

## Who do you serve?

- Everyone must make a choice:

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorite, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” *Joshua 24: 15*.

“I call heaven and earth as witness today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” *Deuteronomy 30:19*

- Some alternatives to the Lord:

Baal: the god of the intellect

Molech: the god of pleasure

Mammon: the god of power and money

Every person is governed by some ambition, a driving force at the center of one's being. Whatever is your master passion, that is your god.

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.

-William Henley, a 19<sup>th</sup> century secular humanist

### **Contrast:**

“And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” *Matthew 23:12*

## My Way

And now, the end is near  
And so I face the final curtain  
My friend, I'll say it clear  
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain  
I've lived a life that's full  
I traveled each and ev'ry highway  
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

Regrets, I've had a few  
But then again, too few to mention  
I did what I had to do, I saw it through without exemption  
I planned each charted course, each careful step along the highway  
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew  
When I bit off more than I could chew  
And through it all, when there was doubt  
I ate it up and spit it out  
I faced it all and I stood tall and did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and cried  
I've had my fill, my share of losing  
And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing  
To think I did all that  
And may I say, not in a shy way,  
"Oh, no, oh, no, not me, I did it my way"

For what is a man, what has he got?  
If not himself, then he has naught  
The right to say the things he feels and not the words of one who kneels  
The record shows I took the blows and did it my way!

-Frank Sinatra, 1969

•It reached No. 27 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and No. 2 on the Easy Listening chart in the US. In the UK, the single achieved a still unmatched record, becoming the recording with the most weeks inside the Top 40, spending 75 weeks from April 1969 to September 1971. Furthermore, "My Way" was found to be the song most frequently played at British funeral services.

### **Contrast:**

"For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" *Galatians 6:8*

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last" C.T. Studd

Serving the Lord: a choice

"I *am* the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." *Exodus 20: 2-3*

God has to be Lord exclusively in your life: no other gods.

- What does it mean to make Jesus the Lord of your life?

"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." *Matthew 7: 21-23*

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." *John 14:23-24*

"But He answered and said to the one who told Him, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.' *Matthew 12: 48-50*

- James and Jude were both half-brothers of Jesus. Note their introduction of themselves in each of their letters:

"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings." *James 1:1*

"Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you." *Jude 1:1-2*

- A bondservant is a slave who had been set free but wanted to continue serving their master voluntarily because they loved him. In the sense used by James and Jude, it likely means a complete and utter devotion to God, His word, and His will. It is disregarding your own desires and will in all things to lay your life at the Cross and follow Christ.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." *Galatians 2:20*.

"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" *Matthew 20:26-28*

Dorothea Day's response to 'Invictus'

My Captain

Out of the night that dazzles me,  
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,  
I thank the God I know to be  
For Christ the conqueror of my soul.

Since His the sway of circumstance,  
I would not wince nor cry aloud.  
Under that rule which men call chance  
My head with joy is humbly bowed.

Beyond this place of sin and tears  
That life with Him! And His the aid,  
Despite the menace of the years,  
Keeps, and shall keep me, unafraid.

I have no fear, though strait the gate,  
He cleared from punishment the scroll.  
Christ is the Master of my fate,  
Christ is the Captain of my soul.

- Total dependence on God
- "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ " *Romans 5:1*
- What Christ has done

How are we to live if Christ is the Lord of our Life?

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." *Matthew 6:19-21*

What are the treasures we can lay up in heaven?

What do we have with us now that will go to heaven?

The Word of the Lord:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”  
*Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33*

The people of God:

“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” *Luke 23: 39-43.*

“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.”

*Phillipians 1:19-26*

Question for reflection:

What does it mean to make Christ the Lord of your life?

Bob Dylan, 1979:

**"Gotta Serve Somebody"**

You may be an ambassador to England or France  
You may like to gamble, you might like to dance  
You may be the heavyweight champion of the world  
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,  
It may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

You may be a state trooper, you might be an young turk  
You may be the head of some big TV network  
You may be rich or poor, you may be blind or lame  
You may be living in another country under another name.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,  
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

You may be a construction worker working on a home  
You may be living in a mansion or you might live in a dome  
You might own guns and you might even own tanks  
You might be somebody's landlord you might even own banks.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,  
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

You may be a preacher with your spiritual pride  
You may be a city councilman taking bribes on the side  
You may be working in a barbershop, you may know how to cut hair  
You may be somebody's mistress, may be somebody's heir.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,  
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

Might like to wear cotton, might like to wear silk  
Might like to drink whiskey, might like to drink milk  
You might like to eat caviar, you might like to eat bread  
You may be sleeping on the floor, sleeping in a king-sized bed.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,  
It may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

You may call me Terry, you may call me Jimmy  
You may call me Bobby, you may call me Zimmy  
You may call me R.J., you may call me Ray  
You may call me anything but no matter what you say.

You're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed  
You're gonna have to serve somebody,  
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

•In response to "Gotta Serve Somebody", John Lennon wrote and recorded the song "Serve Yourself," which was a parody that mocked the injection of religion into Dylan's songwriting.