

2 Cor 5:6-17
The Final Authority

In my last corporate role, I worked for Carolinas Healthcare System. I was the Director of Operations for the West Division of Urgent Care Services. In that position I had 7 direct reports. Every year we would set performance goals. These goals covered budget performance, staffing, quality of care, customer service, and professional/staff development. Working closely with my boss, the VP of Urgent Care Services, we finalized these goals to guide our operations. At the end of the operational year each manager would do a self-evaluation. These evaluations were very important because the result would determine their annual bonus. While self-evaluations were valuable, it was ultimately my boss's assessment that determined the annual bonus because, as it concerned Urgent Care Services, he was the final authority. In the end, it will be Jesus' assessment of things that will determine our reward. Therefore, it is extremely important that we continually consult the scriptures on the issues of life. With this said I want to share three observations from the text, keeping this point in mind.

First, in the end Christ will have the last word. V9-10 “⁹ So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.” Since this will be the case, what matters most to us, disciples of Jesus Christ, is what the word of God declares, for the word of God will be the basis of Jesus' judgment. Not what comes out of Capital Hill or the Supreme Court. Nor the University. Nor the varying positions of denominational governing bodies. How good it is

when these bodies produce that which honors the word of God, but at the end of the day nothing we produce supersedes what God's word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, declares. So, we must be very careful in over valuing what the culture says. Over valuing what the culture determines to be right or wrong, or important. We do not govern our lives based solely on external things or our emotions, but rather by what we believe. External things, emotions, are temporary, what we believe, God's word, is eternal.

Proverbs 30:5-6 "Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection. ⁶ Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar."

Matt 15:18-19 "¹⁷ "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

John 12:46-50 "⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me." **ESV**

In Christ, we no longer live for self. V14-15 ¹⁴“Either way, Christ’s love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. ¹⁵He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.” What’s driving you? What fuels your passion? Let us be honest with ourselves this morning. Do we possess strong desire to glorify God or glorify ourselves? Do we feel a stronger urge to honor God/Jesus or to satisfy ourselves? Are we the center of our world or is Christ now the center? Let me ask it this way. Is there anything you are unwilling to give up for him? Our answers to these questions reveal whether we are truly living for Christ.

Luke 14:26-27 ²⁶“If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.”

Matt 16:24-25 ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.”

Mark 10:28-31 ²⁸Then Peter began to speak up. “We’ve given up everything to follow you,” he said. ²⁹“Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, ³⁰will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life. ³¹But many who are the greatest now will be least

important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then.”

Finally, in Christ, there is no room for the old life. V16-17 “¹⁶ So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” In Christ we are more than just flesh. Prior to faith in Jesus, we were just that, flesh and we were controlled by it. Literally being consumed by our sinful desires. But now that we are in Christ we no longer blindly walk according to the flesh. And that which was pervasive in our old life, sin, is not so in the new life. Church, there is no room for the old life in the Kingdom of God. The old life is dead and dead things have no place among living things. We cannot bring any of the old life with us. We are more than what we see. In Christ there is now something on the inside of us, bursting out of us; leading and guiding us. We are new creations by the power of God’s Holy Spirit that lives in us!

John 8:10-11 “¹⁰ Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” ¹¹ “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Matt 10:17-22 “¹⁷ As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked. “Only God is truly good. ¹⁹ But to answer your question, you know the commandments: ‘You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and

mother.”²⁰ “Teacher,” the man replied, “I’ve obeyed all these commandments since I was young.”²¹ Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. “There is still one thing you haven’t done,” he told him. “Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”²² At this the man’s face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.”

Remember, Jesus Christ is the final authority and only what he thinks in the end will matter. And what he thinks is found only in this word. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.