

"Well-pleasing unto him." - Paul gives evidence in this chapter of his great ambition. "We are ambitious," he says, "to be well-pleasing unto him." Paul has been completely mastered by the Christ. The master motive of his life is to be well-pleasing to Him. This deep undertone comes to the surface often in his epistles. He is like the musician who cares nought for the applause of the audience if he can catch the eye of approval from the master who taught him. Perhaps today a fresh look at the unwearied Christ will spur us on to the best and to the highest.

In the 10th verse, he says, "For we must all be made manifest before the judgement seat of Christ." The solemn outlook is not confined to preachers but to everyone of us who claims to know the Christ. We must be made manifest, like an open book, right in the presence of Christ. The judgement seat of God, at the end of the day, awaits all of us, and there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight.

Paul continues by saying in the 11th verse, "We persuade men." He probably means "We try to persuade men." In some instances Paul was successful, but not in all of them. One incentive before Paul at this moment is the fear of the Lord. With the judgement seat of God in mind, he seeks to be faithful to the men of his generation. Paul's knowledge of the terror of the Lord made him zealous to persuade men.

The 14th verse gives us the center of this beautiful chapter - the grip of Christ's love. "For the love of Christ constraineth us." They may think him crazy or crafty as they will, but that is a small matter to Paul. He has caught a vision of Christ's love for him as shown by his death for us all. We who have been saved by Christ now longer belong to ourselves. We are to live unto Christ. We are bondslaves of Christ, purchased by the blood of Christ. The word constrain is a bold one. It is used of those in the grip of various diseases. Peter's mother-in-law was held in the power of a fever. The Gadarenes were seized with great fear when they saw what Christ had done to the demoniac. The multitudes pressed Jesus together almost to suffocation. Paul held himself continuously to the word of preaching. These different passages give us the use of that same Greek word. The love of Christ holds Paul fast. "O love that will not let me go." In a sense Paul has no choice since as in a vice he is held fast by the love of Christ. It is the magnet of love that is irresistible. The mother is the slave of her sick child. For this high pressure together creates a mighty propulsion and energy. The constraint is not restraint; it is impulse. The boiler that holds the steam makes possible the onward pressure that drives the engine and pulls the train. The love of Christ "presses me hard." I have no rest save in pushing on for Christ. It is the master passion of Paul's life. (See Acts 18:9f) He has found the secret of real life - it is Christ.

The ministry of reconciliation as pictured for us in the 18th and 19th verses of this 5th chapter is one that will engage us and call us to the highest endeavor. In Christ we see God reconciling the world to himself. We have the picture of God endeavoring to reconcile the world to himself through Christ. The love of God prompts the whole effect. Christ is the mediator between God and men. He must speak the word of reconciliation to those who otherwise will not know of God's love and pardon in Christ or who, if they know, will not heed. It is a work worthy of angels. He cannot hope to be successful without the help of the Holy Spirit whom God is anxious to bestow. (Luke 11:13) The minister is the interpreter of Christ to men, and in order to win men back to God. There is no earthly task so delicate and fraught with such results in time and eternity. We are God's co-workers in this great enterprise. (I Cor. 3:9)

The 20th verse begs us, "Be ye reconciled to God." Paul says, "We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ as though God were entreating by us." The word for being an ambassador is one of great dignity. It is common among the ancient writers. Paul is fully conscious of the great commission which he bears from God on behalf of Christ. In a word, Paul, as all ministers are, is God's spokesman to men. He comes with authoritative word as the ambassador from the court of Heaven to plead the cause

of Christ with men whom God so loved that he gave his Son to die for them. It is surely a remarkable proof of God's love that he sends forth ambassadors to beg men to receive his pardon in Christ for their sins. Paul is thoroughly convinced of the reality of sin. He never gets out of sight of Christ. He is Christ's ambassador. He must make his report to Christ. He is to appear at the judgement seat of Christ. He longs to be well-pleasing to Christ. Meanwhile the love of Christ holds him steadily to his ministry of reconciliation to bring on the new order in the world. These men for whom Christ died are worth saving. They were worth Christ dying for them. They are worth our living for them. May God grant to make us good witnesses of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Notes on the Epistles" - A. T. Robertson

The 5th chapter, verse 11 - "the fear of the Lord" - Many today regard this as a played-out motive, but not so Paul. He has in mind verse 10 with the picture of the judgement seat of Christ. We persuade, he says; in other words, we try to persuade. It is always hard work.

Verse 14 - "the love of Christ constrains us" - "Sunechei" means to hold together, to press the ears together, to press on every side, to hold fast, to hold oneself to, to press. So here Paul's conception of Christ's love for him holds him together to his task whatever men think or say.

Verse 17 - "a new creature" - In this we see that a fresh start is made.

Verse 20 - "We are ambassadors therefore" - An ambassador, in Eph. 6:20 and in other passages, indicates a man who has to be persona grata with both countries. Paul has a natural pride in this dignified term for himself and for all ministers. Paul was Christ's legate to act in his behalf and in his stead. The private life must be such as to make men willing to trust him. Here God speaks through Christ's legate. "Get reconciled to God and do it now." This is the ambassador's message as he bears it to men from God.

Verse 21 - "He made to be sin" - the words "to be" are not in the Greek. Sin here is the substantive not the verb. God treated as sin one who knew no sin. This fact throws some light on the tragic cry of Jesus just before he died: "My God, my God, why didst thou forsake me?" "That we might become" - note "bedome". This is God's purpose in what he did and in what Christ did.

Notes from Professor Hodge:

Verse 11 - Influenced, says the apostle, by the fear of the Lord, I persuade men. What this means is somewhat doubtful. The word _____ expresses the endeavor to convince, as in Acts 18:4.

Verse 14 - "Constraineth us", i.e. controls and governs us. The word sunechei means also to restrain, a sense which many adopt here. The love of Christ restrains me from acting for myself. This a more limited sense, and is not required by the usage of the word which is often used to express the idea of being pressed as by a crowd, or figuratively, by calamity or sorrow. The love of Christ constrains us. It coerces, or presses, and therefore impels. It is the governing influence which controls the life. It is being so constrained by a sense of the love of our divine Lord to us that we consecrate our lives to him.

Verse 15 - "Do not live unto themselves" - Self is not the object for which they live. This is the negative description of the Christian. He is a man who does not live

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Let us look for a moment at the wonderful mystery of a beseeching God and on the other hand the mystery of men refusing the divine beseeching. Christ, the Son of God, and God the Father are praying that men may be reconciled. "We are ambassadors on Christ's behalf as though God did beseech you by us." We pray on Christ's behalf. Christ is the pleader. Then God is beseeching. Then Christ is again entreating and praying that men may be reconciled.

To sue for love, to beg that an enemy will put away his enmity is part of the inferior rather than the part of the superior; the part of the offender rather than the offended; the part of the vanquished rather than the victor; surely not the part of the king but the part of the rebel. Love upon the throne bends down to ask of the rebel that lies powerless and fallen at his feet, and yet is not conquered until his heart be won, that he will put away all the bitterness out of his heart and come back to the love and the grace which are ready to pour out over him. He against whom we have transgressed prays us to be reconciled to him.

We are ambassadors on Christ's behalf. We pray you, not merely in Christ's stead, but on his account as if it lay very near his heart, that we should put away our enmity. As we look upon Christ's life, we find that the secret of his whole life was the stretching out, imploring, and welcoming hands to men and praying them to grasp his hand and be saved. Look at him on the cross - the very sublime of entreaty is seen there. The piercing note of pathetic invitation that sounds from that cross. Christ that died, in his dying breath, calls to us and the blood of sprinkling speaks better things than that of Able (?). "Come unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." He begs us, even though you and I deserve different treatment. God pleads with you; he pleads with you because there is nothing in his heart for any of you but love, and the desire to bless you. He pleads with you because unless you will let him, he cannot lavish upon you his richest gifts and his highest blessing. He pleads with you, and beneath the level of your alienation and reluctance, saying, "My son, give me thy heart. Be ye reconciled to God."

On the other side of the picture, man is refusing a beseeching God. That is the great paradox in history. It is an awful and solemn power that every little poor speck of humanity has to lift itself up in God's face and say, in answer to all his pleadings, "I will not." The door opens from within. "If any man open, I will come in." Hence the beseeching; hence the wail, the cries, the urging, Love that stands at the entering in of the city, pleads in vain. "I have called and you have refused. How often would I have gathered you, and you would not." What an awful responsibility is on you to accept or to refuse the pleading of the entreating Christ. Let me remind you that the act of refusal is a very simple one. Not to accept is to reject. Not to yield is to rebel. You have only to do nothing to do at all. In refusing, you refuse the highest good and choose your utter ruin. It is not only supreme folly, it is the climax of all guilt. Look at the cross and hear him that hangs there pleading with you. Do not refuse. "We beseech you in Christ's behalf, be ye reconciled to God."

a grave note. "Be well pleasing unto Him -

Judgment seat - manifest - books open - render an account
 "Knowing the fear of the Lord" - fear due to righteous Judge.
Persuades men - [Win them to Christ or
 Convince men of our disinterestedness] -

The Love of Christ Constrains -
 Christ has hold of him on both sides - urges him on
 in a course which he cannot avoid -
 He has no choice - He is in His grasp -
 Irresistible constraint -

Christ died our death -
 We are not our own - bought with a price - ransom.

"He reconciled us" -
 "He gave us the spirit of reconciliation" - 18, 19
 "deposited with us the message of reconciliation" -
 "gave to us the ministry of reconciliation" -
 God has done His part in Christ's death -
 "Here is God's reconciliation. receive it" -
 "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"
 "No condemnation to those who were in Christ Jesus" -

On Christ's behalf he comes forward - He is furthering Christ's interest
 "We are ambassadors" - } Contrast / stand on his dignity - maintain
 "We beseech" "beg" - } greatness of person he represents
 Paul, here, is preaching the gospel in the spirit of Christ
 [Saul, the Pharisee,] now, fire that burned in Christ
 has caught his soul -
 says - "accept His offered friendship & salvation - Believe
 that He has at infinite cost put away all that
 on His part stood between you & peace & life -