

The Book of 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 5:15

Session 56: Purpose and Meaning, pt. 1

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, **that they which live should** not henceforth **live** unto themselves, but **unto him which died for them**, and rose again.

We are not just offering people forgiveness of sins (which by itself is pretty awesome), we are offering them a way to live unto God which is acceptable to Him and therefore very rewarding in a myriad of ways – and that way is made available by trusting Christ as their all-sufficient Savior. By their positive response to the gospel, they are being imputed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, whereby their status before God has been changed from that of an enemy to one who is now at peace with God. That is what Paul is offering them.

If I stop here in enumerating the life God wants us to have, I am short-changing it. I haven't even mentioned having eternal life. I haven't even mentioned those things which are in connection with our sanctified standing in Christ. I haven't even mentioned the mercies of God or the spiritual blessings which are ours in Christ. I haven't even mentioned our adoption as sons and daughters. I haven't even mentioned our edification which is a rich privilege offered to all who come to Christ.

If people knew of all this, it seems every man would come running to hear of the good news, but they do not know. Paul isn't waiting on them, he takes upon himself to tell them the good news.

Is Paul thinking about slowing down his evangelistic efforts? Not one bit. Why not? Because the doctrine causes him to realize the value of what he is offering and he has decided to endure whatever criticisms in order to be a faithful ambassador for Christ. He has decided that what is being offered is worth him suffering to make it known. He is done with being liked by the world if he just keeps himself in check, and instead he is looking at what His Savior is asking of him.

Paul loves God more than he loves this world's approval. Paul is not living for himself, he is living for Christ. Paul is not attempting to amass wealth, have a life of ease or pleasure or to obtain a reputation; his is a life of willing toil and service because he understands that the great purpose of the death of the Redeemer was to secure this result of the Savior's glory and the eternal benefit of men.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live **should not henceforth live unto themselves**, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

How do men "live unto themselves?" Men live unto themselves when they seek pleasure, gain or reputation as the controlling principles of their lives. Men live unto themselves when they disregard the rights of others, even the legitimate claims which others may have of them, in order to advance their own purposes and ends. Men live unto themselves when they do not have charity working in them, when they have no time to serve others unless there is some reward in it. Men live unto themselves when they seek to honor themselves from selfish motives and have no desire to honor God.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, **but unto him which died for them**, and rose again.

What does it mean for men to "live unto Christ?" it is the opposite of living unto ourselves. It is to seek Christ's honor by the use of all our time and talents, by all the strength of our intellect and body, by all our skills and work, because we understand that we belong to Him, and not ourselves. We are sons and daughters and we have been adopted; we are not our own because we were bought with a price. We learned this back in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and **ye are not your own?**
²⁰ **For ye are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Now, let's look at the next phrase in verse 15.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him **which died for them, and rose again.**

Here is the grounds for the obligation that Paul felt himself under, that he would not live not for himself, but unto Christ. This is an important piece of doctrine that must also be working in us as we are going to overcome this attack of the policy of evil that is devised against us to silence our own evangelistic efforts.

These two elements (the death and resurrection) form truths in Paul's mind to motivate him to continue his evangelistic efforts even when people call him "unbalanced and insane" for doing so.

The first is that when Christ died, Paul saw that act as a purchase, which he voluntarily accepted for himself when he trusted the work of Christ to save him. The second is the resurrection, which assured his own resurrection from the dead and eternal life where there will be no more death, and no grave.

Paul took his relentless obedience and service to be an obligation of gratitude to such an extent that he willingly devoted himself without reserve to be a faithful ambassador of the gospel of Christ; to Christ and Christ alone would Paul give himself as a living sacrifice.

In order for these truths to have the same effect on us as they did on Paul, we will have to engage with these verses. We will have to acquaint ourselves with all they imply, and we will need to consider our own obligation toward the Savior. We will need to meditate on these things and become familiar enough with them to be able to think about them when we are not reading it in our Bible or looking at these notes.

We will need to integrate these things into our prayer life and talk honestly with God about them. And then, as we begin to make the decision to obey the doctrine, and find ways to present the gospel, the Spirit of God will take these verses and work them into our thinking, changing us so that the things that used to hinder us from giving the gospel are no longer hinderances. This doctrine is meant to equip you to overcome fear, criticism, rejection, anxiety and any other

ploy made by the policy of evil to keep you from giving the glorious gospel of Christ to the lost.

For Paul, it was the accusation that he was mentally unstable. But this was not enough to deter Paul from giving the gospel, and thank God that it did not.

What Paul is about to give us in verses 16-21 are the things which must be in our minds, things which we must value more than avoiding the criticisms and accusations of others.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but **unto him which died for them**, and rose again.¹⁶ **Wherefore** henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

Christ died so that we can cease thinking about ourselves, and begin to live unto Christ, who died for us. To the carnal believer this does not sound like an attractive outcome, but to sons and daughters who understand that we are being offered the very best of lives by living unto God. This is not to say there will be no sufferings or adversities, but in spite of those things, it is a life which is full of joy, where our lives have significance, meaning and purpose – which, by the way, everyone wants whether they realize it or not.

Let's talk about meaning and purpose for a moment. People often confuse these two terms, but actually, there is an important difference between meaning and purpose.

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The Most Important Decision

Doctrinal Summary: Session 56

Session 56 establishes that Christ's death and resurrection call Believers out of self-directed living and into a purpose-centered life unto Him. The doctrine presses the Believer to understand that purpose is not found by beginning with self, personal fulfillment, or earthly meaning, but by beginning with God's stated mission for those who are in Christ.

The session then unfolds the change in perception that belongs to the new creature. Because Believers are no longer to know any man after the flesh, they must learn to view others in light of God's reconciling purpose, view Christ according to His heavenly ministry in the present dispensation of grace, and view themselves according to their complete standing in Christ rather than according to their old identity in Adam. In Christ, the Believer possesses a new identity, a new position before God, and a new doctrinal blueprint for daily function.

The doctrinal burden of the session is that reconciliation is not merely a benefit received, but also a ministry committed to the reconciled Believer. Every Believer who has been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ has also been made an ambassador for Christ, entrusted with the word of reconciliation, and called to live with the purpose of making God's gracious offer known to others.