

Date: April 22, 2012

Subject: The Love of Christ Constrains us

Our text: 2 Corinthians 5:14

"For the love of Christ constrains us;
because we thus judge, that if One died
for all, then were all dead:"

When we think of the word "constrain,"
we think of compelling by force, to inhibit or
restrain, to hold back.

Every day, billions of people are faced with
certain decisions, and something constrains their
choices, to one way or the other.

A thief may find something he really wants,
but constrains himself because of the presence of
an officer.

A wife may become upset with her husband,
yet constrains herself from yelling because the
children are around.

The reasons people constrain themselves are very many: fear, time, location, embarrassment, love for family, and so on; but to the Christian, there ought to be only one reason,

"For the love of Christ constrains us;"

Every day we are faced with many temptations, many ways in which we ought to deny ourselves... why? Why should we deny ourselves "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25)? Why should we put the needs of others ahead of our own? Can you think of any reasons? Can you name them? I can name three,

"And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity." - 1 Cor. 13:13

Faith because we are "saved by grace through faith" (Eph. 2:8); hope because we yet wait the final resurrection and the completion of our inheritance that awaits us; and charity, or love, because "the love of Christ constrains us."

What is "the love of Christ"? His love, is the greatest of all,

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a Man lay down His life for His friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." - John 15:13-14

And because of His great love wherewith He loved us, He became a curse for us so that now... we are free from the condemnation of the law,

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." - Romans 8:1

And so we are constrained by "the love of Christ," we are constrained because of His love for us, by our love toward Him,

"If ye love Me, Keep My commandments." - John 14:15

What trials are you facing? What temptations are seeking your affections? They never stop, do they? If we pass by one, another awaits us, and so the temptations to sin are like ~~in~~ the "contentious woman" we read about in Proverbs 27:15

"A continual dropping is a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike."

While all of our sins are forgiven, God still desires our obedience beloved. Now some people obey because they are going about to establish their own righteousness and so are trusting in their own acts of obedience; others obey because of fear like an old dog who has been abused all ~~his~~ his life and so cowers at a raised hand; but let us obey Him in love, because He first loved us,

"There is no fear in love: but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us." - 1 John 4:18-19

Let us not fear as the hypocrites, who love the praises of men more than of God; rather, let us live our lives to the glory of God in loving obedience to Him even when nobody else is around, in all we do, in all we say, even in all we think; let us worship Him in the "beauty of holiness" and of all the reasons to constrain our obedience, let them all come from a heart - a truly thankful heart - of love, to the One who died for us,

"For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that, if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again."

- 2 Cor. 5:14-15

i am gratefully,

Your servant for Jesus' sake,

Rev. J. Allen

- 2 Cor. 4:1-5

My Jesus, I Love Thee, Featherstone 1842-78

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
for Thee all the follies of sin I resign.

My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou;
if ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me
and purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.

I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
if ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
and praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;
and say, when the death-dew lies cold on my brow:
if ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.