will think about him – when you watch the Brewers and the Cubs and the Packers and the Vikings and the bears. You will think about Jesus when you play flag football and soccer. Jesus' love is the reason to be in the best shape you can be in. And then to play hard and not cheat and not break the rules and not be guilty of unsportsman like conduct for Jesus' sake!

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. A man named Don died on Monday. Don was just 68 years old. He had been not well for a while now. Until recently when he was in a car insurance commercial practically nobody knew who Don was or what he looked like. Don was the guy with the really deep voice – that would say, “In a world where...” – in a movie trailer – a movie preview. Don said that catch phrase – those few words – transported people from the painfully ordinary and incredibly average right here and right now – to somewhere – anywhere else. Our life – our heart beating – lungs breathing – painfully ordinary and incredibly average life goes on and on. But some time – some day – when we least expect it – we will be with Jesus – in a world where there will be no more death – no more tears – no more sin – no more pain. We will be with Jesus in a world where we and all believers will be safe for ever and for good!

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Next Thursday in 9.11. For many people this is a very special day – a day to remember the global war on terror. To remember that day now __ years ago – when some 3,000 people lost their lives. Some people say 9.11 is national *important things* day – a day to realize what's really important and all the things and stuff that are not! A day to remember – when you kiss your spouse or your children good-bye in the morning – there is no guarantee that they will

be home tonight – safe and sound. Next Saturday is national *junk drawer* day – a day to straighten out that drawer in your kitchen so full of keys and trash bag twisties and screw drivers and cork screws and finger nail clippers and that crank for when the garbage disposal gets stuck. Clean it out and organize it – instead of pulling and pulling to get it open – and then mashing it shut – after you root around to find the one thing you are looking for. And next Sunday is *hug a crabby stranger* day. That’s a tough one. Should you wrap your arms around a crabby person you don’t know and squeeze? At your own risk – it seems to me. Again – I think what we ought to do – is wrap our arms around the people we do know and love. Wrap your arms around your spouse – your children and grand-children – your best friends. Hug them – hold them – tell them you love them. Hold them tight and know that Jesus holds them even tighter – because we belong to the Lord!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz