

Love Compelling

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 March 2008

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Let's take our Bibles and turn once again to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Begin reading in verse 10 and read through to the end of the chapter.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since then, we know what it is to fear the Lord. We try to persuade men.

What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen, rather than what is in the heart.

If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

As 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. So from now on, we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

[1:07] Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

That God was reconciling to himself in Christ. 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.

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. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

An angry mob is dragging a man through the city streets, who to all outward appearances is dead. They've just stoned him. His body is bashed and bleeding and broken. They throw him outside the city gates and leave him for dead.

[2:21] No, it's not a criminal. It's not a gross, immoral man. It's the Apostle Paul, a preacher of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

And he's not dead. Or at least not for long. For as his fellow disciples gather around him, he gets up. And he goes back into the city.

And the next day he leaves for the next town, Derby. And he preaches the good news in that city. And he wins a large number of disciples to Christ there. And then he returns to Lystra, the city that stoned him and left him for dead.

That he might strengthen and encourage the disciples there. And it's not long after this that we find Paul and his fellow laborer, Silas, accused in Philippi, falsely accused, where they were preaching Christ and demonstrating his works.

And they were stripped and severely beaten and thrown into the stocks into the inner city or in the inner prison. And an earthquake and several conversions later, Paul is off to the next place with the good news of Jesus Christ.

[3:37] And now we see him stripped down to the waist, bending over a whipping post. And his own people, the Jews now, who hated the gospel of Christ, are the ones delivering the infamous 39 lashes, leaving his back torn open.

A whipping so severe that a man could die for it. And Paul moves on to preach Christ to the next place. Until the Jews catch up with him and administer the same 39 lashes once more.

And Paul pulls himself together and goes to the next place. And again, 39 lashes. And they can't stop him and they can't shut him up. And he goes to the next place.

And it's another 39. Five times I receive the 40 lashes minus one, he says. And three times he's beaten with rods by the Romans.

But each time he goes on to preach Christ to the next place. Nothing could silence him. Now it's night and we're out in the open sea and through the light of the moon we can see a man bobbing up and down, holding on to a piece of wreckage in the sea.

[4:55] And it's Paul. And he's there all night long. And he's there the whole next day before he's finally rescued.

And as soon as his feet hit dry land, he's off and going to the next town with this saving love of Jesus Christ. Three times I was shipwrecked, constantly exposed to death, in danger from rivers, in dangers from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from the Gentiles, in danger from the false brothers, in danger in the city, in danger in the country.

I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep. I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food. I have been cold and naked.

And besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my care for all the churches. And he just keeps going and going and going.

Now, when we see a life so committed, so driven, so devoted and self-denying, we want to know what's driving this man, don't we?

[6:09] We want to know what makes him tick, what makes him different from most men who would have quit long ago and gone to something else. What makes him get up out of bed?

He's not an angel. He's a man with a body just like ours. What makes him get up out of bed the day after a beating with rods and drag his sore and bruised body out of bed and limp to the next town to tell somebody else about Jesus?

I want to know what kind of motivation he's tapped into. I could use some of that. What's the secret of such a life of zeal and passion for God?

Open to the passage that was read for you in 2 Corinthians because Paul tells us what made him tick. He tells us what motivated and compelled him.

2 Corinthians 5, some people, verse 13, thought that he was out of his mind. What else could make a man serve like this? He's crazy in the head, they said.

[7:21] And Paul says, no, it's love in the heart. Verse 14, Christ's love compels us because we're convinced that one died for all and therefore all died.

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. Notice Christ's love compelled him.

It wasn't his love for Christ. We'll see that in weeks to follow. That was the result. But it was rather the previous love of Christ's love for him that motivated him, that compelled him, that held him in its grip, that constrained him, that controlled him.

And his love for us is at once seen in its greatest manifestation. His death for us. He speaks of Christ's love compelling us because we're convinced that one died for all.

Immediately takes us to the cross, doesn't he? To tell us of this wonderful love of Jesus. We're convinced that one died for all.

[8:39] It's the word *hupere* in the Greek. It means instead of, in many places, in the place of, on behalf of. And it speaks of substitution.

A substitution was taking place in this death. Imagine yourself to be the guilty criminal who's already been condemned and sentenced to die. It's the death penalty for you.

And there's the firing squad. And you're summoned forth. And as you're making your way, a man steps from the crowd and says, Take me. I'll die in this place.

And you watch as that man is put in your place and blindfolded and stood up in the line, before the line and shot dead. And you go home to your family that night and you realize that every moment of life from that point on, you owe because that man died in your place.

That was Paul. He knew that the life that he had, he owed to the one who died for him. And that he died for all that those who live.

[9:49] Amazing. That life should come from his death. We now have this new life that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.

No longer live for themselves. We once lived that way. Every one of us. We once lived for ourselves. The big question in any issue of life was what's in it for me?

What do I want? What makes me feel good? What makes me look good in front of others? That's the way we lived. For ourselves. But Christ died that we might die to that kind of life.

And that we might no longer live for ourselves, but for him. And so every moment of this new life that's ours in Christ is to be lived for him. Not for ourselves.

The big questions now are what's in it for him? What does he want? What will cause him to look good? What will spread his glory and fame? And notice, it's Christ's love that compels us to live this new way.

[11:01] For him, no longer for me. we're studying the applications of God's love that we saw last week.

We began this study on the attribute of God's love and we saw last week that his love is self-initiating. We saw that it was sovereign. He loves those whom he wills.

We saw it was holy love. It's a love that sanctifies us. We saw it was an unchangeable love.

Unfailing, always the same. We saw it was an eternal love from everlasting to everlasting.

We saw it's an infinite love. Higher than the heavens are above the earth. So great is his love for those who fear him. And now we've come to ask the question, what will love like that do for the loved ones?

What will people who are loved with that special love of Jesus live like because of that love? Well, Paul answers, it will compel them to no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them.

[12:06] Now that was the motivating force behind the life of the Apostle Paul. That life that we just surveyed very briefly. We see him just going and going and going with devotion to Christ.

What drove him? The love that Jesus has for him. You'll miss, if you miss this, you'll never understand the life of Paul.

How many books have been written on the life of Paul and they completely misunderstand the man because they don't understand what made him tick. Christ's love compels us, he says.

This was at the very core of his being. Cut the man open. Lay him open. And what you find in his heart is this beating love of Jesus for him. It's at the center of who he is.

It's what gripped him. It's what held him. It's what moved him to such willingness to suffer all things.

For Christ's sake. It's what got him out of bed those mornings after being beaten with rods.

[13:08] It's what, it's why another shipwreck or another whipping could not keep him down. He never got over the fact that Jesus loved me and gave himself for me.

The love of Jesus. Compelling love. There's nothing too costly for him who gave himself for me.

That's the answer. Nothing too costly for him who died for me. And so a woman missionary serving in Africa finds herself raped and continues serving her Lord there.

and she comes home after a lifetime of service and someone asks her, was it worth it? Was it worth a lifetime of service to Christ knowing now the cost, the horrendous cost to you?

And she says, I quit asking that question a long time ago. Was it worth it? I know this. He is worth it.

[14:22] He is worth it. The love of Christ compels me to no longer live for myself but for him. And nothing is too costly for him who gave himself for me.

Now these were ordinary people. Paul says we. He's not just himself. It's all these laboring with him. It's this woman missionary in Africa.

Ordinary people who were compelled by God's love for them. And so, loved ones of Jesus, I must ask you, what is the love of Christ compelling you to do?

How is it compelling you to live? What are you doing simply for the love of Jesus? How much does that enter into all that you do? If you didn't do anything in this coming week but what you do because Jesus loves you, how much would get done?

What do we know of this key motivation for Christian living? Why is it when no one else notices your ministry and your service, no one else thanks you for it, why is it that you keep going and don't quit and find something more appealing to the flesh?

[15:43] the love of Christ constrains me. Why is it you're here this morning and not elsewhere? The love of Christ constrains me.

Why are you giving money, hard-earned money, to the cause of missions and the cause of the gospel? The love of Christ constrains me. Young people, why don't you join in with all the things that people around you are doing, immoral things?

the love of Jesus constrains me. Why are you unwilling to compromise your moral standards that the world is ever tugging at your sleeve and saying, come on, give a little, compromise a little?

The love of Jesus won't let me. When mom and dad are nowhere around to watch you, why do you still obey and honor them? Because of the love of Jesus.

Why is Sunday not enough to satisfy your hunger for the word of God? Why must you read every day?

[16:52] The love of Jesus compels me. It's here that my lover tells me of his love. And why must you pray? Why must you come to the throne of grace and him who sits upon that throne?

Because the love of Jesus compels me. It's there that I get to talk to the lover of my soul. Why so diligent in serving him?

Christ's love compels me. You see, it's a transforming love. We're studying the characteristics of love. And what we're seeing this morning is that this love is a compelling love. It moves a man to live in a way he otherwise would never live.

It melts us, it stirs us, it shapes us, it moves us, it motivates and thrills us to no longer live for ourselves but for him who died for us and was raised again.

Now, Christ's love is such a critical motivation to the Christian life that we need to keep our hearts continually under a warm sense of his love.

[17:58] this business of knowing the love of Christ. It's not a, it's not an extra, it's not an extra option for the Christian life that we can somehow get on without it.

No, it's absolutely essential. It's absolutely necessary to everything we're called to do in the Christian life. Without it, we've just got the husk, the outward trappings of Christianity.

To take away Christ's love for us is like taking the sun out of the solar system. Nothing's the same. Life doesn't go on as usual with the sun gone and neither does the Christian life go on as usual without this sense that the son of God loved me and gave himself for me.

So, Christ's love is at the center of the Christian's heart and experience. To read the Bible is to discover this point as well is to discover that God wants his people convinced and consumed with his great love for them.

It's as if in reading the Bible we see that God is on a mission to convince us of his love. Now, there's a reason for that.

[19:19] I found 700 hits when I typed in love and its different forms. Why so many verses on God's love for us in the Bible?

Well, first of all, there's our own slowness to believe it. Strange as it may seem, one of the problems of us Christians is that we're slow to believe and we have a hard time believing that Christ's love is really as good as it is.

There are times we think he just puts up with us. He surely doesn't love us now. We have a tendency to question and doubt his love especially during seasons of trials and afflictions.

And we ask with Asaph in Psalm 77, 8, has his unfailing love vanished forever? To ask it is to answer it, isn't it? Has his unfailing love vanished forever?

It can't happen, can it? Unfailing love can't vanish forever. But we feel that in times of sinful failure we think surely he loves us less now.

[20:29] And that's why God is found so often in Scripture arguing with us, giving us reasons, proofs, convincing us that he loves us.

He's overcoming our own doubting hearts. And in this case we can be our own worst tormentors, doubting his love.

But added to this is the devil's attacks. If we don't know how important it is to revel in God's love for us in Christ, Satan knows how important it is.

And so he makes our assurance of God's love a prime target, a bullseye for his attacks. To wound you here is to cripple you in so many areas of the Christian life.

We sang Thy love my soul's chief treasure. Is the love of Christ your soul's chief treasure? Then you can be sure the robber, the thief comes to steal your chief treasure.

[21:33] Someone has said that the love of Christ is a heaven to the soul. And if Satan cannot steal heaven from you, he will steal this heaven of the soul from you.

He will seek to take from you the sense of God's love for you in Christ. And so he is behind many of our doubts of God's love. He's whispering in our ears.

He can't love you, not after you've done that. He's planting thoughts in our minds, unworthy thoughts of Christ's love. And so the Bible is full of God's convincing us otherwise.

See how the Lord convinces his people, his doubting people, of his love for them. When they were under the discipline of Babylonian captivity, Israel is questioning God's love for them. How can God love us? We don't see the Davidic king on the throne anymore. Whatever happened to that promise? And we don't see the prosperity that was promised in this covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

[22 : 40] Where is God's love? He's forgotten us. And God says in Isaiah 54, 10, Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken, nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

So the Lord goes to the most stable things that they could see, those everlasting mountains and hills. They don't move, they're there.

Centuries have passed. There's the mountains, they're still there. And God says, let me compare my unfailing love to that mountain. Though that mountain should fall into the heart of the sea, though commotion should happen in this world and in your nation and in your life that would cause things as stable as mountains to move, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken.

We hear further their doubts in Isaiah 49, verse 14. Zion says, the Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me.

Indeed, that's how they felt. And you've been there and I've been there. We feel like our prayers are not being answered. Are they even being heard on high? Has he forgotten us? And so in verse 15 of Isaiah 49, the Lord selects the most unshakable love on earth.

[24 : 16] He goes to the love of a mother with her nursing baby on her breast. Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she is born.

Though she may forget, I will not forget you. See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Your walls are ever before me.

Unshakable mountains. They may shake, but my love won't. Unshakable love. The love of a mother for a nursing. Some of you work in the nursery.

We've had nursing babies in the nursery. How many of you nursery workers have ever found that an uncollected nursing baby after the services, that mom just went home and forgot the child?

It doesn't happen, does it? And yet God says, even if it should happen, that a mother would intentionally forget her child and no longer have compassion on it.

[25 : 23] I will never forget you. So great his love. These are two passages from the Old Testament of God convincing his people of his love for them.

He goes to the mountains. He goes to the mother's love. But when we come to the New Testament, God takes us by the hand and he leads us to the middle cross on Golgotha and he says, behold the love of God there, there it is.

Christ crucified. And that trumps all other expressions of love. So when Paul, this one who's compelled by the love of Christ, when he would speak of the love of Christ, what's he do?

He takes us to Calvary, Romans 5 and verse 8. God demonstrates his love for us in this, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Now in so stating, he has bypassed a thousand different expressions of God's love for us. Could have spoke of that last breath you took. God loved you.

[26 : 34] He gave you breath. He could speak of the sunshine today. God loved you and warmed this planet with his son. But he bypasses all that. He goes to the grand demonstration of the cross.

Christ dying for us. Not when we were good people, not when we were righteous men, but when we were sinners. Calvary is an awesome place and awesome things happen here.

And God wants us to know right up front that what happens here is because of his love. God is here demonstrating his love. God is putting it on display.

God is putting it out where people can see it. He's placarding. He's showing off his love at Calvary. Augustine says the cross was a pulpit in which God preached his love to man.

And the verb is in the present tense, isn't it? God demonstrates his love for us in this. He could have said God demonstrated his love for us.

[27 : 44] Two thousand years ago, God demonstrated but instead he says God is still demonstrating his love for us in this. The cross is the eternal ongoing demonstration of God's love.

Look and look and look and look until you too are compelled by the love of God in Christ. See who it is who dies there, none other than God's one and only son.

See who it is he dies for, none other. than sinners like us. That's where Paul found Christ's love to be compelling love.

The dying love of Jesus. It's what Wesley speaks of. And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?

Died he for me who caused his pain? me who him to death pursued.

[28:50] You see the he, the me, amazing love. How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me? This is what makes love compelling. Who dies there and who he dies for?

Now that so transformed the apostle Paul's life and so continued to transform Paul's life that he prays the same for all the rest of the people of God. You see, he won't let us come to a passage like this and say, well, that's Paul.

We expect that of him. After all, this idea of being so motivated to serve God with such devotion, it must be one of those executive privileges of apostles.

He doesn't let us go there. Turn to Ephesians 3. We get to listen in on Paul when he's on his knees praying, for God's people, all of God's people.

It's for this reason I kneel before the Father. Chapter 3 of Ephesians and he comes to verse 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and I pray, and I pray that you being rooted and established in love may have power together with all the saints to grasp grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

[30:26] No, this is something for you too. And that's why I pray for you, Paul says, that you together with all the saints might have power to grasp the wonder of Christ's love.

Romans 5.15 God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given to us. How is it that Christians come to appreciate the fact that Christ loves them?

How is it that that truth actually vibrates in their soul and produces changes and doesn't let them go on living for themselves? How does that happen? You know and I know that we've stood before the cross in the scriptures and we've stood before passages that talk about Christ and him crucified.

We've sat before Isaiah 53 and our hearts have stood as stones unmoved. How is it that that love of Christ becomes a living passion within us that his love for us moves us to live differently?

It takes the spirit of God to enable us to even grasp it. And so God has given the ministry of the Holy Spirit to us that is all the saints so that that might become a reality.

[31:44] He has put his spirit in the heart of every one of his children that they might live with a sense of God's love for them in Christ. That they might no more live for themselves but for him who loved them and died for them.

And so the spirit sheds abroad God's love in our hearts. You see the Christian life was never meant to be lived without the love of Christ being poured into our hearts.

The commands of God were never meant to be obeyed without God's love flooding us and moving our soul to grateful obedience. You were never meant to face temptation without God's love making it harder for you to sin against him.

What? Did this sin cause pain to my Savior who took the punishment in my place and will I feed it and give expression to it and count its pleasures better than the smile of my Savior?

You were never meant to face a temptation without love for Christ pulsing in your heart. God's Christ love for you pulsing in your heart.

[32:57] Your service to God, your various ministries to one another were never meant to be carried on without God's love flooding your soul. You were never meant to witness to Christ to your lost friends and workmates without the love of Christ compelling you.

You weren't meant to face trials and sufferings without God's love comforting your heart. So on and so on we could go. Christians are not meant to live without being gripped by Christ's love for them. We're not fit to live. We're no more fit to live than we are held under the spell of Christ's love. That's key to spiritual health.

That's 101 spirituality for the Christian. We are different people when we're basking in Christ's love for us. And so God has given us his Bible in which he tells us over and over, I have loved you, I've loved you.

And then he puts his spirit in our hearts to convince us that it is so. That we might grasp this love of Christ. That we might be grasped by it and compelled to live for him.

[34:16] love's compelling power. Oh, to know more of that, more of that in our experience. It's not something just true for the Apostle Paul.

It's for all of us. And it's seen as well in the life of John the Apostle. He's often referred to as the Apostle of love. And you who have read his Gospel and his Epistles know why.

He wrote so much about God's love in three Epistles. But then also there's the way he refers to himself. In his Gospel he tells the story of Christ.

Now Christ chose his apostles, his disciples, and had them with him. And in his Gospel he refers to those disciples and he calls them by name. There was Peter, there was Thomas, there was James, and he refers to them by name.

But whenever he refers to himself, you never, in the Gospel of John, read the name John. He only refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

[35:25] As if to say the most important thing about me, if you remember anything about me in this story, is that Jesus loved me. This is one who saw his glory.

The glory is of the one and only from the Father. and he would only refer to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Do you think of yourself that way? Do you talk to yourself that way? Do you remind yourself that you are a disciple that Jesus has loved?

Is that the most important thing about you? You see, John too was a man taken up with the love of Christ. He was compelled by this love of Jesus.

It's John who tells us that God is love. 1 John chapter 4 and verse 8. And when in the very next verses he would expound on that, God is love, what does he do?

[36:32] He takes us by the hand, even as Paul did, and he takes us to the middle cross. talks about the Lord Jesus dying for us.

1 John chapter 4 and verse 9 and 10. God is love, and this is how God showed his love among us. Same thing as demonstrates, as Paul says, here's the demonstration.

This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. this is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, as a propitiation is the word, for our sins, and a propitiation is one who turns away the wrath of God from us by bearing it himself.

You want to know what love is? God is love, and he showed that love when he sent his one and only son to turn aside his wrath from us by bearing it himself.

So John cannot talk about the love of God without mentioning the wrath of God. And here's the sad case that we find ourselves in today, because people don't like to hear about the wrath of God, so the church says, well, let's give them what they want, we'll just talk about the love of God, love of God.

[38:08] And so we have a trivialized love, we have a boring love, and people are bored with the love of God.

They find nothing attractive, nothing amazing. But John says, you don't understand love if you don't understand his wrath.

love. Notice what he says in verse 10, how God loved us. He sent his son to appease his wrath that was against us.

I wonder if we've ever thought much of God's wrath and God's love both being on us at the same time. Isn't that what he's saying? God's wrath was upon us for our sin, and he so loved us, who? Us under his wrath, that he sent his son to take his wrath away from us by burying it himself. You see, Jesus didn't die to make the father love us.

[39:16] He died because the father loved us. The father's the one who sent the propitiation. The father's the one who said, go and turn aside my wrath from them.

He's the one who sends the atoning sacrifice for our sins. This is how God showed his love for us. He sent his son to take away his wrath from us.

The apostle Paul speaks the same way in Ephesians 2, verse 3. He says, we, we were by nature the objects of wrath. Day one, as we were born, we are objects of wrath.

We're sinners. And as sinners, we are objects of the wrath of God. In the very next verse, he says, but because of his great love for us, who us objects of his wrath, because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, even when we were dead in transgressions.

It is by grace you have been saved. Who? You. You. Objects of wrath. You who deserve eternal damnation. You who deserve to have all of his kindness and goodness forever taken from you.
[40 : 29] Objects of wrath. But because God was so rich in love, he saved us. You can't understand the love of God in Christ unless you understand the wrath of God that he bore. He bore himself that we might never, ever have to bear it ourselves.

Amazing love. Here's the love of the Father. It's the love of the Father in this passage that's emphasized, isn't it? It's the love of the Father in giving such a sacrifice to turn away his wrath. In other verses, it's the love of Christ that's emphasized. Chapter 3 and verse 16 of 1 John. This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

We see it, the love in the Father in giving his Son. We see the love of Jesus Christ in laying down his life, giving himself for us. He wasn't drugged to the cross against his will.

No, he so loved us that he laid down his life. He says, here, he deserves to die under your wrath. Take me. Let me die in his place.

[41 : 42] And it's here that we see that my example that I gave earlier breaks down. God's love is far greater. Because Jesus just didn't take the bullet for you, friend, so that you could live another 25 years before you die.

No, he took God's wrath for you that you might live forever and ever under his favor. and he did it willingly.

It was damnation. It was hell that came to Calvary that day and he did it willingly. No reluctance. He went to the cross more willingly for us than we come to church for him.

That's our savior. Thomas Watson says Christ leaped into the sea of his father's wrath to save his spouse from drowning. such is his heart for his loved ones.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul. What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the painful curse for my soul.

[42 : 56] For Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. costly love. We're seeing this love that we studied last week is compelling love.

Now we're seeing it is costly love. It costs the father, his one and only son, dying the damnation that we deserve, the damnable death of the cross. And it costs the son, his own life, laid down to bear that wrath that we might never cost love.

And it's this that makes men quit living for themselves. It's this that causes young ladies and young men to be sick and tired and to say, I have spent enough time serving myself.

It's time, it's high time to serve the Lord, this one who loved me and gave himself for me. And it's the same love that will compel you more and more to live that way.

And people will wonder why. Why is she that way? Why isn't she like the rest? There'll be no answer. But that Christ's love compels her to live this way.

[44 : 08] So have we moved on from Christ's love? Oh, we've got that one down. Now let's go on to the next truth. Shame on us. Shame on us. We never get past that.

We never grow beyond the love of Christ for us. Do we no longer think of it with delight? Do we no longer spend time just thinking of how Jesus loves me?

Me. It's time to return to the foot of the cross. And so the Bible tells us of God's love.

And last week we saw the many characteristics of his love. Yes, his love is self-initiating. He starts it himself. It's sovereign. It's holy. It's unchangeable.

It's eternal. It's infinite. This week we've seen it's compelling. He tells us about his love. And then he shows us his love. And we see it's costly love.

[45 : 06] It meant Jesus, the eternal Son of God, dying under his Father's wrath. But God does more than that. In the Bible he not only tells us of his love and shows us his love, but then he shows us the difference that his love makes in the likes of human beings who have tasted that love.

So let the life of the Apostle Paul this morning remind us that it's possible for a man this side of heaven to live more under the spell of Jesus' love than what we have known to this point.

And let the Apostle John point us afresh to the one who loved us and freed us from our sins by his blood and who suffered God's wrath for us. And so as we move into what many call the Passion Week, as we think of the death of Jesus before coming back on Sunday to remember his resurrection, I send you home to think every day this week about this amazing love at Calvary, to read the Passion account over and over, to read until your heart burns within you and you feel something of what moved the Apostle Paul, beating in your own heart to live no more for yourself

but for him and then come, come back on Friday night and take the emblems of his love, his body and his blood given for us.

Lost friend, if you're outside of Christ, I send you to this loving Savior immediately. He's dealing in love with sinners this morning and he says, come and receive me.

And in receiving me, you receive eternal life. You bring me your sins and I'll give you my righteousness. You bring me your hell and I'll give you my heaven.

[47:01] You bring me the wrath that you deserve and I'll shower my unfailing love upon you. His love is better than you realize. His love is better than life.

We have found it so. Amen. Our God, we thank you for the revelation of your love to us in the Bible, that you've told us of it. We thank you for showing it to us at Calvary and showing it to us again this morning.

And thank you as well for showing us what that love does in the heart of another sinner saved by grace. Oh, we see what it did for the Apostle Paul, how it compelled him to no more live for himself but for you.

And we say, that is right. That's the way it's supposed to be. And we are ashamed that it's not more like that in our lives, that we still find ourselves asking what's in it for me and wanting what we want. Forgive us, Lord. Lead us by the hand back to this amazing love. Go on showing us the wonder of it, the amazement that you, our God, should die for us in Christ.

[48:14] And so, lead us into that life, Holy Spirit. Open our eyes that we might grasp it and change us and help us to show to this world, even by the way we live, what a wonderful Savior, what a wonderful lover of our souls Jesus is.

Draw with those cords of love, those who are still only under your wrath. Bring them this day to the great praise of your unfailing love, we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.