

2 Cor 5 pt. 3 v.14-21 READ THRU The Great Exchange

V.14-15

The love of Christ compels us, it propels us - Christ's love does not move us to slothfulness, it holds us together and moves us to do the works of the Father.

We, believers, have found the love of Christ so compelling that we are moved to action as Paul and his companions were so moved to action. They couldn't do anything else!

Why? Paul uses his judgment. He uses discernment. It's important for believers to be discerning.

Ultimately Paul says, in the course of using good judgment - discernment, it stands to reason that Since Christ died for all, then His sacrifice is big enough and sufficient for ALL.

This is the great evangelistic message that we are compelled to proclaim. This is the great reconciling of mankind to God through the death of Jesus Christ.

Such a great debt was owed by the whole of mankind AND God loved mankind to the fullest extent. He was so compelled by His love for us that He paid the whole of our debt in Jesus Christ's body on a cross.

Even as Christ declared of Himself:

[Jhn 3:16-19 NKJV] 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

[Isa 53:6 NKJV] ...the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of **us all**.

[Heb 2:9 NKJV] 9... that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for **everyone**.

[1Jo 2:2 NKJV] ...He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also **for the whole world**.

The KJV reading of our text reads: [2Co 5:14 KJV] 1...we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

This accurately depicts our former state - dead, lifeless, carrying about in our mortal bodies the sentence of death.

One may say, “Foolishness! I am clearly alive, I’m fine, and you are insane!” That person may have the greatest counterfeit life on planet earth but without Christ there is no everlasting life.

One can be physically alive - a beating heart, but spiritually dead.

Conversely, those who are Christ’s are spiritually alive for eternity after their heart has long stopped beating.

All humanity was born under the death penalty - doomed.

Christ shared in our physical death, to prevent our spiritual death, and more than that - [Jhn 10:10 NKJV] ...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly.

While Christ died for all, this isn’t to suggest that all mankind, including unbelievers, will be saved.

To its ultimate extreme this idea suggests that Satan would be saved as well (Origen, 2nd/3rd century).

This is what is called Universalism - a heretical view that because of divine mercy and love all will be forgiven and brought into the kingdom. Quite an attractive heresy.

All have been covered - not all have chosen to participate in the new covenant. They have opted out, as it were.

We find in v. 15 that this idea of who exactly is redeemed is further defined as, “those who live.” And who are they who have lived? We who have believed in Him; we who have shared in Christ’s death and resurrection. We beggars who have come to receive His grace and radical love as dead men brought to life.

V.16-17 - 2 x Therefore back to back

Since that’s the case, since there is a vast community of saints, of “those who live,” a timeless and eternal church comprised of the souls of men who have grasped the promise, partakers of the covenant of Christ. That community - we - bear witness to the fact that Jesus saves dirty, fleshly, wretched sinners.

Since Christ is in the business of redeeming dirty wretched sinners - we regard NO ONE according to the flesh.

Easier said than done. We love in groups and out groups, even within the Body. Especially in the world.

But, having spent our pasts lives in that dead condition we are the proof of a God who is not a respecter of persons.

He demonstrated his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly. Is it so strange to us then that Christ continues to save the ungodly and to bring them to the kingdom?

No. We are the evidence. May we view others through Christ's eyes, and may we refuse to regard any one according to the flesh.

My prayer is always "Lord, help us to love others like you love us."

*We have known Christ according to the flesh-

[1Jo 1:1-3 NKJV] 1 That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled,** concerning the Word of life--

Paul and the other Apostles knew Jesus in the flesh, but that season had passed for them. Here and now we relate to Jesus through the Holy Spirit that lives in us and moves us to faith.

Similarly, we relate to people by the Spirit, not the flesh.

That's a tricky one too! We love to concoct external rules and regulations to live and judge others by.

But take a LOOK, Behold! Anyone in Christ is new. The old dead man has passed away, has died, all things have become new!

Any thing related to the flesh, the old life, is gone so we no longer relate to that - we don't hold that against anybody.

This is one of those verses that has the power to eradicate the guilt that we bear when we consider our past selves. We are new creations in Christ. All is new.

All around,
Hope is springing up from this old ground
Out of chaos life is being found, in you
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us

V.18-19 All things are from God - God is still on the throne, still sovereign, still making people new.

We have become new, our old man passed away, our new man came to life because God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

This implies that there was an outstanding debt that needed to be reconciled unto God. God is the creditor, we are the debtor.

God, reconciled that debt himself rather than just cancelling the debt.

There is a world of difference. God paid the outstanding balance. He didn't sweep it under the rug. All that was owed, was paid for in the blood of Jesus Christ.

This is where we need to add some detail to the discussion regarding the free gift of salvation. The gift is free to us - that's what makes it a gift, grace, but it cost God everything.

Christ paid everybody's outstanding balance himself to satisfy the requirement for righteousness.

And in the payment Christ has given us something else - the blessed ministry of reconciliation, whereby we direct men to Christ that they might be reconciled as well.

V.19 - In case we missed it the first time Paul says it again! When the Bible says things more than once in quick succession pay attention!

The nuts and bolts, if you forget everything else: God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself! AND we have a part to play in that ministry!

V.20 - Now then...having spent the time and energy to communicating the seriousness of the matter - Christ's love is so compelling that we regard no man according to the flesh; since God has reconciled mankind to himself in the body and blood of Jesus Christ and has brought us into the ministry of reconciliation to serve...

we have been given a ministry (each of us) - the ministry of reconciliation; we have committed to our care the word of reconciliation (what we say matters); we have been brought into God's diplomatic service and granted the role of an ambassador to represent the interests of our King's government to a universal nation that is divorced from His love.

God pleads through us - what is it to plead - why is that different than preach, teach, speak, etc....

Last week we talked about persuading people - being intentional in our discourse, not just loose-y goose-y “planting seeds” with little thought to the gravity and importance of the message and the potential salvation of the hearer.

So now we see that we have been made ambassadors for our Lord to beseech people to be reconciled to God! We are imploring the hearer for Christ’s sake, pleading to them on Jesus’ behalf. What is the request? “Be reconciled to God.”

This is the most natural thing in the world for those filled with the Holy Spirit, why? Because that’s the Holy Spirit’s message, just like God is pleading through us!

Some say, “I’m not an evangelist.” Perhaps you not in the sense of Billy Graham, or Greg Laurie, but you ARE if the Holy Spirit lives in you! If you have been brought into the kingdom then you ARE and ambassador for Jesus’ sake by the Holy Spirit. Pleading - be reconciled to God!

Alistair Begg - “I’m not a salesman, I’m a herald. I have a responsibility to say to you, “I implore you, through Christ, be reconciled to God.”

And that’s just it. We are not selling fire insurance. We are not using gimmicks to change peoples mind.

The message is this - apart from Christ, we will die in our sin, but by Christ's blood we are reconciled to God. We beg you - be reconciled to God!

"If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for." -Spurgeon

"Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter." -Spurgeon

Why?! Why would the audience we are imploring even consider such a request?

Because God made Jesus christ, the sinless one to BECOME sin for us -- do you understand the nature of that theological bomb shell?

It's not that Christ was **just** a sinless man, who did great things, and since he was a sinless man who did great things he didn't deserve to die. And well, since he elected to die on our behalf we have been made right.

The point is - God **made** Him SIN, which we can't fully understand this side of heaven, and God punished Sin and death in totality on the cross and set men free from its hold over us when we were steeped down to the bone in its vileness.

This is the great exchange! God took our substance, our sinful nature nailed it to the cross as he made Christ sin, and clothed us in Christ's substance, His righteousness!

You are completely holy, not partially holy - and you are being made holy by the Spirit.

This is what compels us, and propels us.