

The Re-Financing of the House of Usher

Ever been told to "get a life"? Well, I know where you can get a good deal on a used one: low mileage, hardly ever been lived, and below blue book. Actually, this one's already been driven off the lot, but the tale is instructive.

Ian Usher of Perth, Australia, put his life on the block on eBay: not just his possessions, but his life – habits, hobbies, hang-outs, relationships, all of it. The deal includes his house, skydiving gear, introductions to his mates and even a trial run on his job as a salesman. He'd hoped to get a half-million (\$480,000 American) but settled for the high bid of \$384,000. He explained that it's a great life – no hidden rust or sawdust in the gearbox or anything like that – but a painful divorce left bad memories for him so he decided to move on. The deal included only Usher's life, not his identity; he hung onto his passport.

Which is just the problem, really. What good is a new life if it's lived by the same self?

Jesus bought our old lives at full market value – the midnight noon of Calvary and the fullness of righteous wrath against sin. Jesus, however, goes a step farther: he genuinely offers a new life, a new self. But this one costs us: it comes at the price of our very identity. It is a matter, says Paul in Romans 6.6, of "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." We may keep our possessions but we surrender our passports.

So the gospel reverses Usher's gambit: he moved out of his life, took his self with him, and someone else moved in. We remain in our lives while Someone Else moves in and gives us a new self. We don't run away from the old, painful past; we watch as Jesus makes it new (2 Cor 5.17).

Get A Life!
Doug