

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
“Motivation for Ministry” – Part 2
Taught by Dr. Bruce Bickel
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Good morning, men!

Audience Members: *Good morning!*

It's good to see you. We have a special treat. Let's go quietly before the Lord and just know that he is God.

[Rich Clark on the Harmonica - MUSIC]

Holy! Holy! Holy art Thou Lord God of hosts. Father, we celebrate your being, your attributes, who you are in all of your glory. We trust, Lord, that you'd remove all of the frustrations of this week from us, that our minds would be focused upon you, that you'd be pleased to guide us into all truth for Jesus' sake. And may it be so for his glory. Amen.

Turn in your Bibles please to 2 Corinthians 5. We're looking specifically at verses 13-15 today, looking at the theme of Paul's motivation for ministry. What is it that motivated Paul to be so singly focused? When you look at his background, he probably was not well thought of by his populace. He was not one who would be politically correct in our terminology. You see, it's very dangerous to be different than society. It's more dangerous to live a holy life than any other kind of life.

The world resents different and holy people because they reveal their own sin. It's a contrast between their own style of life and holiness. That's why people say, "Oh, you're holier than thou." Well, in reality, that's true. When somebody says, "You're holier than thou," they mean that derogatorily. But quite honestly, it ought to be a compliment. That doesn't mean that we pride of over that. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying the reality is it very dangerous in our culture today to live a holy life because the system of this world is so anti-Christ. In fact, the world often hurriedly flings different names at people who live according to a higher standard and are more holy than they are and they fill them in.

Here are a couple of terms. The term sometimes used is the term "mad." They're mad because of their holiness. Another one might be a "fanatic." It's been that way throughout the course of human history in the life of the church. Let me give you some examples.

Look at Hosea 9:7, what's said about the prophets, "The days of punishment are coming. The days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this-because your sins are so many, and your hostilities so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac." The culture is basically saying because you're living a holy life and calling down the judgment of God, you're a maniac, you're a fool. You see, the world does not think well of people who attempt to live a holy life.

How about Mark 3:21. We see the apostles were given power over demons and they didn't eat. Here's what Scripture records about what people said about them, "Then Jesus entered a house and again a crowd gathered so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When the family heard about this, they went on to take charge of him for they said this, 'He is out of his mind.'" That was because they demonstrated the holy power of a gracious God.

The same thing could be said about the apostle Paul in Acts 26:24 after Paul preached about the resurrection of Christ, this was Festus' response, "At this point, Festus interrupted Paul's defense and said, 'You are out of your mind, Paul,' he shouted, 'Your great learning is driving you insane.'"

You see, a great many people must have thought that of Paul because here's what Paul taught. Paul said that a dead man appeared to him and spoke to him, and the world said that he was a raving maniac. Paul also said he had abandoned a brilliant career. The normal goals of men of his age had no attraction to him. His conduct changed radically from persecuting a church to preaching for the church. He gave up position, he gave up possession, he gave up prestige for sickness, beatings, prison and ship wreck, and the only thing that people could say about him was this, "He must be insane." What is it that motivated Paul? What was behind the singleness of heart, his single purpose? The people just explain him away by saying he's a maniac, he's insane, he's foolish.

Audience Member: *What were those verses again?*

Hosea 9:7, about the prophets, Mark 3:21 about Jesus and his disciples, and Acts 26:24 about Paul.

The world just explained him away by saying he was a maniac or he was insane. You see, the world looks on the outside. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:12, "We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart." You see, they looked at the appearance of Paul and saw that he had a holy life and they declared that he was insane. Paul had a consuming enthusiasm for only one thing in his mind, and that was the glory of God and the salvation of sinners and the perfecting of the saints. The glory of God and the salvation of sinners and the perfecting of the saints.

All people who could not understand Paul never understood what motivated him, what incited him to action. It's in these verses that Paul gives us the answer to what is it that motivated me to have the singleness of purpose that my whole focus was the glory of God and the salvation of sinners and the perfection of the saints? What is it that motivated him? We touched on it last week. The first one was this—he had the fear of God. You'll notice that in verse...we've been reading in 2 Corinthians 5:13-14a, "¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us." Notice in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord."

The thing that motivated Paul was two-fold. First of all, it was the fear of God. He saw God as a righteous judge. He saw God as a righteous judge, and that created within him a sense of awe, respect, dignity and admiration for God as a righteous judge. The fear of the Lord. That is what controlled his thinking. When you reshape your view of God, you're going to reshape your conduct for God. That's what happened to Paul. He reshaped his view of God. He began to see him as a righteous judge, and therefore, it reshaped his conduct. That's why last week I had you sit down and meditate on the 28 attributes of God. I know this, brothers, when you and I have the right view of God, we're going to have the right conduct for God. That's what happened to Paul.

He said this, "It was my fear of God, my seeing God as a righteous judge, that transformed the way that I thought about him, and that's what motivated me." There's this fear of God which is a sense of awe, the sense of respect, the sense of dignity. If you have the right view of God, you're going to have the right conduct of God. That's Paul's illustration. It controlled his thinking.

Today, he gives us a second reason for that. You'll see that in 2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ." You see, the love of Christ controlled his actions. The motivation thing that drove Paul to be a maniac in

the eyes of the world, to be insane in the eyes of the world, for people think so difficultly of him, call him all kinds of names, because they never understood his motivation. His motivation was two-fold. It was the fear of God controlled his thinking and the love of Christ controlled his actions. You see, when you and I have the right view of God, we'll have the right conduct for God.

Paul is now going to teach us the second aspect of his motivation. There was a deep sense of reverential awe and respect for God, his awareness as a supreme judge. That was his fear of God conditioned his thinking. The fear of God and the love and Christ produced a maniac in the eyes of the world.

Ideally, brothers, what I'd like to do today is to create a bunch of maniacs here at the barn. We need to become insane for Christ. We need to become maniacs. If the world would take a look at us and say, "What is it that motivates you to have such a different conduct? Why do you act the way you do? Why are you saying those things? How come you're not like the other people in the world? How come you're different than the people that go to much church? What is it about you that makes you so radically different? You see, you're so different than anybody else." I would say this—Paul's answer is this is—it's the fear of God and the love of Christ. It's the fear of God that really conditions our thinking, and it's the love of Christ that controls our actions. I want us to explore the love of Christ today; the second aspect of Paul's motivation.

Paul gives us the reason for his being viewed as a religious maniac in 2 Corinthians 5:13. He says that his conduct, however it is judged, is dictated by the love of Christ, that is Christ's love for him. Christ's love for him. If he's judged as being out of his mind, it's because of the love of Christ. The great compelling motive of all of his actions since his conversion was Christ's great love for him. Here's this great apostle of the heart set free, who's saying this, enjoy great spiritual liberty, glorifying in the fact that he was under constraint.

That's contrary to logic. That's a dichotomy. He's saying, "Look, my great freedom is this. I'm under constraint, I'm compelled, I'm controlled, I'm constrained, by the love of Christ. You see, that's where my freedom is." That's the opposite of what we would say. We would say, "Freedom is I get to do what I want." Paul is saying, "No, freedom is doing what God wants you to do." What controls your actions is your understanding Christ's love for you.

You see, he is saying this—it's the love of Christ working in us. It's the love of Christ mastering us. It's driving us like a great force, holding us in all of its power. That's what the word controls or compels means. Take a look at 2 Corinthians 14, "For the love of Christ controls us." Your Bible might say "constrains" or "compels," depending on your translation. Literally it means this—to hold together, to press on every side, to hold fast.

The idea here of this compelling is not an urging. It's not a pushing you from behind. It's really the idea of keeping you within the confines of a well-walled out road. In other words, you're constrained because you're operating in this. Remember when we had the floods here in the region? What did people do? They built up sand bag walls. What were they trying to do? They were trying to constrain, they were trying to control, they were trying to compel the water so that it wouldn't run random all over the place. That's the word here in the Greek. It's saying that you're compelled, you're constrained, you're controlled by these walls of Christ's love to keep you on a single focus. It's just like building sand bag walls for the flood. It takes the water in the direction that you want it to go. Paul is saying this, "My freedom is understanding that I'm compelled, I'm controlled, I'm controlled by the walls of Christ's love

to keep me going in the right direction, and therefore, I can glory in the salvation of the lost and the perfection of the saints.” That was his single focus. He says, “I’m compelled by the love of Christ.

He says, “That’s where I have my great freedom.” That’s contrary to our logical thought. We think freedom means I get to run all over the place and do what I want. Paul is saying, “No. No. A thousand times no. Your freedom is this—when you really understand Christ’s love for you, it demands a love response back.” Christ loved us first so that we could love him. You see, when you really understand Christ’s love for you, there’s only one response. It’s a love response in obedience. That’s why obedience is a love response, and duty becomes a desire. You see, Paul is saying when you’re really compelled, controlled and constrained by the love of Christ, your duty now becomes a desire, because you’re set free to be compelled by the love of Christ.

The love of Christ controls our energies, it controls our loyalties, it channels us into one direction, and we become a mighty power for God, because we understand Christ’s love for us individually. This is not a life of bondage. Paul is saying we are never as free as when we are under the banks and the boundaries of Christ’s love. That’s where you’re free. When you’re in the banks and the boundaries of Christ’s love.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:15, “and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” What is it that really controls you? Ask yourself the question, brothers. Be honest today. You don’t have to answer it out loud. What is it that controls your actions? What is it? Is it really your understanding of the magnificence and glory of Christ’s love for you? That’s what Paul is saying. That’s what keeps you singly focused. It prevents you from being selfish (see 2 Corinthians 5:15).

When you and I fill our minds and hearts with the substitution and not your situation, your life changes. When you and I begin to think about the substitutionary atoning work of Christ rather than the situation in which we find ourselves, we’re now being controlled by Christ’s love. Think about substitution, not about your situation.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21, “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Think about the substitutionary work of Christ. He died the death that I should have died. He paid the sins that I should have paid. You see, when you start thinking like that, that’s going to control your actions because you’re now being compelled by the banks and the boundaries of Christ’s love for you because your focus is upon the substitutionary atoning work of Jesus Christ, and not the situation in which you find yourself. Do you see the difference? Think about substitution, not your situation. When you do that, the only thing you can do is respond by loving and serving him in return. That’s why Paul is saying, “Look, you’ve got to understand first of all, Christ’s boundaries of his love for you.” When you do that, you’ll be singly focused.

That’s why we had Michael last year make us those rubber bands to put on our wrists, that said, “WHJD?” What has Jesus done? Remember a couple of years ago there was WWJD? What would Jesus do? I have no idea what Jesus would do. It’s audacious to think that I’d even know what to do. But I can tell you this—what has Jesus done? That’s what we gave all the Brave Men, because we want you to understand this—I don’t know what Christ would do right now, but I do know this. I know what he’s done. He substituted himself for me. I know that. That controls my actions because when I focus upon his substitution and not my situation, my conduct changes because I’m compelled, I’m controlled, I’m compressed, and I’m held in the banks and the boundaries of Christ’s love, when you think about substitution. Substitution is one of the greatest words in all of Scripture.

Audience Member: *Can you apply that to our real-life situations for us men as we're facing temptation.*

We'll get into that in a minute. There are several consequences of this, so hang on. Good question.

Do you see the difference? Thinking about substitution versus situation? Let me give you a real-life example. You men have been part of my life over the past 10 years and my work with the Tin Lanh Church in Vietnam, the little orphanage that I started back in the late 60's and 70's when I was in Vietnam. The young man who was the pastor of that church, you've helped me build the orphanage, his name was Pastor Win.

It took us 11 months to build that orphanage. The only way that we could build the orphanage was that I had to go barter with the Army Division I was assigned to as a Forward Air Controller of the 101st Airborne Division. The way that I would get enough material to build that orphanage, I would go get captured weapons or whatever a guy could find in the Vietnamese economy. I would take a helicopter and fly it out to one of the ships at sea and I'd land on the deck of a destroyer and land on the 5-inch gun mount. I would tie the aircraft down and I would swap what I could take from the Vietnamese economy and swapped for Navy-made ice cream. The ice cream I would take it back in my helicopter. I'd take it back to the Army Supply Sergeant. He would give me lumber, tin and cement to build the orphanage.

It took us 11 months of my flying out and coming back. My flying out and coming back. I'll tell you what, guys, landing a helicopter on a 5-inch deck of a gun mount of a destroyer is not an easy thing to do because it's bobbing up and down. That is not an easy thing to do. I did that probably twice a week, just to get enough ice cream so that I could get the lumber, tin and cement to build the orphanage. I gave it to Pastor Win and his church, Tin Lanh Church, the ones you've helped me support in the last years. That's what Tin is from.

One day, I realized, you know why it was taking me so long to build this orphanage? Because Pastor Win was taking 50% of what I gave him, he went down the street and gave it to the Buddhists, who were persecuting him because they would give him no material to build the orphanage. I was furious! I said, "Pastor Win, don't you understand that I'm risking my life two to three times a week to go out there and get this ice cream to come back and get you the material to build this orphanage, and you have the audacity to take half of what I'm giving you and giving it to the Buddhists who are persecuting you? What in the world's going on? Don't you understand I'm risking my life for your sake?" He was so quiet and he just smiled and he put his hand on my shoulder and he said, "Brother, how can I not forgive them when he's forgiven me so much?" I said, "Now wait a minute. Don't whip Scripture on me. {LAUGHTER} I'm risking my life for your sake." All he said was, "Brother, he gave his life for our sake." "Yeah, I know that, but..." You see, he just shot me out of the saddle.

He's a maniac. He's insane. Totally illogical to do something like that. Why did he do that? Because he understood the supernatural substitutionary work of the person of Christ. He understood substitution rather situation. It took us 11 months to build his orphanage. But in reality, we built two. There was one for us and the Buddhists down the street also had an orphanage. For years, they worked together. I was exposed in my fallacy of my ego, my pride and my selfishness. All he said was, "Bruce, think about the substitutionary work of Christ and not the situation." I was supposed to be the mature person who was going to teach him.

Remember I told you what my dad told me when I went to Vietnam, “I asked the Lord to give you one brother to hold to spiritually accountable”? I thought, “Hey, I’m the Naval Academy graduate. That’s me. I’ve studied the Scripture. I have a Thompson Chain Reference Bible, and I can show you how to use it.” He sat me down by the feet of a Vietnamese pastor, who said, “Bruce, think about substitution and not the situation and your conduct will change.” That’s because he’s saying this is, “How can I not forgive them when he’s forgiven me so much. How can I not forgive the Buddhists this time, when Christ has forgiven me all the time?” You see, Pastor Wen was so singly focused. He had a ministry to the Montenyards, the mixed-blooded people up in the Laotian-Cambodian border. I used to take him up there in a helicopter when I could. I’d fly him up there. We would take medical supplies to the Montenyards.

The Montenyards were a mixed breed of people who, they were on the side of whoever gave them a bigger rice bowl. If the Vietcong gave them the bigger food, they would be on their side. The next day they might be on our side because we gave them more food. They were just sort of mercenaries. There were laws against the Vietnamese people that you could not associate with Montenyards because they were mixed blooded. In fact, the national dress in Vietnam was called an ao dai. It’s the high-collared silk dress that you see the ladies wearing all the way down with the slit and the silk pants and the coolie hat. The reason they wear that is because you don’t want to get a sun tan because the only way you can tell a normal Vietnamese from a Montenyard was the texture, the color of their skin.

The worst name that these boys in the orphanage would call one another was call each other a Montenyard. That was like calling somebody an SOB, because it meant this—there are laws against my having a relationship with you; legally I cannot be associated with you because you’re a Montenyard. He had a ministry to the Montenyards. I used to fly him up in the mountains when I wasn’t flying combat missions. I’d get a helicopter and fly him up there and we’d take food. He would take food to the Montenyards.

You need to understand his situation. He was an escaped North Vietnamese citizen who came south from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. As a young teenage boy, he was converted by a French missionary. He then went on to seminary and started the little Tin Lanh Church.

The North Vietnamese were after him because he was an escaped North Vietnamese and now was a Christian pastor. They wanted him dead. The South Vietnamese wanted him dead because he had a ministry to the Montenyards. He was breaking the law by having an association with the Montenyards. I asked him one day, “Brother, how do you handle the pressure of realizing that when you step outside the door of your little church, Tin Lanh Church,” the one you help me with now, “when you step outside the door, both sides want you dead. How do you handle that?” All he said was this, “Think about substitution and not the situation. God will not take my life one second too soon or let me live me live second too long, as God is sovereign.”

After I was wounded and sent home after I was shot down and wounded and spent time in a Naval hospital, it got a message from his wife that he went out one day and nobody has ever seen him since. I don’t know what happened to my brother. One of the two sides might have gotten him. We don’t know. Never heard about him ever since then. That’s one of the reasons why I’m still committed to the little Tin Lanh church because that was the church that he started. The guy’s a maniac. You see how illogical that is? To give half the material to the group that was persecuting him. You don’t act like that unless you’re controlled by the love of Christ. He understood what it meant to have Christ’s substitutionary work applied for him. He used to say, “He died the death that I should have died. He paid the sins that I should have paid. How can I not respond in loving and serving him when I

understand that?" That's what Paul says. Let me read that again, 2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ controls us." Men, what controls you? You've got to ask yourself that question. What's the controlling force in your life?

Having concluded, Paul says. This is not an emotional response. He comes to the conclusion that one died for all and therefore all died. His conduct was controlled by his love of Christ. You see, the love of Christ is not some emotional goose bump that controls us. It's not something that you hear a tape or listen to a motivational speech and get all psyched up and get all emotional about it. I'm sure there can be emotion about your love for Christ. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying that's not what motivates you. It's not emotional goose bumps that motivate you. It's your understanding of the substitutionary work of Christ on behalf of you.

You see, we come to the conclusion that Christ is not simply a person doing us a service. We come to the conclusion that he's a person filling our place and dying our death. We come to that conclusion. That's what controls us. He died the death that I should have died. He bore the penalty of sin that I should have paid. Christ died in my place. It's his demonstration of love such as that that has the compelling power over us to change our conduct. It's a love response in obedience to him.

When filled with gratitude, there's very little room for griping. When you're filled with gratitude for the love of Christ, there's very little room for griping. Consider these truths for a moment. Romans 5:6- 8, consider this, "6For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Consider that. When you consider that, brothers, there's little room for griping. Very little room for complaining. All you can do is say what? Thank you. Thank you.

How about Romans 6:9, "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." Consider that for a minute. You died with Christ. You'll live with him. Think about substitution, not your situation.

How about Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Think on those truths, brothers, and it will put to an end the worldly life of living for yourself. Think of substitution and not your situation.

Paul gives us some results of that, some applications about that. Remember this—it's the fear of God, seeing God as a righteous judge that controls our thinking. We have the right view of God. Then it is the love of Christ that controls our actions. What are the consequences of those two motivations to give us a singleness of purpose, to keep us in the bounds of Christ's borders of his love, to keep us from running all over the place? Let me give you four, I believe, that Paul teaches us in this passage.

If we really understand and embrace the fact that the love of Christ controls us, compels us or constrains us, first of all, our gratitude will be a calculated decision, not an emotional response. Go to verse 2 Corinthians 5:14, our gratitude will be a calculated decision, not an emotional response. 2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded..." That's not an emotional response. There may be emotionalism to that, but it's not something that gives you goose bumps that says, "Ooo I feel ooey-gooney and wish-washy." No, this is you came to the conclusion that Christ died for me, and that changes your conduct. You see, we reason it through and come to the logical

conclusion that Christ died for me. That means I can no longer live for myself. If I really understand that Christ died for me, I can no longer live for myself.

Our decision to live for him will not be based upon emotion. We serve him whether we feel like it or not. You come to the conclusion that Christ died for me and my response has got to be a loving, serving response in return. Whether I feel like it or not is not the issue. The issue that I've concluded that Christ died for me and that controls my conduct.

Paul says, "Because we are convinced that one died for all and therefore all die." I have to ask you the question, men. Are you convinced? Are you really convinced that Christ died for you? Think about that today. You'll know how to apply it when you walk out the door. Ask yourself the question, "What am I going to do about what I just learned? Am I really convinced? Have I concluded that Christ died for me?" You see, when you have the attitude and understand that, your gratitude will be a calculated decision, not an emotional response.

Secondly, I think, is another application. Our life will be a life, a sacrifice, of ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:15). Our life will be a sacrifice of ourselves. When the love of Christ controls, constrains and compels us, our gratitude will be a calculated decision, not an emotional response, and our life will be a sacrifice of ourselves. Notice 2 Corinthians 15, "and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves..." You're not living for yourself anymore, but "for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

I would have to say this—they are not Christians whom the love of Christ has not influenced their conduct. They may use the name of the Savior in vain or as a moniker on their own psyche, but if the love of Christ doesn't control them, they can't be Christians at all. How can you not understand Christ dying for you and not change your conduct? Paul says this, "When you understand that, you're going to quit living for yourself. You're going to give up a life of selfishness, and you're going to be motivated and have a desire to live a life of service and love for him and a love response in obedience. Our life will be a sacrifice of ourselves.

They may call themselves after the name of the Savior, but they are not living unto him who died for them if the love of Christ does not control to some degree their actions. The Puritan Thomas Manton says this, "Christ has taught us how to die to sin by the example of his own death, that is, he denied himself for us that we might deny ourselves for him." Think about substitution not your situation.

I find a third application. If the love of Christ controls us, constrains us or compels us, our gratitude will be a calculated decision, not an emotional response, our life will be a sacrifice of ourselves, and thirdly, our relationship with people will change. (2 Corinthians 5:16) Our relationship with people will change. "Therefore..." Now in other words, the word "therefore" is saying based upon the fact that I've concluded that Christ died for me, therefore, from now on, we recognize no one according to the flesh. In other words, you see people differently because your thinking has changed. "Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer." (2 Corinthians 5:16) You see our relationships with people will change.

We will see people differently. No longer will we see them according to the world's standards, such as race or color or appearance or personality or possessions or positions in life. You no longer see people solely by their externals. No longer as people who have violated my rights, but as the person I have a responsibility to love because I understand that Christ has loved me. How can I not give it to the

Buddhists when Christ has forgiven me so much? How can I not do that for them? That's insane. That's a maniac. That's somebody who is contrary to the system of this world because the love of Christ controls you. When that happens, brothers, it controls your actions, and you'll see people differently.

Number four. Our relationship with Christ will change. Our gratitude will be a calculated decision, not an emotional response, our life will be a life of sacrifice of ourselves, our relationship with people will change, and our relationship with Christ will change. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:16, "even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer." In other words, you don't just see Jesus as a man, in the flesh. You see him as a sovereign Lord who rules and who died for you, substitutionally, giving himself for you so that you could live for him. You see him differently because you're compelled by the love of Christ. Do you understand Christ's love for you?

We'll see him no longer according to the false standards of man. We'll see him through eyes of faith, as an ever-glorious Savior, reigning Lord, and as the Holy Son of God. We will love him more and serve him more deeply when we understand his love for us more clearly.

What is it called when a person has his relationship to God changed? Or when their relationship to others change? What's it called? It's called reconciliation. Notice 2 Corinthians 5:18. The degree to which the love of Christ controls any person is the degree in which the impossible becomes possible, the crooked things become straight, the rough places become plane and the difficult become easy. Duty then becomes a delight and self no longer a dictator. Self is no longer your dictator. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:18, "Now all *these* things are from God..." What things? The things we've been talking about. "Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." How can I not give it to the Buddhists, when he has done so much for me? How can I not do that? That's insane. That's a maniac. It's a man whose life is controlled by the love of Christ.

You will feel the power of the love of Christ in your soul as you know it. You will feel the power of Christ's love in your soul to the degree that you know it. If you don't focus on it, you'll never know it. It will never penetrate your soul. Study then the love of Christ. Search deep and learn its secrets and see what happens to you. Gratitude will become a decision not an emotional response. The old gospel hymn states it rather clearly, "He loved me even though he knew me." He loved me even though he knew me. When he was on the cross, I was on his mind. Do you ever think about that? He loved me even though he knew me. In all of my rottenness, he knew me, and said, "Bruce, when I was on the cross, yeah I knew you. I knew you from eternity past. But when I was on the cross, you were on my mind." Substitution, brothers, not the situation.

Now it may bring you to tears like David, who danced before the ark of the covenant because he was so overjoyed with the fact that understood that God's love had been showered upon him.

Audience Member: When you say that we don't think of you as rotten, but I know [UNCLEAR] human and you know you have sinned, so what makes you different? I know that's what you're saying here, but how has that [UNCLEAR] in your life?

The best way to look at it is the love of Christ is like a barrier and a border. When you're down here in the love of Christ and you're kind of focusing on that, it's going to keep you in the right direction. It's when I lose sight of the love of Christ for me that I move outside those boundaries and begin to do what I want to do and start living a life of selfishness. That's how it impacts your life. It becomes a check

and balance for the decisions you make. You understand John 14 when Jesus said, “If you love me, you’ll obey my commands.” Duty then becomes a desire.

Ted is big on giving us regeneration teaches us to have a new desire. When you understand the love of Christ, you have a new desire. Your desire is, “I understand how he loved me. My response has got to be a love response in obedience to him. That’s my new desire.” I don’t always do it successfully, and everything I do is tainted. Even in my desire to be obedient, it’s tainted because of my sinfulness. But in the fact of that, I’m still controlled by that and so it helps you make your decisions. Yes, I have the freedom to do that, but I’m not going to do it because I understand the love of Christ. You see, you’ve got to focus on that. If you don’t think about it, you’re not going to act upon it. The degree to which you understand Christ’s compelling love will be the degree to which you will have a love response in obedience. So part of it, where am I thinking? That’s why Paul says you’ve got to understand this—the fear of God controls my thinking, but it’s the love of Christ that controls my actions. Those two things go in balance. I’ve got to have the right view of God to condition my thinking and the right view of Christ’s love will control my actions. It’s a process in your life, that even as well as we do it, we’re still going to do it and be tainted. But that’s why substitution is so important.

Audience Member: *And that’s the difference between duty and delight and fear [UNCLEAR]...*

Right. The way I like to say it is this, based upon what Ted’s been teaching us, which I really respond to very positively. Duty becomes a desire. When you understand Christ’s love, duty becomes a desire. There’s nothing wrong with duty. Understand what I’m not saying. We have duties in the Christian life, and we should not flinch from them. But those duties, when you understand Christ’s love, change the motivation behind it. It’s not an obligation that I must do it; it’s a desire because I want to do it. That’s the desire, when duty becomes a desire because of the love of Christ.

Bill: *I think if we were to look at the question and the response is, if you take a look this teaching, this teaching basically clarifies [UNCLEAR] what glasses we look through.*

Absolutely.

Bill: *If we look through the glasses of the world, circumstances that drive our decisions and our thoughts and emotions, this is clearly teaching us that when your glasses are Christ’s love for us, that allows us to look through life circumstances and look beyond...this is David...if you read David, and I think it’s Psalm 55-59, he’s over and over again looking through the situation he had with Saul and Saul’s persecution of him, looking through it and ultimately resting and comfortable in the fact that as he looks through it, he sees Christ and Christ’s love. I think that’s a lesson for us, once again, when we take this and we apply it. What does it really mean? [UNCLEAR] railroad analogy that you taught us, that we’re free because we’re designed to be that locomotive with all the power of God’s love and energy, but we’re only free within the experience of the rails in front of us. You used that analogy years ago, and I think [UNCLEAR] powerful. A locomotive is no good when it’s sitting on the ground.*

It’s off the tracks, it’s no good. That’s right. It’s a good illustration, Bill. Thanks for clarification. That’s why I’m just trying to give you something think about. What Bill just explained, think of that in terms of life, of this. Substitution not situation. When you think of substitution, you’re looking at it through eyes that Bill just described. When you’re thinking about situations, you’re off the track. That’s what controls us, compels us and constrains us. It’s the love of Christ. Think substitution not situation.

Audience Member: *One of the challenges that we have, or I have personally, in watching television and seeing...*

Oh my.

Audience Member: *...seeing the Nigerian young boys being killed as the building is being burnt and hearing about the Syrian children and seeing the massive humanity that it at times become so large and so big and so much that we can't personally, or we don't feel that we can personally do anything about that and your heart kind of breaks for that situation, and then trying to bring it back into well, then what can I do individually. It just seems like the world is so out of control when you see the laws of our country and where we're going as a moral decline and all these things happening. I guess the only hope in all of that is we know God is in control, and we also know that Christ is returning and all of these things that have been prophesied, so that's the overriding positive of it, but that doesn't take away from the fact of these things happening and having a sense of it's just so big and out of control, what can I do.*

Well, one of the things we have to realize is the only ability God requires of us is our availability. That's the only thing he requires of us. Be available. Walk outside this door and ask yourself the question, "What am I going to do about what I just learned today about Christ's love controlling my actions?" Just do that. The Holy Spirit will guide you. You've got to realize this—the only ability he ever requires is just be available. Become an aggressive responder to what you see going on around you. Who knows what that will be. If people responded to the situations you're describing, the Lord will be involved in that. That doesn't mean that we sit back and do nothing. All I'm saying is just be very, sensitive to what the Lord's doing around you. Be an aggressive responder and a desire to want to express your love for him by being obedient. That'll take care of itself. That's the role of the Holy Spirit. It's not our job to figure this out. Our job is to walk by faith and be an aggressive responder.

Let me conclude with this. Here's another one of my favorite Puritan writings on this particular passage. "In proportion as your heart is tender and sensitive to the love of Christ, it will become your controlling motivation to your whole life. When a person is perfectly motivated by the love of Christ, he will be a perfect Christian. When a person is growing under the influence of the love of Christ, he's a growing Christian. When a person is sincerely affected by the love of Christ, he's a sincere Christian. But he in whom the love of Christ has no power whatever is not a Christian at all." What controls you, brothers? Do you really understand the difference between substitution and situation? For God who made him who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf—hupere—that we might become the righteousness of Christ in him. May it be so, brothers, that you and I will have a singleness of purpose in our lives, and we will be viewed in the world as becoming a maniac. We'll be viewed as being insane because it is the love of Christ that controls us, compels us and constrains our actions, and they see us in a love response in obedience to him because our duty to serve him has now become a desire because we understand the love of Christ for you, for me, personally. May it be so that world would call us maniacs coming out of the Barn? Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the clarity of this message. Father, if we've said anything that's contrary to your intent in preserving this for us in Holy Scripture, then please remove that from our minds and only let us remember those things that the Holy Spirit was inspired to teach. Father, in the best of our days we are still tainted in everything that we do. All we can do is realize that we've come to the conclusion that your love has freed us not to live a life of selfishness, but to have a desire to live a life of service and express our love for you. May it be so that world will see that we change the world one at a time

because of our love response in obedience to Christ. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said...Amen!!!