

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2024**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
SECOND CORINTHIANS**

Message Nine

**Being Constrained by the Love of Christ
and
Living to the Lord**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 14:7-8

I. The love of Christ constrains us—2 Cor. 5:14:

- A. The Greek word rendered “constrain” means “to press on...from all sides, to hold...to one end, to forcibly limit, to confine to one object within certain bounds, to shut up to one line and purpose (as in a narrow, walled road).”
- B. The word *constrains* may also be translated “compels”; the love of Christ compels us and forcibly limits us.
- C. The constraining love of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:14 is the love that was manifested on the cross through Christ’s death for us—Gal. 2:20.
- D. If the choice had truly been ours, we would probably be somewhere else today:
 1. It is not up to us to make the choice; it is the love of Christ that constrains us.
 2. The love of Christ takes away our choice, our preference.
- E. This love constrains us to live not to ourselves but to live to the Lord—2 Cor. 5:15:
 1. Worldly people live to themselves, but the love of Christ constrains us to live to Him and not to ourselves.
 2. If we would live to the Lord, we must be constrained by the love of Christ; this love limits us, confining us to the narrow way that leads to the unique aim—Christ Himself.
- F. We need to devote ourselves to the Lord in His constraining love—v. 14.

II. Christ died for us so that we may no longer live to ourselves but live to the Lord—v. 15:

- A. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 Paul does not speak of living for the Lord, by the Lord, or with the Lord; he speaks of living to the Lord:
 1. To live to the Lord is to take Him as the aim of our living; in everything that we do, Christ should be our unique aim—Rom. 14:7-8.
 2. To live to the Lord means that we are under the leading and the constraining of the Lord to fulfill His demand, satisfy His desire, and accomplish His purpose—2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10.
 3. The apostles were determined to live to the Lord, to be well pleasing to Him:
 - a. They were absolutely under the Lord, under His leading, restraint, and control.
 - b. Everything they did was for the accomplishment of the Lord’s desire and purpose—2 Cor. 5:9, 15.
 4. We should not seek to please ourselves but seek to please the Lord by living to Him—v. 15.
- B. Christ died for our sins so that we may be forgiven, and He died for us so that we may live to Him—1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14-15:

1. Christ's death not only saves us from death so that we do not need to die, but it also causes us, through His resurrection, to live no longer to ourselves but to Him:
 - a. To live to ourselves means that we are under our own control and direction and that we care for our own aims and goals.
 - b. To live to the Lord means that we are under the Lord's control and direction and that we want to satisfy Him and fulfill His purpose.
2. Living to the Lord is deeper in significance than living for the Lord—Rom. 14:7-8:
 - a. *To the Lord* implies that we are the Lord's possession, that we already belong to Him; *for the Lord* implies that we are still our own and are according to our pleasure and convenience.
 - b. Living for the Lord implies that I and the Lord are still two; living to the Lord indicates that I am one with the Lord, as the wife is one with the husband in married life.
- C. Living to the Lord is based upon the fact that we are the Lord's; we belong to Him—v. 8:
 1. We need to realize that the Lord bought us with the great price of His precious blood—1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.
 2. Now He is our Lord and Master, and we belong to Him.
 3. All that we have, all that we do, and all that we are, are to Him; everything is wholly to Him, and now we should live to Him.
- D. As a whole, 2 Corinthians 4 and 5 reveal that to live to the Lord means to live the kind of life that the Lord Jesus lived:
 1. Paul experienced the putting to death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his body—4:10-11.
 2. When we experience the putting to death of Jesus, we can live the kind of life Jesus lived—a crucified life; therefore, to live to the Lord is to live a crucified life.
 3. When we live to Christ, we do not live by our outer man; rather, we live by our inner man, by our regenerated spirit—v. 16.
 4. Living to the Lord in 2 Corinthians 5:15 is equal to walking according to the spirit in Romans 8:4.
- E. We live to the Lord through His resurrection, the issue of His death—2 Cor. 5:15:
 1. In ourselves, by our natural life, we cannot live to the Lord; only through Christ's resurrection—that is, only through the issue of His death—are we able to live to Him.
 2. To be constrained by the love of Christ means to remain in His death, which will bring in the enjoyment of His resurrection, and in the resurrection of Christ, we live to Him—4:10-12; 5:15.
- F. Our living to the Lord proves that we are His and that He is our Lord, who died for us to purchase us to Himself—Rom. 14:7-8; Rev. 5:9:
 1. Our living to the Lord is a declaration that we belong to Him and that He is our Lord—2 Cor. 5:15.
 2. Since we belong to the Lord, we take Him as the only aim in our life, and we live to Him.
 3. Living to Christ is expressed in a hymn—"Jesus, I live to Thee, / The Loveliest and Best; / My life in Thee, Thy life in me, / In Thy blest love I rest"—*Hymns*, #504, stanza 1.
- G. Living to the Lord is the real meaning of being "a full-timer"—one who is serving the Lord full time—2 Cor. 5:15:
 1. To be a full-timer does not mean that we need to give up our job.
 2. To be a full-timer means that whatever we do, we do to the Lord; whatever we are, we are to the Lord; and whatever we have, we have to the Lord.
 3. To be to the Lord and live to the Lord mean that we are one with Him.
 4. We do not live to ourselves but to the Lord.
 5. We all should be like this—living to the Lord.