

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-17: *LIVING FOR CHRIST*: June 17, 2018

Introduction:

In our society today generally, with the odd exception, people live for themselves. There's an irritating advertisement put out by the "ME" bank which reinforces this trend, which goes on with a song about *me me me me me me!*

When people return from a holiday, and they're asked how it all went, they often give the highlights rather than a day by day itinerary. That's what we're going to look at today in our reading from 2 Corinthians 5:

1. Our goal as a Christian is to please the Lord. (verse 9)

From the beginning of Chapter 5, Paul writes about how we should live in *this earthly tent*, that is, our body. The emphasis is on *pleasing the Lord*. That is our goal. So much of Scripture spells out how we should live if we are serious about putting God first as we seek to *please* Him. One example is found in Romans 12:1-2 (Read).

We seek to please our marriage partner, our parents or our children in lots of practical ways through life. But first place in our thinking should be how we are to *please the Lord*.

2. We will all be called to account. (verse 10)

In verse 10 Paul gives a good motivation for seeking to *please the Lord*. *We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ* to give an account of how we have gone in pleasing Him. Which verdict shall we receive: "Well done my good and faithful servant" or "Depart from me for I never knew you"?

Christians will not be judged so far as their Salvation is concerned but we will be judged for the use of our time, talents and treasures.

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Do we *make it our goal to please Him* in all of these areas of our life?

3. Persuading people. (Verse 11)

One of the great privileges of being a Christian is to be God's ambassador, as Paul explains in verse 20 (read). An Ambassador doesn't represent himself or herself but the nation or Monarch or President who sends them. As Christ's Ambassador, we are to be involved in God's rescue operation, trying to persuade others to stop being God's enemies and become His friends, by repenting of sin and trusting in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

In order to persuade people about turning back to God we need to know what we believe. How are you going in learning from sermons and your own private reading of the Bible? Do you belong to a small group which meets through the week to learn what it is that we believe?

Prayer will be important too. We need to pray for opportunities to speak about Jesus and pray for wisdom as to what we might say.

It would be good to have some small helpful books to give to people, such as "What is a Christian" or "How to make the most of the rest of your life", both by John Chapman.

4. Our message. (Verse 15)

When Ambassadors are sent, they are sent with a message. Here we find the message we are to make known as we seek to persuade people about the Lord: Jesus died for all and rose again, that those who believe in Him and receive Eternal Life will live no longer for themselves, but for Christ, who died on their behalf, to pay the punishment that their sins deserve.

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This is far from the message of the “ME” bank isn’t it! Frank Sinatra sang the famous song: *I did it my way*. Well Christians are to be different and *do it God’s way*.

5. A new creation. (Verse 17-18)

A person who is *in Christ* has turned back to God in repentance and faith and totally committed themselves to the Lord. It is another way of speaking of a Christian. As such, they are *a new creation*. Peter, James and John in their Letters in the New Testament, write about *being born again* or receiving *new birth*. People who become Christians are new people. As we read in verses 17-18, *the old has gone, the new has come*. This is not of our own doing. *All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ*. We who have responded to Christ’s death by trusting in Him have been made right with God.

Our sins have been forgiven, we’ve been gifted the Holy Spirit and Eternal Life. It is all of grace, something we don’t deserve. None of us can be good enough to merit God’s favour. God has taken the initiative in bridging the gap between us with Christ’s death.

Conclusion:

We’ve thought today about what it means to *make it our goal to please the Lord*.

It will involve every area of our life.

It will move and motivate us to try and persuade others to trust in the Lord.

May God help us this week to live in a way that pleases the Lord.