

Lesson Outline

1. The Context: Evangelism as the Third Objection against Paul's Ministry
 - The sufferings of Christ section runs from 2 Corinthians 4:7-7:3.
 - The three objections addressed are suffering, unrighteous living, and evangelism.
 - The evangelism section runs from 2 Corinthians 5:12-6:2.
 - Knowing the organization of the passage is not the same as having the doctrine work in the Believer.
2. The Attack: Paul's Zeal for the Gospel Criticized
 - The accusation is that Paul is too zealous with the gospel.
 - The criticism is designed to slow or stop Paul's evangelistic ministry.
 - The question is whether such an accusation could be made against us.
 - The doctrine is intended to equip Believers against the policy of evil's attacks on evangelism.
3. The Doctrine Already Introduced: The Love of Christ Constrains Paul
 - Verses 12-13 introduce the objection and Paul's answer to his critics.
 - Verses 14-15 further explain the doctrine Paul employed against discouragement.
 - The love of Christ is the controlling motivation behind Paul's evangelistic persistence.
 - The doctrine gives the Corinthians an answer to those who glory in appearance and not in heart.
4. The Logic of Verse 14: Christ Died for All Because All Were Dead
 - Christ's death for all proves that all were spiritually dead.
 - The passage teaches that Christ died for every man, not only for those who would be saved.
 - Everyone is dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore everyone needs the gospel.
 - Paul's ambassadorship led him to seek continual opportunities to give the gospel.
5. The Purpose of Verse 15: Those Who Live Should No Longer Live unto Themselves
 - The word "that" introduces the purpose of Christ's death.
 - Redemption is offered not merely so men may escape judgment, but so Believers may live unto Christ.

- The life offered through the gospel is the only life worth living.
 - The death of Christ reveals the cost required for Believers to receive God's benefits.
6. The Life God Intends: Living unto Christ in the Present Evil World
- Paul wants people to have the kind of life God intends for them in this present evil world.
 - This life is not a promise of health, wealth, prosperity, or freedom from fallen-world conditions.
 - It is a life rich in the inward man, rooted in identity in Christ, peace with God, and conformity to Christ.
 - Living unto Christ enables Believers to handle adversity through the power of God's grace.
 - Paul desires this life for all men, which explains his constant evangelistic effort.
7. The Value of the Gospel Offer: Peace with God and Life in Christ
- The gospel offers forgiveness of sins and a way to live unto God acceptably.
 - Those who believe are imputed with the righteousness of Christ and brought into peace with God.
 - The gospel also includes eternal life, sanctified standing, mercies, spiritual blessings, adoption, and edification.
 - Paul understood the worth of what he was offering and endured criticism to make it known.
 - Paul loved God more than the world's approval and lived for Christ rather than himself.
8. The Distinction in Verse 15: Christ Died for All, Yet Only Believers Live unto God
- Paul distinguishes between all for whom Christ died and those who actually live unto God.
 - Christ died for all, but not all are savingly benefitted by His death.
 - Those who reject the gospel reject God's offer of salvation.
9. The Contrast: Living unto Self versus Living unto Christ
- Men live unto themselves when pleasure, gain, or reputation controls their lives.
 - Men live unto themselves when they disregard the legitimate claims of others to advance their own ends.

- Living unto Christ means seeking Christ's honor with all our time, talents, strength, skills, and work.
 - Believers belong to Christ because they were bought with a price.
10. The Ground of Obligation: Christ Died and Rose Again
- The death and resurrection of Christ form the ground of Paul's obligation.
 - Christ's death is understood as the purchase price by which the Believer is no longer his own.
 - Christ's resurrection assures the Believer of resurrection, eternal life, and victory beyond death and the grave.
 - Paul's obedience and service were expressions of gratitude to the Savior.
 - Paul willingly gave himself as a living sacrifice and faithful ambassador of the gospel.
11. The Doctrine Working in Us: Meditation, Prayer, Obedience, and Evangelistic Action
- Believers must engage with these verses and acquaint themselves with all they imply.
 - Believers must consider their own obligation toward the Savior.
 - The doctrine must be meditated upon until it becomes familiar in the Believer's thinking.
 - The doctrine must be integrated into prayer with honesty before God.
 - As Believers decide to obey, the Spirit of God works these truths into the thinking and removes hindrances to evangelism.
12. The Exhortation: Do Not Be Silenced by the Policy of Evil
- Paul was accused of being mentally unstable because of his zeal in giving the gospel.
 - The accusation did not deter Paul from his evangelistic ministry.
 - Believers must engage the doctrine so they are not victimized by the policy of evil.
 - The goal is that every Believer would benefit from the doctrine and continue faithfully in evangelistic service.

The Book of 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Session 55: Dealing With Accusations

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: ¹⁵ And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The Love of Christ as Paul's Motive

These two verses go together which is evident by the fact they contain a single sentence. The first phrase of verse 14 tells us Paul's motive for all he does. Remember when we talked about motives in the previous session? Paul says that "the love of Christ" constrains him. What does that mean? It means that the love of Christ compels Paul to be a faithful minister of the gospel, to have such zeal for communicating the gospel. Now, we have a choice to make, is Paul talking about Christ's great love for him, or is Paul talking about his love for Christ which compels him to be a faithful ambassador of Christ and publish the word of reconciliation?

Look, I will say that most of the time, when you see the phrases "the love of God" or "the love of Christ" they are talking about God's love toward us. But, I will also say that Paul's love for Christ is what motivates him to do everything he does. So, here is how I prefer to see it: This great cycle of love starts with God's love to us, Christ's love toward us, and once that love has made its sufficient impact on us, so that we now in turn love Christ out of our own hearts, so that our love for Him becomes the great motivator for our actions. I can see a point when both of those are in play.

To say it another way, Paul is overwhelmed by the demonstration of Christ's love for every man in that He went to the Cross and took upon Himself the sins of the world to offer eternal life to them, and that great love motivated Paul to be zealous with the gospel message. But, at the same time, I am not sure how motivated you can be by observing Christ's love, unless that love has produced

something in your own heart, a deep gratitude for what has been done for you and an understanding of where you would be without it, which results in a love for Christ which is above every other love in your life.

So, I won't debate it because I can see both. God's love for us comes first and then our love for Him gets generated and I actually think you need them both. And maybe that is why the delineation is not always so clearly seen.

So, by the love of Christ, Paul gave himself to the work of publishing the gospel of Christ, moved by the ruined condition of men and a desire to emulate His Redeemer, and possess the same spirit of love toward mankind which was in Christ. That seems to be another way of talking about the life of Christ being made manifest in Paul's body.

Is it okay to be moved by Christ's love to men (and to Paul/us in particular)? Yes. Is it okay to motivated by our love for Christ? Yes. In fact, I think we should have both.

Either way, this sets the stage for something that Paul is about to conclude.

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that **if one died for all, then were all dead:** ¹⁵ And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Christ Died for All

I want to make a point that Christ indeed died for all, not just for the "elect" which term has been misused to teach that God chooses who will be saved and who will not. The understanding of the verse is that Christ died for every single human individual that has ever been conceived.

If this interpretation is not correct, and if Christ did not die for all, then the argument of Paul here is a non sequitur, and is worthless. The demonstration that all are dead, according to Paul, is that Christ died for all.

But suppose he meant, or he knew, that Christ died only for a part – only for the elect – then I want us to consider two questions: 1) how would the argument

stand, and 2) what would be its force? The argument would read like this: “Christ died only for a portion of the human race, *therefore ALL* are sinners.”

It would be like making the argument, “Medicine is provided only for a part of mankind, therefore all are sick. Pardon is offered to part only, therefore all are guilty.” If this is true, then Paul’s argument falls apart.

But Paul never reasoned in this way. He believed that Christ died for all mankind, and on the ground of that he inferred at once that all needed such an atonement; that all were sinners, and that all were exposed to the wrath of God. And the argument is in this way, and in this way only, sound. But still it may be asked, what is the force of this argument? How does the fact that Christ died for all prove that all were sinners, or that all are dead in sin?

In the same way as to offer pardon to all who are in a prison, proves that all there were found guilty. What an insult to offer pardon to a man who has violated no law! And there would be the same insult in offering salvation to a man who was not a sinner, and who did not need forgiveness.

The Meaning of “All Dead”

The fact that Christ died for all proves that all were transgressors. The word “dead” is not infrequently used in the Scriptures to denote the condition of sinners (see Ephesians 2:1).

It does not mean that sinners are in every sense and in all respects like a lifeless corpse, for they are not. They are still moral agents, and they have a conscience, and are capable of thinking, speaking, and acting. It does not mean that they have no more power than one in the grave, for they have more power. But it means that there is a striking similarity, in some respects, between one who is dead and one who is a sinner. That similarity does not extend to everything, but in many respects, it does.

In summary: If one died for all, then were all dead - The first position the apostle takes for granted; viz. that Jesus Christ died for All mankind. This is beyond doubt.

The second position Paul justly infers from the first, for if all had not been guilty, and consigned to eternal death because of their sins, there could have been no need of his death. Therefore, as Christ most certainly died for all, then all were dead, and needed His sacrifice, and the quickening power of His Spirit.

The Context: Evangelism as the Third Objection against Paul's Ministry

We have been studying the fifth category of the Sufferings of Christ, which runs from 2 Corinthians 4:7-7:3. This fifth category has three particular objections to it: 1) Suffering, 2) Unrighteous living, and 3) Evangelism. This third section of the doctrine which concerns evangelism runs from 2 Corinthians 5:12-6:2. That is just the way I have organized the material, but knowing this is not the same as having this doctrine work in you. This is just a way of seeing the flow of the passage.

The Attack: Paul's Zeal for the Gospel Criticized

This particular objection against Paul and his ministry is that Paul is too zealous with the gospel. On the board, I simply titled it, "Evangelism" but I am talking about the attempt to dissuade the Corinthians from following Paul's example by criticizing Paul for his zeal with the gospel of Christ. But, the broader issue is how Paul deals with defamation. So, we could just as easily put the word "defamed" on the board. Is that the accusation that any of us are facing? If not, why not? I have an answer for that in my own life, but I confess it is an uncomfortable one. I ask the question because I want us to start thinking about this issue so that the doctrine has an open door to do its work.

Obviously, this doctrine is designed to protect Paul from the attack against him which is designed to either slow him down in giving the gospel, or stop him altogether. But Paul has some doctrine working in him whereby he doesn't even slow down.

Now, I am convinced that if we are not giving the gospel as we ought, this same doctrine can remove the hindrances that keeping us from doing so. So, I have a two-pronged intention, to give the doctrine that encourages us against the policy of evil's attacks to stop us from giving the gospel, and that same doctrine which

will equip us to overcome whatever hindrances are succeeding so that we don't give the gospel. Either way, this doctrine is for all of us.

The Doctrine Already Introduced: The Love of Christ Constrains Paul

Last week we covered the doctrine in verses 12-13. In that session we introduced the objection and the initial doctrine which Paul used to keep from being discouraged in his evangelistic efforts, and to give the Corinthians an answer to them that were criticizing Paul.

Today we will be looking at verses 14-15. These verses will further the doctrine which Paul employed when facing this kind of attack from the policy of evil. Let's begin by reading the verses in their context.

2 Corinthians 5:12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.¹³ For whether we be beside ourselves, *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause.¹⁴ For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:¹⁵ And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The Logic of Verse 14: Christ Died for All Because All Were Dead

In the last session we saw the start of the doctrine in verse 14, that it was the love of God that constrained Paul to be so evangelistic. We also saw how the logic of verse 14 shows that since Christ died for everyone who was (spiritually) dead, that was the proof that everyone is/was dead in trespasses and sins. That is the argument Paul sets forth. It is clear then that Christ died for every man, not just "the elect" (those who would be saved).

So here is the doctrine that motivates Paul to keep giving the gospel everywhere he goes: Everyone is dead in trespasses and sins, Christ died for everyone, ergo, everyone needs to hear the gospel of Christ. As an apostle (sent one), Paul takes his ambassadorship seriously and is constantly looking for opportunities to give

the gospel. This is the fulfillment of the “love of Christ” for the lost world, which constrains Paul to action.

The Purpose of Verse 15: Those Who Live Should No Longer Live unto Themselves

2 Corinthians 5:15 And *that* he died for all, **that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them**, and rose again.

“That” is a purpose word. Christ died for all, “that..”

And here we have the purpose of this redemption which is offered through the gospel, not just to miss Hell (not to diminish that aspect of that), but so that everyone who believes the gospel might stop living unto themselves, and begin to live the only kind of life worth living; a life which is unto the One who died for them, and rose again. That is what was required of God’s Son in order for us to have the benefits God is offering to everyone.

The Life God Intends: Living unto Christ in the Present Evil World

And that is the next step in the doctrine that motivates Paul. Paul wants people to have the kind of life that God intends for them to have while living in this present evil world. And what kind of life is that? No, not the kind of life you will have in eternity, for that is not possible while living in a fallen world where people are free moral agents and we live in our fleshly bodies and we have an active Adversary against us; and no, not a life of guaranteed health, wealth and prosperity (though people may have those to some degree or other), but I am talking about a life which is rich in the inward man; a life in which we find our identity is truly in Christ and we enjoy the peace and meaning that brings. I am talking about a life in which we are connected to something beyond ourselves, something bigger than the things in this world, something Divine, so that we have a genuine relationship with God through His Spirit and His word, a life whereby we are being conformed to the image of God’s Son as each doctrine begins to take root in our spirit to renew our mind and change our conduct and behavior. I’m talking about a life where the peace of God reigns in our heart to such an extent that we can take

pleasure in those things which are capable of destroying us because they are opportunities for the power of God's grace to keep us from being overwhelmed by our circumstances.

Who wouldn't want a life where we know how to handle adversity and tribulations in such a way that we become more than conquerors? Who wouldn't want the peace of God to sustain them through the trials of life? Who wouldn't want the exceeding power of God's grace to be at work in them to do those things which our flesh is incapable of? And who wouldn't want to have real world experience on how to deal with the difficulties of this life so that we have some wise counsel to give those we love, counsel which can preserve both their physical and spiritual lives? These questions are rhetorical; we would all want these things if we are thinking about them clearly. There is a lot wrapped up in a life that is "unto Christ."

So let's bring this back to where we were in the passage; Paul wants these things not only for himself, but for everyone. He wants everyone to come to Christ (hence, he gives the gospel everywhere he goes) and he wants those who "live" (notice the use of that word in verse 15 which is a reference to those who respond positively to the gospel message) – to no longer live unto themselves (for that is the path to failure, pain, regret, ruin and a wasted and empty life), but to live unto the One who loved them and gave Himself for them (for that is the abundant life that everyone is looking for, though few know how to find it).

And if that kind of life is the goal that the Lord Jesus had in mind when He died on the Cross; no wonder that is the goal Paul has in mind as he constantly spreads the gospel of Christ. And that should be our goal too.

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The Most Important Decision

Pastoral Exhortations to the Reader

- Consider whether the accusation of being too zealous with the gospel could ever be made against you, and if not, honestly ask yourself why not.
- Do not be content merely to know the organization of the passage; seek to have the doctrine work in you.
- Remember that everyone is dead in trespasses and sins, Christ died for everyone, and therefore everyone needs to hear the gospel of Christ.
- Do not live unto yourself, for that path leads to failure, pain, regret, ruin, and a wasted and empty life.
- Live unto the One who died for you and rose again, using your time, talents, strength, skills, and service for His honor; this is done by our evangelistic efforts of planting and watering.
- Do not let fear, criticism, rejection, anxiety, or any other ploy of the policy of evil silence your evangelistic efforts.
- Engage the doctrine through meditation, prayer, and obedience until it begins to shape your thinking and conduct.
- Take upon yourself the privilege of telling others the good news rather than waiting for them to discover what they do not yet know.
- Love God more than the world's approval, and be willing to endure criticism in order to be a faithful ambassador for Christ.
- Let gratitude for the death and resurrection of Christ move you toward willing service as a living sacrifice unto Him.

Doctrines That Motivated Paul to Continue Preaching the Gospel

- **The doctrine of universal spiritual death:** all men are dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore all men need the gospel of Christ (verse 14).
- **The doctrine of the love of Christ constraining the Believer:** Paul's evangelistic labor was not driven by self-promotion, but by the love of Christ working in him (verse 14).
- **The doctrine of the purpose of redemption:** Christ died so that those who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again (verse 15).

- **The doctrine of life unto Christ:** the gospel offers not merely forgiveness, but a life rich in the inward man, lived unto God, sustained by grace, and conformed to Christ (verse 15).
- **The doctrine of the value of the gospel offer:** Paul understood that he was offering peace with God, righteousness in Christ, eternal life, adoption, spiritual blessings, and edification (verse 15).
- **The doctrine of ownership by purchase:** Paul saw Christ's death as the purchase by which he was no longer his own, but belonged to the Savior who bought him (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- **The doctrine of resurrection assurance:** Christ's resurrection assured a resurrection, eternal life, and a future beyond death and the grave for everyone who believes the gospel, which motivated Paul to preach it (verse 15).
- **The doctrine of grateful obligation:** Paul viewed his obedience and service as the rightful response of gratitude to the Savior who died for him and rose again (verse 15).
- **The doctrine of willing sacrifice:** Paul gave himself to Christ as a living sacrifice, choosing faithful service over the approval of the world (Romans 12:1).