

The Motivating Power of Christ's Love

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Introduction

Father, I pray that our souls, our minds, Lord, may they be still. We pray that there would be a God-wrought stillness here. Lord, we pray that You'd draw near just now. In Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

Would you please open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5? Brethren, I really appreciate all the prayers. I still somewhat have a low-grade headache, and I feel somewhat in a fog, so if you'd pray for me while I'm preaching, I'd very much appreciate it.

The Love of Christ Controls Us

Brethren, I'll tell you right up front, the title of my message is "The Motivating Power of Christ's Love." There in verse 14, "For the love of Christ controls us." Or the love of Christ constrains us, or compels us. That's what I want to deal with today. But I want to read this in context. The Apostle Paul beneath Christ. Prototype, we might say, missionary. We might describe him as the kind of person that John was talking about. The kind of person that had let go of the things of this world. The kind of person that's abandoned for the things of Christ. What is it that drove such a man? What is it that compelled him? Because I want to be compelled by the same thing. Because we hold on tightly. Tighter than we think. I want to be like Paul. I want to be ready to let go - anything at all, anytime. I want to live free of this world. And I want to be driven by the same things that drove him.

These verses contain this well-known statement: The love of Christ controls us. Let's see it in context. Let's begin reading in verse 11. Now, this first part, "therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others..." That probably belongs in verse 10. Back in verse 10, you have the judgment seat of Christ. Each one is going to receive what is due for what is done in the body, whether good or evil, therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. That probably belongs there. Verse 11, mid-stream. "But what we are known to God. And I hope it's known also to your conscience. We're not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance, and not about what is in the heart. For if we're beside ourselves, it is for God. If we're in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died. And He died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh. We regard Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old

has passed away. Behold, the new has come. And this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake, He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God."

The motivating power of Christ's love. Now, I believe when it speaks here about the love of Christ constraining us, this isn't specifically our love for Him, but His love for us. Now undoubtedly, His love for us produces our love for Him. But I think what Paul has in mind is actually His love for us as demonstrated in His death for us.

Let's just ask this question right at the beginning. Where does this come from? You know, we just read this. It can almost seem kind of jumbled together at first glance. You have a lot of things going on here. A lot of things being said. Where does "the love of Christ controls us" come from? I mean, how did Paul get there? What I'd like to do is just briefly look at verse 11, 12, and 13 to let the context let us flow into these words.

Paul Defends Himself

First, Verse 11. Picking up halfway through, "But what we are is known to God." Now, the "we." Paul's not speaking collectively about himself and the Corinthians. He's not saying, with his arm around the Corinthians, you know what we both are collectively God knows. That's not what he's saying here. The "we" is Paul and his fellow workers. Paul and his company. Paul and Timothy. Paul and Titus. It's the guys that are working with him. It's the other guys that he sends there, or have come to the Corinthian church with him. And you'll see that. "What we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience." You see, he's speaking to them, second person - the Corinthians. The "we" is he and his fellow laborers.

Now, what's going on here? Why? Why do you even need to say that? Why do you need to say to the Corinthians, what we are, God knows? We'd like you to know too. If you look at 2 Corinthians collectively, Paul's talking this way because he's under attack. Some people have come into the Corinthian church. They're called "super apostles" in the ESV. People have come in. People are deceiving the church at Corinth. People are coming in with a different message. People are coming in and attacking Paul. That's what we have. Look at verse 12. You can see this. "We're not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those..."

Now, see there's a third person. You've got Paul and his people. You've got the Corinthians. And then there's "those." Now, some of those or them might be part of the Corinthian church, and also those that are coming from the outside. He wants the Corinthians to be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. Now, notice that. "We're not commending ourselves." Very interesting reading 2 Corinthians. Paul will say I'm not commending myself, but I want to commend myself. I'm not boasting, but I will boast. I don't want to boast. There's nothing to it, but I will boast. It's back and forth. If you just go back and look at 4:2. And look at the last line there of 4:2. "We would commend ourselves to everybody's conscience." You know what you feel like, the feel you get in this book is that Paul is very torn. He's torn because he's being put in a position that he does not want to be put in. He's being put in a position because he is the representative of God, because he is the ambassador of Christ, and he is under attack and the attacks are being believed by the Corinthians, and so what it does, is it puts him in a place where he doesn't want to boast; he doesn't want to commend himself, but at the same time, he does. And what he's saying is, I do it in the sight of God. What he wants them to know is this is not carnal boasting. I'm not doing it like those guys that boast in outward appearance. This isn't carnal. I'm doing this in the sight of God. And you know what we are. You know what we were when we were there. He's not boasting to appear to them as somebody great. In fact, later, in the letter, he says I don't want anyone to think more highly of me than I ought. In fact, when he gets through his boasting, he says I'll boast about my weakness, like John was talking about. Not that he's some great person. But you know what he is? By the will of God, he's an apostle of Jesus Christ. And he's not going to deny that. Because souls rest on that. Because the message he brings, is the message of reconciliation. And you know what happens? When they attack him, if you find yourselves believing the messengers of Satan, and not the messenger of God, then you shut out God, and you shut out God's message, and that can cost you your soul. And so, he's going to do this out of the love that he has for these people.

Just listen to this: Don't turn there. "Are they servants of Christ? I'm a better one. I'm talking like a madman." You see, they're boasting. He comes along and he boasts, and then he says, it's like when he does it, he says I'm a fool; I'm a mad man. But you're pushing me to it. You guys should be the very ones that have the ability to answer my detractors. Because you know what I was among you. Or this, 2 Corinthians 12:1 "I must go on boasting, though there is nothing to be gained by it. I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord." "I've been a fool. You forced me to it. For I ought to have been commended by you. I was not at all inferior to these super apostles, even though I'm nothing." So what's happening here is Paul's being forced to defend himself.

All I can think is... I don't know what went through Paul's heart and mind. But this must have been one of the hardest - in my own opinion, in my own estimation - it probably was one of the hardest letters that he had to write. When you're under attack, when you're

maliciously under attack, when you're falsely under attack, when charges are being hurled at you, now, sometimes when that's happening, the best thing to do is just to remain silent, but Paul can't be silent. Because this doesn't just have to do with his reputation, this has to do with the truth that they're believing. This has to do with the Gospel. These people that were coming in and making accusation, they were bringing another Gospel. They were bringing another Christ. And so he needs to defend himself, because in defending himself, he's defending his own apostleship, and in defending that, he's defending the message that he has from God.

Notice what they boasted in, you look at verse 12 there. He wants them to be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance. You know when it came to outward appearance, do you remember what they were saying about Paul? His presence is weak. His speech is of no account. You get the messengers of Satan, that's an easy target. They go after the physical things. Well, look at the guy. Look at him. Small, or skinny, or sickly. Look at his presence. This isn't a guy that holds much weight. This isn't a guy that outwardly has a whole lot of authority. And so they're coming in and they're boasting, they're boasting in their credentials, and they're saying, but Paul, he just doesn't have it. I mean, look at the guy, you think you can believe that guy? You can trust that guy? His presence isn't anything. I mean, he talks very boldly in his letters, but when he comes here among you, there's not much there. And to add to that, some were charging, calling into question his character. They were saying that he did what he did by the flesh. They were calling into question his apostleship. They were questioning whether or not Christ even really spoke through him. And the thing here in all of this, jump over to 2 Corinthians 6:12. The thing about this is many of these people at Corinth are Paul's own converts. And instead of defending their spiritual father under this corrupting influence, these very people are becoming hardened towards Paul. They're falling for what these guys from the outside are doing. They're becoming hardened towards Paul. "You're not restricted by us. But you're restricted in your own affections. In return, I speak as to children. Widen your hearts also." Or jump to 2 Corinthians 7:2. "Make room in your hearts for us. We've wronged no one. We've corrupted no one. We've taken advantage of no one." You see, he's having to appeal to them. The thing is, he wants them to be convinced in their own conscience about what he was and how he conducted himself, how he behaved himself, when he was among them. He wants them to have the conviction of who he is, so that they might be able to answer on his behalf against these detractors, these guys that boast only in the outward. But what's happened is their own hearts need to be widened. Their own hearts need to be brought to a place where they're making room for Paul. They've become hardened towards him.

And brethren, as Paul is finishing up the letter, he basically says this authority has been given to us. And it's not to lord it over you. It's for your own upbuilding. Paul is doing what he's doing out of love for them. Paul is defending himself out of love for them. Out of a zeal for God's truth and a love for the Corinthians, Paul is forced to have to boast about

himself. He's forced in this direction. Look at this, verse 13. "For if we are beside ourselves..." Beside ourselves. That's like to be put out of place is what it literally means, or to be out of your mind. To be deranged. Paul, you're out of your mind. Where does this come from? Well, he didn't just dream it up. Obviously, that was another accusation that's coming at him. Paul was often called a fool and a madman. I mean, Festus, did he not say that? Paul, you're out of your mind. You're mad. You're out of your mind. And even there he says, no, I'm not. And he's not, but that's what he's being charged with, and he says, ok, let's even grant I am, if I am, he says, it's for God. It's God I'm serving. Whatever people may think I am, however I may come across, it's for God. Or if I'm in my right mind, it's for you. Do you see the two things that drive him? It's God - zeal for Him. And a love for God's people. Paul's out of his mind.

The World's Perception of the Christian's Insanity

Brethren, have you ever noticed, in the midst of this world, where people are insanely in love with their sin, running headlong into hell, and they look over at us Christians, the only ones who have sanity, and they call us madmen. I was thinking when I was first converted, a high school buddy of mine who now is a Jesuit priest, he called me either a Jesus freak or a Jesus fanatic when I first got saved. And I didn't hear it from him, I heard another guy. I was playing softball and we were coming in from taking hitting practice coming in from the outfield, and the other team was on the infield, and one of the other guys on the other team I went to high school with as well, and as I was running by him he said, Dave told me you're a Jesus freak. And I stopped in my tracks and I looked at him and said Curt, how could you not be that way for Christ? But you know the thing is, the whole time that I was doing drugs, getting drunk all the time, living a wild life, Dave never called me a freak or a fanatic. It's the world. That's what they do.

They look at Paul. Do you ever read in some of these old books? Like, you read Jonathan Edwards. And what are they calling people during the revival? Enthusiasts. Yeah, but brethren, that's one of the beatitudes we could say, blessed are those who are called madmen by the world, who are called enthusiasts. And here's the thing. Follow where Paul's going. He says, I wish you could defend me, I hate being put in this position where I have to do this, I don't want to commend myself, I'm not going to commend myself again. I wish you could do this. I wish that I was bearing on your consciences here. You've got these people. They're all hung up on this outward appearance. There are these people that have come in, they're calling me a madman. Paul objects to any charge of being deranged. And he declares right here in verse 14, that whatever it was that was driving him to such zeal for God and a love for the Corinthians, no matter what the appearance might look like on the outside. Don't judge the book on the outside. Don't judge Christians on the outside. Don't judge Paul on the outside. John was saying that. I think John was even saying it about himself. I think he was looking at himself and he was sizing things up.

But the thing is, we need to peel back the outside and we need to see what's happening there. He says no matter what I look like on the outside, what drove Paul to be what he was and to do what he did and to say the things that he said, brethren, they don't come from any madman's delusions. What do they come from? Verse 14 "The love of Christ controls us." The love of Christ compels or it constrains us. If you want to know what made Paul tick, or you want to know what drove this man, you've got to look beneath the surface.

Called to Judge Rightly

This is where verse 16 comes from. You can jump ahead just a little bit. "From now on therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer." You see where this comes from? This isn't just totally brought out of nowhere. Paul didn't just grab this. The idea is that these guys were judging according to the flesh. That's exactly what looking at his presence is weak, but oh, the power of God was upon him. The Spirit of God moved mightily on this man. You Corinthians, you may think me beside myself. You may think that my bodily presence is weak, you think my speech of little account, but listen, as Christians we don't measure things that way anymore. That's what he's saying. You don't look that way. You don't assess that way.

Assessing Paul that way is assessing him exactly according to the flesh, but if you peel back the outward layers and the outward weakness, inside what do you find? Inside you find a lion. Inside you find a man that is strong. Inside you find a man that is determined. A man that is driven. Brethren, what we find is a man that is saying here, I'm mastered by something. Something has me constrained. Something has me in its grips. Something binds me. If you want to know what it is that drives me with zeal towards God and a love towards you Corinthian brethren, here it is. Here's what it is. It's no madman's delusion. Within he is constrained to live this way for God and to live for God's people and to be sold out for Christ. What others see as fanaticism, it's not. What others see as madness, it's not. The love of Christ is a master force here.

Paul Reaches Some Conclusions

And I look at this and I'm saying to myself, How? How, Paul? I want to imitate you more. I want to follow you as you follow Christ more. How did this grip you? And he explains it to us. Brethren, you can see it there. Verse 14. "The love of Christ controls us, because..." Here's the reason: "We have concluded this." What's happening? We've concluded. The old KJV says we have judged. We have reasoned. We've come to conclusions. Paul is thinking about the love of Christ. And this is a force which has mastered Paul.

And I want you to think. Have you ever seen people who never really accomplish anything? They never really stay at anything very long. They never really stay focused. They're here and there. They're hit and miss. They start something, they start school, or they start a job and then they don't and then they're out and then they're doing something else. Brethren, people like that, it is very safe to say are not mastered by something. We need to be mastered by that which keeps us moving in the right direction. That's what's happening to Paul. And look what he says: I've concluded. He's a man that's mastered by this force of the love of Christ because he thinks about it. He's reasoning through it. It's not just that he has some fuzzy feelings about the love of Christ. He's actually thinking about it.

Face-to-Face with the Son of God

And you have to see how he thinks here. Brethren, he's coming face to face... That's the Son of God. He's become the Lamb of God. Why? Why? The Son of God is hung between two condemned thieves. What wondrous love is this? What is this? Why did He do this? He died for me. He died for us. Why? Why did He leave the halls of heaven? Why did He come down? He was in a place - no pain, no suffering. Only glory. A throne. And there He is. Look at Him. Almighty vengeance fell on the Son. Why? Why? What's happening is he's asking questions. He's wanting to come to conclusions. You don't come to a conclusion unless you ask questions about it. You don't come to conclusions, you don't thus judge, unless you're thinking. You're using some cognitive principles or faculties up here. Why? Why? Why did He die for me? What's going on in this? Because this is how the love of Christ compels him. This is how it constrains.

Brethren, if love doesn't make you think and make you reason and make you deduce the way that it does Paul, then you don't know anything about this, about the love of Christ, the way that he knows something about it. For Paul, the love of Christ constrained him in here.

One Died For All

And so what was it? What was he thinking? Ok. Look at the text. 5:14. "For the love of Christ controls us, because we've concluded this, that one has died for all." One has died for all. This is not all the world without exception. One has died for all. Now if you look at verses 14 and 15, you'll see that it says that Jesus died three times. I recognize that if you take just this, "Jesus died for all," I think if we properly understood the very next thing that's said, you could see that this isn't for everybody. But in case that isn't clear right at the moment, you can look at the third time here. Notice verse 15. "For their sake... died." There's the third reference to His death in these three verses. For whose sake did He die? You tell me. Who does it say? For whose sake? Those who live. For those who live that

they might no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for their sake. Or for their sake died and was raised. That's who we're talking about here. We're talking about Christians. He's dealing with all the redeemed. Brethren, He died. He died for us.

Now it's true, and right here in the context we can see this, did He die to reconcile us? Yes. Did He die that our sins might not be counted to us? Yes. Did He die to impute that righteousness whereby we would be the righteousness of God? If you go down to verses 19, 20, 21, you see exactly this truth. Jesus Christ died. The Lord laid the iniquity of us all upon Him. He took that in our place, in our stead, for us. Yes, that we might be forgiven. Yes, He who knew no sin, He became sin. He knew no sin. There was no sin. There was no fault. There was no blemish. No original sin. He was born of a woman, but He was conceived by the Spirit of God. He's without blemish. He's pure and He's perfect. And He became sin for us. It's for us. Why? That we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Yes, it's true that we need forgiveness. Yes, it's true that we need to be saved from hell. Yes, it's true that we need to be saved from that almighty vengeance. Yes, that's true and that's in the context here.

But brethren, as we're thinking, we need to think. We need to think that, but we need to think beyond that. Because in Paul's thinking, he's thinking beyond that. This "all" here is Christians, He died for us, and there's a logical inference in this. Therefore... look at the very end of verse 14. If He died for all, He died for all the redeemed. He died for those who are alive, that they may no longer live unto themselves, but for Him who for their sake died and was raised. Brethren, listen to his conclusion. Listen to the "therefore." "Therefore, all have died." All have died. Do you see what Paul's saying? They've all died. This is the same thing that he talks about over in Romans 6. He says that they're made alive. We die in Christ. We're made alive in Christ. This is speaking of our union with Him. But what you have to see, is that Paul does not leave the cross simply at our justification. He doesn't leave it simply at our forgiveness. Notice what he says. He died in order to do something.

The Implications of Christ's Death for Us

What is it? Brethren, did you hear brother John? He's talking to us about this life. The middle class American life. And what Paul says, is when I see the same One who ascended. He descended into the lower parts of this earth. I see Him. He humbled Himself. Not just as a man. He was a servant. You can imagine Him trembling as He brings that cup to His lips. Father, if it's possible, take this cup away. And the Father says it's not possible. And Paul's looking at this and saying, Why? Why? Why is He doing this? And he's not just seeing in it, yes, it's for my forgiveness, yes, it's that I might be reconciled, yes, it's that God might not count my sins to me. But it's more. It's more. We have to go beyond that. There's another reason in that cross. And he says it has everything to do with yours and my selfishness. Do you see that? Isn't that amazing that that's in there? Jesus Christ went that

you might die. The old man might die. He says in verse 17, we're new creations. The old has passed. All has become new. That's what's happening here. That's what he sees in the cross. But the old man, that's what dies. We died. He sees in that cross his union with Christ, and he says, did He die on that cross? And he says I've concluded something about that. I've concluded I'm reconciled. I've concluded I'm forgiven. But I've concluded something else by that death. I've concluded that in that death, He died that I might die to self. That I might die to my own selfishness. My own selfish ambition. And that I might really live. And that I might live for Him.

Brethren, that's what's going on. Why did He die? It says for our sake. Yes. But to accomplish what? Beyond forgiveness. Deliverance. You see what we need to be delivered from. And what Paul is saying is, I'm compelled by that. I'm compelled that He died to free me from my selfishness. How does that work? How does the love of Christ... Is He going to die in my place? Is He going to die in my stead? Can you see Him there on the ground in the garden? Is that bloody sweat for me? You notice he says, "for their sake." Sometimes we can say, Oh, God sent His Son to the cross for His sake. Yes, yes, he did. For His glory. But you don't want to say, well He didn't die for my sake. You don't want to say that. Because He did die for your sake. But He did not just die to free you from the guilt of sin. And that's what Paul is recognizing. For me? For me? That bloody sweat is for me? Look at those soldiers. The crown of thorns on His head, that's for me? He's being scourged, and it's for me? Under the dark sky of judgment. That's for me. And that's to put to death my own selfishness that I might live for Him. What wondrous love is this?

The Impact of Christ's Constraining Love

You see, this is how he's reasoning. He's going to do that for me. I'm constrained. This is like a vice. And you must not think of it in the wrong way. This isn't bondage. This isn't bondage. There's no freedom like this. These are the bonds of love, the cords of love. We like to be constrained this way. A man that throws his arms around his wife. Why? He's just compelled. You dive into that steak and you eat. It was good. You're compelled by an appetite. Those are good appetites. This is the utmost freedom.

Brethren, let me tell you something. If the greatest privilege imaginable to mankind is that Christ would go to the cross and die for your sins, well, think about that. Think about it. He died for me? He died that I might not live to myself. One of the greatest privileges that has been purchased for you as a Christian, is that you don't have to live for yourself, but for Him who for your sake, for your sake, He died and He was raised. We need more maniacs like Paul. We need people who are rational like Paul. We need people to think like that. We need to think like that. Think. Think. Think. Think about the cross. Come back to the cross again and again.

I'll tell you, the life John called us to live. Do you know what's going to set you free? It's when you think. It's when you think about the cross. It's when you think about the price that was paid in your behalf. The Lamb of God. Slain. For your sake. Brethren, this is wonderful! You will be constrained as you think. We have to come back to it again and again. If we're going to reason the way Paul did, we've got to ask questions of that cross. Why? Why did He do that? Did He do that so that I could have a better golf game? Did He do that for that?

Now look, I know, like Kevin's message yesterday, perhaps, perhaps there would be a place to live for Christ, to deny self there. I mean, you might have a lost family member that wants to take you out to a golf course. But you know what I'm saying. To go to the cartel held border areas. To go to Iraq. John didn't tell you. There was a time that John was in Iraq that the city he was in was attacked by ISIS. He said the local Christians were pretty disturbed. That's one way that we die to self. That's one way.

But it's moment by moment, Paul was a man who was constrained. You see what he's saying in verse 13. It was for God and for them. It's living for God and for the elect. It's living our life. It's zeal. And he's saying you want to know where it comes from? It comes from right here. There's a mastering motivating force at work in my life that has to do with the love of Christ, and I trace it back to the cross. And I look there to that cross, and it makes me think, and it makes me ask questions, and it makes me come to conclusions about why I'm here. It makes me come to conclusions about why God saved me.

The Privilege of Being Loved by Christ

Brethren, there has been no greater expression of love to mankind ever. Not ever. We are among some of the select few that have had such a privilege bestowed upon them, that the Son of God would die in our behalf. Paul says, is He going to die for me? Is He going to die that I might be one with Him? And that I die with Him? Is that why? That I might become a new creation? That I might have renewal? Not just forgiveness. That I might actually die to that selfish, proud Pharisee that I was. If that's why He died, then you know what? That constrains me, and I'm going to seek to strive after and live for the very reason that He died for me. And it constrains me. And it presses me.

Brethren, we have to think much more about the cross. Or at least, I say that because that's an expression of my own heart to you. I do. I feel like I'm in the Word all the time. But I don't feel like I all the time make the cross a study the way that I really feel that Paul did. And I recognize this, if we're going to be more like Paul, then we really have to focus on that cross, just as much as he did. Because that constrained him. And I'll tell you, when you let loose a people that are really moved upon and motivated by this kind of force, it will turn the world upside down. It really will. Brethren, to die to self One of the glorious,

blood-bought privileges of the children of God. That's what you see in these verses. You can't get away from it.

Conclusion

Well, brethren, I'll just say this. Think, brethren, think upon the cross. Think upon this love. Until you feel what Paul felt. Until you feel its constraining influence. Think. Think. Brethren, remember what it was like to be a lost sinner. Remember the pit that you've been dragged from. Christ shed His blood for you. In your behalf. He who feels Christ's love like Paul felt Christ's love, they're constrained to live like Christ lived. That's what I read of Paul's life. That's how I read these verses. Did Jesus die for me? For me? When I was His enemy? For me? Then, I'm going to live for Him. I'm constrained by that love. I'm going to live for Him. You see how the cross stimulates self-sacrifice? It stimulates sanctification. It makes a man beside himself.

I would just ask you this: You know, judge yourself; judge yourself in this. Can you say that? I know we might be able to say no, I'm not constrained by the love of Christ as much as I should be, but I am constrained by it. But judge yourselves. If you find in yourself: no, no, I don't think I am. Then we would say what's said here: Be reconciled to the God who alone can save you.

And to the Christian, to those who say yes, I am constrained by that love. I would just say to you, more. Think more. Let your mind be set on things above. This is one of the loftiest things that we can do with our minds. These are the best conclusions that you can come to with your mind. The conclusions about what the cross means to you. And to your life.

Father, we ask You give us fresh and new and glorious vision, views, manifestations of the cross. We thank You for the unspeakable gift that You've bestowed upon us. We thank You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.