

**Pentecost 5**  
**June 28, 2015**

*"Christ's Love Compels Us"*

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**2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21**

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**F**or Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup> And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. <sup>16</sup> So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

If I take this bottle of water in my hand, open it and then squeeze it the water will come out of the bottle. Something similar happens to us when we are compelled or squeezed by the love that our Savior Jesus has for us as Paul says, "Christ's love compels us." The Greek word for compel literally means to be held together or squeezed. It is used to describe someone being held in prison. Christ's love compels us. It surrounds us. It encompasses us. It squeezes. His love fills our lives. It comes out of us where ever we go and whatever we do.

This past week we had the opportunity to see this love Jesus has for us fill us and squeeze us so that we could bring this love to the children who came to our Star Bible Camp. There is no greater privilege and honor that being used by Jesus to bring his love to others. So we ask ourselves this morning: what is so compelling about the love Christ has for us?

Let's turn our attention to verse 14. "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died." Paul says we are convinced. The word "convinced" has the thought of judging something to be true based on evidence in a court of law. Christ's love is so compelling because we are convinced by what we have seen with our eyes of faith that one died for all, and therefore all died.

What is so compelling about Jesus' death on the cross? It is the fact that the sin of all was placed on Jesus. That means the sin of the world. This includes every sin I have ever committed in my life and will be committed in the future. In Romans 5 we hear that Adam was the source of sin for the whole world that condemned the world to death. It also says that Jesus was the source of justification or declaration of not guilty for the whole world. "Consequently, just as the result of the one trespass was condemnation for all men, so the also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men."

This past week in our Bible camp we sang the well known song, "Jesus loves me this I

know, for the Bible tells me so.” We see the love of Jesus in the way that he welcomed the mothers who brought their children to Jesus to bless them. Where we see this love most profoundly is in his willingness to give his life for the sins of the world. It was Jesus who said, “God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son....” We see this in the prophet Isaiah who said, “The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.” We see this all compelling love in 1 Peter 3 where it says, “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”

Notice it says that because Jesus died for all, all died. By paying the ransom price for my sin, Jesus caused the death of my sin. I have no power in myself to kill even one small sin I have committed. I may kill the germs on my hands by washing them with soap and water or by putting some germicidal on my hands. But I cannot remove or destroy or kill sin that ultimately will destroy me on judgment day. Jesus did that for me when he died for all. There is hope for this poor sinner in the words, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin” and “The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.” Believing this makes it my very own.

Christ’s love compels us because now we get to live a whole new life out of love for his love for us. Here is what Paul says in the words we read to you. “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” The theme of our Bible Camp was “We love because he first loved us.” The longer you live on this earth, the more you realize how hard it is to not be selfish and think of yourself first. How easy it is to see problems in other people, even little children, and not in myself! When we see how our sin died with Jesus us, it frees us to love God and love other people compelled by that love Jesus has for us. Because Jesus died and rose for me, my heart is already where Jesus is raised to live at the right hand of the heavenly Father. I want to live a whole new life for him and not for myself. His love squeezes me every day and constantly works changes in this sinful and selfish heart of mine.

Because Christ love compels us we view the world differently. “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.” Paul reflects on how he once regarded people and even Christ from a worldly point of view. Literally the Greek words here are “according to the flesh.” Without being compelled and squeezed by the Christ’s love we will look at people and Jesus from what we feel is right inside of ourselves, in our heart of hearts if you will. Because of Adam’s fall into sin and the sinful flesh inside of us, we are led to believe or even compelled to believe we can come up with human solutions to our problem of sin. We even view Christ as a life coach who can help us improve our performance, instead of the Savior who died for all and killed sin for us. Oh, how blessed we are to say with Paul, “we once regarded Christ this way, we do so no longer.”

Christ’s love so compels us and squeezes us that we see ourselves in a whole new relationship with our God. “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new us come.” When God saw his original creation which he had made it was very good, meaning perfect. You are a new creation in Christ. That means God looks at you and says, “You are very good. You are perfect in my sight through my Son.” When God rested on the seventh day after creating the world, he did not rest because he was tired. He rested because there was not left to do. Hebrews 4 says, “Anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.” When Jesus died he

said, "It is finished." There is nothing I can add to what Christ's love has done for me. I am a new creation, the old way of death is gone, the new way of life is mine. I am ready to live for Christ with a certain swagger and bravado that says with Paul, "For me to live is Christ." One of the boys in our camp had a t-shirt with these words, "For me to live is Christ."

Christ's love compels us. It compels us to believe that we are reconciled with God and have peace with our God. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." The Greek word for "reconcile" has the thought of a change in relationship. Paul uses this word in 1 Corinthians to describe a change in relationship between a husband and wife. When two people are having problems in their marriage they can work toward reconciliation by meeting each other not half way but at least 90% of the way. With God we have nothing to offer our God to change our status with our God. He does it all through Christ. Romans 5:10 says "we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son." As we sang again in our Bible camp, "Living, loving, dying rising, Jesus did it all for me." He did everything necessary to have peace with God. So we know we can not only die in peace when our last hour comes, but also live in peace each day as we live our lives for Jesus.

This love of Christ compels us to not only be happy in his love for us, but also to thrill at the privilege of sharing Christ's love for others. "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."

This past week at the end of our lesson on Friday about the Apostle Paul, one boy asked the question, "Why doesn't Jesus come and talk to us today?" What a privilege it was to speak to the next generation and tell them that Jesus loves us so much that he gives us the privilege of taking his love to other people. Paul says, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." Jesus could appear to us and speak to us today. How honored we would be if Jesus stepped in to preach this morning in my place. How honored we would be if an angel tapped me on the shoulder and said, "You have had a long week this week, let me deliver the message to the people of Star this morning." Instead he gives this honor and privilege to others. The children we saw in camp are the future generation of Christians to bring Jesus to their peers.

We are ambassadors for Christ. Christ love compels us to stick to the message he passed down to us. Christ's love compels us to warn people about the judgment to come and point them to Christ as Paul once did. We plead with people to be reconciled to God by believing in his message of reconciliation. Jesus spoke so clearly and so simply when he said, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

The message of Christ's love is so simple and yet is so profound and amazing. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Here is the great exchange. On the one side is Jesus who had no sin who was holy and righteous. On the other side is the world that is thoroughly corrupted by sin and totally lacking in righteousness. Jesus became our sin. It was placed on him, all of it. He

paid for it all and then he transfers over to us not only his perfect payment but also his righteous life. Martin Luther once said, "Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to sing to him, and say, 'Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me what is yours. You have become what you were not so that I might become what I was not.'" Because of this amazing exchange in your life and mine, the love of Christ compels us.

This past week was a good week at Star of Bethlehem. We were compelled by Christ's love to bring his love to our children. Today we begin another week of life here on this earth, ready to be squeezed by Christ's love so others can see Jesus through us. Amen.