

~~They are~~ Subversives. They live in a land, the land of their birth, yet they want to overthrow all who ^{wield} ~~exercise~~ power in that land. They want to conquer that land from the inside out and claim it for their ruler. One by one they seek to turn the citizens of that domain, making them faithful to another domain. They call themselves Christians.

A subversive, that's what you are. A Guerrilla fighter. In the land of death sin, the land where death claims dominion, Lordship, you have been sent. In the land of sin many languages are spoken, fear, anxiety, greed, hatred, jealousy, violence, force, revenge. But we who are sent ~~from the~~ ~~land of~~ ~~life~~ by the ruler of life are quietly teaching other languages, faith, hope, love, peace, forgiveness, generosity, trust. In the realm of death everyone is alone. ~~Or they may gather at a bar and buy drinks for one another, or make quilts in a church while they gossip about those who are not there, but in the realm of sin and death everyone knows that you can only count on yourself.~~ Look out for number one. Don't trust anyone, depend on anyone. Because we were all born in this land, from the first day on we were learning its languages. Back before we can even remember we learned fear. Pain, hunger, harshness, meanness, these all took us and twisted us and bent us, often in ways we cannot remember or understand. But one day ~~But back there, also at a time most of us cannot remember,~~ God began his work. Through baptism he stamped for the realm of life, took us out of the power of death. Here's how he did it.

First he sent his son into the realm of death. Openly he spoke the language of the realm of life. He loved, and forgave, and gave. A lame man walked, a greedy tax collector named Zachheus he ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~Jesus~~ ~~presence~~ became generous. Life blossomed, and death withered, wherever Jesus was. Sin and death would not tolerate it. So they hung him up as an example. See, here is where loving and forgiving and giving will get you. Be generous and you will end up like Jesus, stripped naked, mocked, alone. Death had claimed

one more victim.

But then God acted. He raised Jesus from the dead.

~~It is as if the realm of death is a country~~

In our second lesson Paul writes this: For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death ~~has~~ no longer has dominion over him. Death is not his Lord.

But God did not stop there. As Paul says, "Do you ~~know~~ not know that all of us who were been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the ~~death~~ dead by the glory of the Father, we too might ~~live~~ walk in newness of life.

When you were baptized, all that deserves death in you was drowned, put to death with Christ. Every claim death has upon you was satisfied, and you were marked for the realm of life. Death is past for you, just as it is past for Christ. You died with him in baptism.

You do not belong to death. Though we still live in the land where death claims to be king, we belong to life. *we no longer live in the realm of death but in the realm of life and heaven*

So, Paul writes, you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

What does it mean?

~~That is how it is.~~ Though anxiety and guilt and fear and greed and insecurity would all fill our thoughts and words and deeds, God has freed us from ~~them~~. They are all for people who must live under the fear and dominion of death. *these. Now it must your heart and words and deeds full of Christlike things.*

~~Once we were like slaves, we are like slaves who have been freed.~~ *But*

Into our quarters has walked a man named Jesus who says, I've paid for your freedom, live as free men and women.

Two things ~~could~~ ^{can} happen then. We ~~could~~ ^{can} believe what he says, and walk out into freedom. Or we ~~could~~ ^{can} remain, not believing him we ~~could~~ ^{can} continue to live as slaves.

Christ has broken the dominion of sin and death over us. We are a people freed to live in faith, and trust, freed to forgive, to generously,

give of our time and love and wealth for our neighbors. We are ~~people~~ freed from anxiety, ^{like that Samaritan from told of} freed to give no thought to our safety and to stop along the road and assist the man victimized by thieves. We are free to bind up his wounds and take him to an inn, free to assure the innkeeper that whatever he needs we will pay.

We are free to to be spendthrifts with our forgiveness. No one can stop us from holding no grudges, from praying for our enemies, from wanting good for those who have hurt us.

We are free to have no anxiety about tomorrow. To live believing that God will bring us through every tomorrow even as he has brought us through every yesterday.

We are free. Free to say no to lust and greed~~xxxx~~ to simply not listen to their wh~~is~~perings within our hearts.

We are free.

We are free to die. For our life is in God's hand. Already we are made citizens of his realm.

Subversives. We are subversives. In the realm of death, where sin is Lord, we take our orders from ^{we think of the church huddled together under attack from death have much better to see the world} ~~another~~ ^{the Lord of life Jesus} one, Christ. Through you and me this is what God has planned. He wants to turn the realm of death into the realm of life. Through us he wants to touch more and more with peace and ^{forgiveness} ~~forgiveness~~ and love. He's greedy. He wants every one and every deed for himself.