

Compelled by the Love of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Introduction

1. There are literally millions of people throughout the world who praise Jesus with their mouths, but not so much with their hearts and with their lives.
2. In the scriptures Paul shows us that there is more to giving praise to Jesus than simply saying we love Him.
3. How does the love of Christ affect you in your motivation, affections and actions in life?
 - a. In our text Paul says that it is the love of Christ that compels him to do every thing that he does.
 - b. He says that Christ's death ought to have this same affect on all of us, "*If one died for all, then all died.*"

Discussion

I. The Love of Christ Compels (Constrains, KJV) Us (vs. 14, 15).

A. How can the love of Christ compel or constrain a person?

1. In the previous verse Paul pointed out that some people thought that he was beside himself, and if such was the case it is for God.
 - a. Why beside himself? Most people in his day saw Paul's zeal, and the decisions he made based on that zeal, and interpreted it as him being fanatical or "beside himself" (crazy).
 - b. Festus was one such person (Acts 26:22-25).
 - c. Even today, if one of our members was top notch in his trade and gave it all up to preach the gospel and go to those places that are hostile to the gospel; many would think him crazy!
 - d. Yet this was exactly Paul's attitude! (Phil. 3:16; Acts 21:13).
2. Therefore a person who does not understand the love of Christ would accuse such a man as he of being crazy, just as Festus did.
3. On the other hand, if a person does understand the love of Christ and what He meant when He said, "*Love knows no one greater than this, than to lay down one's life for His friends*" (John 15:13), that person would see Paul as being of sound mind. Why?
 - a. Because the love that Paul showed in his actions as a gospel preacher was patterned after the very same love that Jesus shows each and every one of us when He gave up His life for us.
 - b. Because the love of Christ is so very different and so far greater than anything that the world has to offer that those who are of the world do not understand when Christians have the same love as Christ (Isa. 55:8-9).
 - c. Christ's love confined Paul. It stood for the purpose and motivation for every thing that he did!



- B. How does Paul's motivation for doing things apply to us?
1. Simply this (vs. 14, 15), "*If one died for all, then all died, and He died for all that those who live should love no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*"
 2. What Paul describes as his motivation for all things must be the same motivation for every person who is alive in Christ.
 3. We know that according to Rom. 6:1-10 those who have been baptized into Christ's death are raised to walk in the newness of life, whereby they die to sin and to themselves in order to live wholeheartedly for Christ.
 4. When Paul put to mind the crucifixion of Jesus he knew that he should have been the one upon that cross, but since Christ did it instead he could no longer bear to be selfish in any aspect of his life.
 5. "If a person is truly impressed by the cross of Jesus then they should never need for someone to get on their case in order to motivate them," the love of Christ should be motivation enough. (Dunagan)
 6. This is the very type of life that Paul expresses to us in Gal. 2:20.
 - a. This applies to marriages. Notice that husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25). They are compelled by Christ's love.
 - b. It applies to friendships. Jesus gave his life for those who would be a friend to Him (John 15:14). So should we (1 John 3:16-17).
 - c. This also applies to the work that we do in every aspect of our lives (Col. 3:17).
 - d. Everything should be done in light of the love that Jesus showed us on the cross.
- C. Many people will say, "I am impressed by the cross of Christ, I love Jesus." But Paul shows us how to live with this attitude in mind.

II. **The Love of Christ and our View of Life (5:16).**

- A. The love of Christ compels us to regard all things different.
1. As Christians we are able to understand Christ's love. But in doing so we are also expected to change the way we view life and other people according to that love (Eph. 3:17-19).
 2. One of the biggest stumbling blocks for Christians is that after baptism they still hold on to their worldly views.
- B. We must no longer regard men according to the flesh.

1. To regard a person according to the flesh means to regard, consider, or judge them the way men who walk according to the flesh judge other men.
 - a. White, black, short tall, rich, poor, beautiful, ugly.
 - b. Some also regard people based on how they are treated by them.
 - c. We must note that refusal to speak to a person for any reason is a fleshly attitude.
 2. Paul was able to preach the gospel to those who both saw him as beside himself and of sound mind because he did not regard them according to how they treated Him, but according to their need for the gospel.
 - a. Notice his attitude toward the Jews who persecuted him (Rom. 10:1).
 - b. This is reflected of Jesus' love which He also showed us in that He prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him.
 - c. How many of us would be willing to do this?
- C. We no longer regard life according to the flesh.
1. Our goal in life is no longer to please ourselves, but to be pleasing to God.
 - a. Prov. 16:1-3: "Acknowledge Him in all your ways."
 - b. Matt. 6:33: "Seek first the kingdom of God."
 - c. What entertains us ought to be different (Eph. 5:4; Job 31:1).
 2. How we respond to God's word
 - a. Look for ways to change (2 Cor. 13:5).
 - b. Eager to learn all that it says (2 Tim. 2:15).
 - c. Eager to do all that it says (Tit. 2:14).

Conclusion

1. In 2 Cor. 5:17 Paul points out that all things have become new when we confine ourselves to the love of Christ.
2. Our souls have been made new, our way of thinking is new, our outlook on life is new, our attitude toward other people is new.
3. Do you desire to have a fresh start? All things can be made new if you are willing to obey the gospel of Christ.

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