

Paul's Driving Motivations
2 Corinthians 5:14-15
Part 2

In 1926, fresh-out-of Harvard news correspondent John Roots sat in a waterfront room in Canton. With him was a man named Mikhail Borodin a communist revolutionary who was at that time acting as an advisor to Chou-En-Lai the first premier of the People's Republic of China.

These men began to talk about the presence of Christian missionaries in that country. In their conversation Borodin the communist revolutionary confessed to the correspondent that he had at one time been fascinated with the New Testament and most particularly with the Apostle Paul.

He was fascinated because when he read the accounts of Paul he saw in him a true revolutionary, someone who was willing to totally sell himself out for what he believed in.

Though Mikhail Borodin was unable to see the validity of Paul's cause, he was able to identify in Paul that revolutionary fervor that he so admired.

And where did this story about Mikhail Borodin and his perspective of the Apostle Paul and Paul's revolutionary fervor lead us?

It led us back to our study of **2 Corinthians** and to our present text of **2 Corinthians 5:11-15**. And what was the question that we have been seeking to answer? What drove Paul to live a revolutionary lifestyle? Or in other words, what drove Paul to sell himself out for something that he believed in? So this is the question that we have been seeking to answer.

And what is my hope for these messages as we seek to answer this question? My hope is that as we continue to consider the driving motivations of Paul's life, that it may lead us, when we have considered these motivations, to adopt a similar lifestyle where the cause of Christ would become far more important to us than our own personal agendas or comforts, or in other words that we, like Paul, might find ourselves each day inching that much closer to living the same revolutionary lifestyle as Paul himself.

So what, in our current text, was first thing that we see motivated Paul? Paul's first driving motivation that contributed to his revolutionary lifestyle was the fear of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:11-13). We saw this in **2 Corinthians 5:11-13.**

So let me read these verses for you. And this is what they say. **“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. (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. (13) For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.”** So how did these verses fit into the flow of the text?

Paul had just spoken to the Corinthians in **2 Corinthians 5:9-10** about having to appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that he might be recompensed for the deeds done in his body whether good or bad. And then Paul immediately followed these remarks with this statement in **2 Corinthians 5:11**, **“Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord we persuade men.”**

Because Paul knew that he would have to one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ and answer for the deeds done in his body whether good or bad, and because he feared the Lord, or in other words because he had a reverential awe of Christ, he was highly motivated to live his life in a manner pleasing to Christ. And it was this desire that compelled Paul, as an apostle to the Gentiles, to expend an incredible amount of energy in persuading men, or in other words the Corinthians, to the fact of his integrity, which he sought to accomplish by issuing a challenge to them to examine their consciences, which we saw in **2 Corinthians 5:11**. His hope in issuing this challenge was that as the Corinthians did this that the moral faculties of their consciences would exonerate him and declare him to be a man of **integrity** more concerned with matters of heart than matters of appearance, such as his critics were, which we saw in **2 Corinthians 5:12**. A point that Paul drove home even further when he, in **2 Corinthians 5:13**, explained the contrasting styles between the **severe letter** and the epistle of **2 Corinthians** that were predicated on his wholehearted devotion to God and to them.

So, what was the first motivational force that Paul alluded to in **2 Corinthians 5:11-13** that led him to live a revolutionary lifestyle? The first motivational force that led Paul to live a revolutionary lifestyle was his fear of the Lord.

And now let me make this perfectly clear. There is absolutely no way that we, in the cause of Christ, will ever find ourselves living a revolutionary lifestyle if we do not fear the Lord, or in other words have a reverential awe of Christ. In fact, there is absolutely no way that our lives will have any eternal value at all if we do not fear the Lord. We must fear the Lord for the fear of the Lord, as the Scriptures clearly teach, is the beginning of wisdom.

But we are yet done. Paul has given us a second driving motivation in **2 Corinthians 5:14-15** that contributed to him living a revolutionary lifestyle. And what is this second motivation?

Paul's second driving motivation that contributed to his revolutionary lifestyle was the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). And we will see this spelled out for us by Paul in **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**.

So now let me read these verses for you. And what do they say? They say this. **“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; (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.”** These verses are the verses that we will be examining this morning. And it will be these verses that I believe will clearly support what I have said about the love of Christ being the second driving motivational force that contributed to Paul's revolutionary lifestyle.

So now let us now look more closely at these two verses and we will begin by looking at **verse 14** and the very first phrase. And what is the very first phrase? **“For the love of Christ controls us.”**

So let me ask you this question. When Paul spoke of the love of Christ, what was he specifically thinking of? When Paul spoke of “the love of Christ” in 2 Corinthians 5:14, he was thinking specifically of how Christ expressed His love for us through His death on the cross of Calvary. We know this because it is Christ's sacrificial death, which is the subsequent theme of **verses 14-15**.

The magnanimous, free, unmerited love of Christ, as expressed on the cross of Calvary, was a primary motivating factor in causing Paul to want to live his life in a manner pleasing to Christ thus leading to his revolutionary lifestyle.

We see Paul's fascination with the love of Christ in many different passages in the New Testament but let me read for you just one, **Romans 8:35-39**.

And what do these verses say? They say this. **“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) Just as it is written, ‘For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ (37) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

So based on these verses could we say that Paul was fascinated with the love of Christ? Absolutely! In fact, he was so enamored, so fascinated with the love of Christ that knowing that he would never be separated from it was an incredibly thrilling thought.

And how did his fascination with the love of Christ impact him? It controlled him. Isn't this what the verse says, **“For the love of Christ controls us.”** The word “controls” (SUNECHO) describes pressure that produces action. When Paul considered the awe-inspiring love of Christ, it produced within him a pressure, or in other words a compulsion, to live his life in a manner pleasing to Christ.

Therefore when we consider why Paul worked so hard to persuade men, more specifically why he worked so hard to persuade the Corinthians as to the fact of his integrity, it was not only because of his **“fear of the Lord”** as we have already seen in **2 Corinthians 5:11** but also because of appreciation and even fascination with the **“the love of Christ”** as we now see here in **2 Corinthians 5:14**.

In fact, the truth is that there was not an area of Paul's life that had not in some way been impacted by his appreciation and even fascination with **“the love of Christ.”** This is why he was able to say, **“For the love of Christ controls us.”**

And this should also be true of us as well. It is a wonderful thing to go through life knowing that we are loved, but the most wonderful thing of all is to go through this life knowing that Christ, the Lord of glory, the God of this universe, loves us and will always love us. And it is this knowledge, along with our fear of the Lord, that will provide us the driving motivation to live our lives in a manner pleasing to the Lord, ultimately leading us to adopt the kind of revolutionary lifestyle that characterized the life of Paul.

So how did Paul come to this awe-inspiring appreciation and fascination with the love of Christ, an appreciation and fascination that was so great that he could say that it controlled him?

Let us continue to read the verse. And what does it say? It says this. **“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.”**

So how did Paul come to have this awe-inspiring appreciation and fascination with the love of Christ, an appreciation and fascination so great that it controlled him, according to the words of Paul in **2 Corinthians 5:14**? Paul's appreciation and fascination came from a conclusion that he had drawn from the facts that he knew. So, what was that conclusion? It was this: **“that one died for all, therefore all died.”**

Now this is a very interesting statement. For those who are not familiar with the teachings of the New Testament this particular statement might seem rather strange. In other words, I believe that those unfamiliar with the teachings of the New Testament might have expected Paul to have said something like this, “One died for all therefore all did not die.” Or perhaps they would have expected Paul to say, “One died for all therefore all lived.” But this is not what Paul said. Rather he said, **“One died for all, therefore all died.”** And even though this statement might appear to those who are not familiar with the teachings of the New Testament as being somewhat peculiar, it is really not peculiar at all to those who are familiar with the teachings of the New Testament, which makes it very clear to us that every

true born again believer, through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, has become identified with Christ in His death.

So now let me read for you **Romans 6:1-3** and see if this is not so. And what do these verses say? They say this. **“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? (2) May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?”**

Having been joined to Christ through the baptizing work of Holy Spirit means that every true believer has **died** with Christ since they are in fact in Christ (Romans 6:1-3). And if they have in fact died with Christ then certainly Paul was well justified in **“having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.”**

So why did this conclusion by Paul **“that one died for all, therefore all died”** cause him to be so fascinated, so intrigued, so enamored with the love of Christ and so much so that he told that Corinthians that the love of Christ controlled Him?

When Paul said that Christ “died for all” he introduced the essential and irreplaceable truth of substitutionary atonement. In other words, Christ, our substitute, died **our death**. And why is this so important?

Everyone is a sinner. Isn't this what the Scriptures teach? Absolutely! What does **Romans 3:23** tell us? It tells us **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** And what is the necessary righteous judgment for those who have sinned? Death! Isn't this what the Scriptures teach? Absolutely! What does **Romans 6:23** tell us? It tells us **“For the wages of sin is death.”** And there within lies the problem?

Death is the righteous judgment of God against sin. Death is the righteous judgment against our sin. And this debt that is owed to God must be paid. This is a problem. But now let me share with you some good news.

Christ, having died our death, became the propitiation for our sins thus satisfying God's righteous demands against us and making it possible for us to **live through Him** (1 John 4:9-10). Let me read for you **1 John 4:9-10**

and see if this is not so. And what do these verses say? They say this. **“By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. (10) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”**

Hallelujah! We, apart from this expression of love, would now be separated from God without any hope of having a personal relationship with Him, forever assigned to living a life of futility in this life and facing certain judgment in the next, but because we through faith in Christ have been joined to Him and to His death, the debt we owed to God, because of our sin, has been paid through Him and in Him.

So now let me ask you a question. Would you expect that this knowledge would have an impact on the way believers would live their lives? Paul certainly thought so.

Let me now read for you **2 Corinthians 5:15** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this. **“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.”**

Christ died our death not only that we through faith might live through Him but also that we might **live for him** (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Just as the fear of the Lord controlled Paul, the unfathomable and unmitigated love of Christ also controlled him providing a second driving motivation for Him to live his life in a manner pleasing to Christ. In fact, according to Paul this is the very reason why Christ died so that those who live, or in other words those who have placed their faith and trust in Him for salvation and have been therefore joined to Him, might no longer live for themselves but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

So now let me ask you a question. Who are you living for? Are you living for yourself or for Him who died and rose again on your behalf?

As we ponder the answer to this question I would like to now read for you the words of a very old hymn entitled, “I Did This For Thee; What Hast Thou Done For Me?”

I gave my life for thee, my precious blood I shed, that thou might
ransomed be ... I gave, I gave My life for thee, what hast thou
given Me?

My Father's house of light, My glory circled throne, I left for
earthly night, for wanderings sad and lone, I left it all for thee
what hast thou left for Me.

I suffered much for thee, more than thy tongue can tell, of
bitterest agony, to rescue thee from hell. I've borne, I've borne it
all for thee, what hast thou borne for Me.

I have brought to thee, down from My home above, salvation full
and free, my pardon and my love; I bring, I bring rich gifts to
thee, what hast thou brought to Me? I bring, I bring rich gifts to
thee, what hast thou brought to Me?

So again, let me ask you the same question. Who are we living for? If we are
living for Christ I suspect that we, like Paul, have given a lot, have suffered
a lot, have brought a lot, and surrendered a lot in our service to Him.

May God give us the grace, in light of the love of Christ, to not live our lives
for ourselves but **for Him** who loved us and gave Himself up for us.