

The Love Of Christ

Introduction. There is nothing that feels better than being in love. Love enables us to do anything. Of course, there is no greater love than the love of Christ (John 13:1; 15:13).

Looking at the characteristics of Christ's love, I want you to ask yourself, "Can I be doing more for the Lord?" Maybe we are unmotivated because we do not truly have the love of Christ in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17). We may have knowledge; but love gives knowledge depth.

Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:14 means that Christ's love controls, totally dominates me or leaves me no choice. Christ's love for me compels me to crucial commitment, complete consecration and compassionate service. What does it do for you?

I. *It Is A Universal Love*

- A. The love of Christ is not for just a select few; i.e., the "elect" as viewed by the Calvinist, it is universal (John 3:16; Ephesians 5:2).
- B. It is distressing to see the extreme prejudice in our day. Even in this country, racism lurks like an uneasy shadow.
 - 1. In three months in 1994, over 100,000 people lost their lives because of racism in Rawanda between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. Or consider the Holocaust where over six million Jews lost their lives.
 - 2. The love of God is far greater than the limitations of our minds.
- C. God made us all one in humanity regardless of race, country and culture (Acts 17:26).

II. *It Is A Personal Love*

- A. God's love is not so general in the whole world as to negate a personal love (Galatians 2:20).
- B. There is a saying which goes, "When Christ was on the cross, I was on His mind." When I think of all the sins I have committed in my life, I must confess that I do not know how God could ever love me but I stand amazed at His amazing grace.
- C. The well-known song, "Does Jesus Care?" (466), asks, "Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth or song, as the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long? O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; when the days are weary, the long night dreary, I know my Savior cares." He certainly is touched with our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15-16).

III. *It Is A Powerful Love*

- A. The United States has put a lot of power and money into Bosnia, So-

- malia, Afghanistan and Iraq. At best, we have only a tenuous peace.
- B. All the power in this world cannot justify men. For this great task, one must have the power of Christ and the gospel (Luke 19:10; Romans 1:16-17; 5:8).
 - C. This love not only saves us, but it also protects us (Romans 8:38-39; 1 Peter 1:3-5). The inheritance we have is preserved by our God in heaven.

IV. ***It Is A Demanding Love***

- A. Back in the Old Testament, God reveals Himself as a jealous God (Exodus 20:5). In 2 Corinthians 11:2, Christ is presented as one who was betrothed to the Corinthians and was a jealous husband. To please God, we must reciprocate love (1 John 4:19).
- B. My love for my wife is so deep, there is not room for anyone else. It must be that way with our love for the Lord (Matthew 22:37).
- C. People just cannot say they love the Lord and then do whatever they please (Luke 6:46). If the scriptures tell us how to obey the gospel, those commands are not optional; they are commanded! This is the way we show our love to Christ.

V. ***It Is A Satisfying Love***

- A. As I look over the crowd, I wonder why more people are not here. The most probable explanation is that they do not receive the stimulation and satisfaction when worshiping God because they do not have the love of God in their hearts (Ephesians 3:17).
 - 1. God designed us so that as we perceive and understand God's revelations of Himself it would be enjoyable to respond to this truth.
 - 2. This is worship and it must be a natural response to what we see. Henry Ward Beecher once remarked, "I never knew how to worship until I knew how to love."
- B. Paul could confidently face whatever was ahead because he was satisfied with the love of Christ (Philippians 1:21; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).
- C. People need love, especially when they do not deserve it. The love of Christ will satisfy every spiritual need. The song, "Christ's Love Is All I Need" (371), says, "Tho' dark and dreary be life's way and burden's hard to bear; there's One whose love will never fail, my heart shall never despair. My hope is staid in Him today and He will safely lead, to that sweet home beyond the sea, Christ's love is all I need."

VI. ***It Is A Triumphant Love***

- A. If we triumph in this life, it will only be because Christ loved us (Romans 8:37). If we triumph in the life to come, it will only be because we loved Christ enough to obey His commandments (1 Corinthians

15:57).

- B. The song, "Victory In Jesus" (359), says, "I heard about a mansion He has built for me in glory, and I heard about the street of gold beyond the crystal sea; about the angels singing, and the old redemption story, and some sweet day I'll sing up there the song of victory. O victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever, He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood; He loved ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him, He plunged me to victory, beneath the cleansing flood."

Conclusion. Your telling me that you love Christ is easy, but showing me is much harder (John 14:15). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe commented, "We are shaped and fashioned by what we love." We ask you who are here to dedicate yourself to the Lord by obeying His commands if you have not done so already. If your love has grown cold, turn back to God (Revelation 3:20). "Wonderful story of love, tell it to me again." We all remember as children singing, "Jesus loved me this I know for the Bible tells me so." Show the Lord how much you love Him!