



3/9/26

I always love our baptism celebrations. It was so cool to hear the testimonies of how Jesus met people where they were and changed their lives forever. 51 people were baptized yesterday! All different ages. That's just so cool. God loves big families. Heaven is going to be filled with His huge family. Praise His name!!!

*Blessings,
Jonna*

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

This passage starts out, "For the love of Christ controls us." And then it explains how that impacts the way I live, how I view others, why I view others differently, and what that means for my purpose. I guess WHATEVER controls me impacts all those things.

If my need to be self reliant controls me, it impacts what I live for. I will live for whatever serves my personal satisfaction. It impacts how I view others. My opinion of them will be based on how they affect my view of myself. If they help me think better of myself, I will view them with respect. If I feel worse about myself by my interactions with them, I will avoid them. My purpose in life will center around what satisfies me. The problem with that is that I will never find satisfaction in a life centered on me. It's never that I just need to do it better or love myself more. I need to get my eyes off of myself and onto Christ!

So what happens when the love of Christ controls and motivates me? First, vs. 14-15 explain that the whole way I live will be significantly impacted because the very reason His love controls me is that His love saved me. He died for me to help me stop living for myself and to help me live for Him instead. For my sake, He died and was raised. He lived and died and rose again because I was dead and now through Him I live.

Why would He want to free me of living for myself? He knows that living for myself gets me nowhere good. It is because He loves me that He helps me to live for Him. That is when I am most satisfied.

Vs. 16 tells me that when His love controls me, I see people differently. I no longer see them according to the flesh. I see them through the eyes of God. I see them through eternal eyes. Paul said he once viewed Jesus just as a man. But Jesus changed that for him. Now he sees Him as Lord. That's what happens when His love is so embedded in my heart that He changes the way I see Him and others.

I see others differently. I see Christ differently. I see myself differently. My old self was crucified with Him and I have been raised to new life in Him. I don't view myself or anyone else through the lens of our failures, but through the lens of faith in Jesus and what He did for us.

I also see through vs. 18-21 that the love of Christ impacts my whole purpose. God the Father Himself reconciled me to Himself through Jesus and gave me a ministry of reconciliation. The beautiful thing about being loved by God is that I don't have to fight for position or leave others out for fear that He will choose them over me. He chooses to love ALL His people. There's always room for me, so I can always be part of making room for others... to be reconciled to Him.

He has given me the privilege of being His ambassador, representing Him to others, that they might be reconciled to Him. An ambassador serves at the pleasure of his master. He doesn't come with his own agenda. This would be scary, except that my Master provides me with all the love I need to accomplish His purpose for me. God gives me the privilege of speaking on His behalf, to reconcile others to Himself, so that His love can be their motivation, too.

Let me not forget, Jesus is not just motivated by love. He IS love. His love is so great that He who was completely without sin willingly allowed the Father to make Him to become sin for us... so that we might become the righteousness of God.

True righteousness doesn't exist apart from God. He gives us the free gift of righteousness. His righteousness is what brings us peace.

The benefits of allowing the love of God to be what controls me are exponentially greater than anything I could have by relying on myself. Self reliance is way overrated. I remember a time when I got angry at the thought of God's love "controlling" me. Now it's all I want!!! I get sad for all the times I realize that I'm NOT allowing His love to control me.

Lord, the more Your love controls me, the more I'll live for you... the more I'll see people, including myself, through Your eyes... the more I'll want to see others have that same reconciled relationship as I have. There is no need for rivalry. God has plenty of love to go around. His love never runs out. I pray that Your love will be my motivation more and more.