

CORINTHIANS - The MORE EXCELLENT WAY

STUDY 23

Love's Leading

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

2 COR.5:14,15 (NAS)

Study 23a: MORE MOTIVES for HOLY LIVING (5:11-21)

5:11 What motive for obedience is often lacking in Christians today?

[5:11] What is the fear of the Lord? The old way of defining the fear of the Lord is that I used to be afraid that God would hurt me. Now the fear is, or should be, that I should hurt Him, that I should grieve Him, that I should cause sorrow to the Holy Spirit. [Morgan 242]

[5:11] By "the fear of the Lord", then, the Apostle does not mean that terror (A.V., Ambrose, Herveius, Beza) which the ungodly will experience when they stand before God's judgment throne (cf. Rev. 6:15ff.), but that reverential awe which the

**What is the
'fear of the Lord'?**

Had Paul seen Christ before the Damascus road?

Does his language imply that he had actually seen and had some form of contact with Christ during His earthly ministry? There is no inherent impossibility in such a contingency, and it has been variously suggested that Paul when a disciple of Gamaliel in Jerusalem (see Acts 22:3) must have enjoyed ample opportunity for hearing Jesus and even meeting with Him, that he had been a witness of the crucifixion of Christ, or that he was the rich young ruler who had questioned Christ (Mk. 10:17ff.). But, whether or not Paul had had some such personal contact with Jesus in the past, the significance of what he says here is determined by the immediate context: prior to his conversion his knowledge of Christ had been after the flesh, formed in accordance with external and mistaken standards; but his conversion had meant the transformation of his knowledge of Christ. [Hughes 198]

Christian should feel towards the Master whom he loves and serves and at whose hand he will receive "the things done in the body". [Hughes 186]

5:12-15 Paul commends selflessness as an apostolic proof -- derived from whose example?

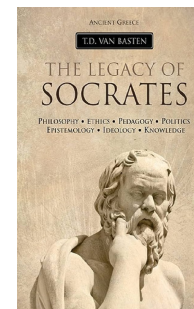
[5:13] ... his proclamation of the gospel to others, whether Festus or the Corinthians, is essentially sober-minded ("I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but speak forth words of truth and soberness"). In other words, Paul's preaching of the gospel is at all times thoughtful, intelligible, balanced, directed to the mind as well as to the heart, and entirely free from any suggestion of "mania" or "ecstasy". [Hughes 191]

5:16-21 Identify the primary message of the apostles, and its result for the believer

[5:16] Before his conversion Paul had a clear picture of Christ in his mind; now he knows it was a wrong picture. This is equally true whether he means (as he probably does) that he had a wrong conception of the Messiah ('even if we have known a Messiah according to the flesh', e.g. a political Messiah) or that he had a wrong conception of Jesus of Nazareth (which he would readily have acknowledged, although this is the less likely sense here); in either case it was 'worldly standards' that had counted with him then, but as it is, 'even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so now no longer' (NEB). He is not contrasting his own post-Easter knowledge of Christ with the knowledge that the Twelve had of him before the cross, neither is he depreciating an interest in the Jesus of history as something improper, or at least spiritually irrelevant, for a Christian ... [Bruce 208]



F.F. Bruce



[5:19,20] Paul's fondness for the term "word" (*logos*) as a synonym for the message of the gospel (cf. for example, Eph. 1:13, " ... having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation"; Col. 1:5, " ... the word of truth of the gospel" 1 Cor. 1:18, " ... the word of the cross") and John's application of the term to Christ as a title (Jn. 1:1,14 ; cf. Rev. 19:13) take on extra significance in view of the consideration that in Greek thought *logos* indicates what is true and trustworthy as opposed to the term "myth" (*mythos*) which is descriptive of what is fictitious and spurious. Socrates, for example, declares that a particular story is "no fictitious myth but a true *logos*". Hence the term "logos" carries with it, like a kind of overtone, the implication of truth and genuineness, and is accordingly peculiarly appropriate as a synonym for the gospel, which is "the word of truth" ... An ambassador acts and speaks not only on behalf of but also in the place of the sovereign from whom he has received his commission. It is his duty to proclaim faithfully and precisely the message entrusted to him by his sovereign. [Hughes 207,209]

"The word of truth"

6:1-3 What might we forget if we misunderstand grace? (Eph.2:10; Acts 20:24; 26:19,20)

6:4-10 Categorize the ways in which Christians recommend themselves as God's ministers

[6:4-7] His conduct and endurance of suffering not only attest the genuineness of his apostleship but provide an example to others. Nine forms of suffering are arranged in three sets of three: (a) general suffering (**afflictions, hardships, calamities**), (b) suffering endured at the hands of men (**beatings, imprisonments, riotous onsets**), (c) sufferings endured by way of self-discipline (**labours, wakeful nights, fastings**). The **hunger** is voluntary, not involuntary; cf. 11:27 where, in another catalogue of sufferings, involuntary and voluntary hunger are separately mentioned, the latter being expressed, as here, by Gk *nesteia*, 'fastings'. Next he enumerates the qualities he endeavoured to cultivate and display in the course of his service, culminating in the armour of **righteousness** (or integrity) **for the right hand** (meaning perhaps for attack) **and for the left** (for defence); cf. 10:3f. And the fuller development of the figure in 1 Th. 5:8; Eph. 6:11-17. The mention of **the Holy Spirit** in a list of virtues is striking: it is by the Spirit that these virtues are fostered, and they are the evidence of his indwelling presence. [Bruce 212]

6:11-13 How were the Corinthians bound (restrained) by their own affections? (7:2; 1 Cor.13)

6:14-7:1 One more motive for Christian vigilance – the ultimate promise!

Paul's three impelling motives

In this section of the epistle the apostle Paul brings before us the three great motives that moved his heart as he went about through the world proclaiming the gospel of Christ. The first is this: He ever had it before his mind that all his work must soon be tested at the judgment-seat of Christ. What a solemn reflection it is for a Christian to remember that everything he says and everything he does as a believer is some day going to be examined by the Lord Jesus, and he will be rewarded accordingly! ... Notice the next motive that stirred the apostle's heart to Christian endeavour. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord ..." This, I think, is a forgotten note in modern preaching in many places ... "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb.10:31) ... there is something in God to fear, something that the Christless man may well fear, and that is God's hatred of iniquity. God is of purer eyes than to look upon sin; He cannot but judge iniquity ... Now notice the last of these three impelling motives. Paul says. "For the love of Christ constraineth us ..." , that all-conquering love that laid hold of the

heart of proud, haughty, self-righteous, cruel Saul of Tarsus ... That is what made him the man that he was, actuated, motivated by divine love. Do you know that love? Have you too been laid hold of by the love of Christ? [Ironside 130-141]

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