

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

Charlie DiPalma

LESSON #40 — OUR OBLIGATION TO THE LORD, PART 1

But since the Father and Jesus have done all of these things, to make it possible for us to have Jesus as our best friend, surely, we are obligated to return that love to the Lord, and to those who are around us in our daily lives. And we want to use that foundation of the fact that Jesus is our best friend, to look at some things that should grow out of our recognition of that fact. Our love for the Lord should lead us to do certain things. Let's look at several passages of Scripture to establish that point in the Bible.

Let's look first in the book of Ephesians, the third chapter, verses 17-19. Ephesians 3, verses 17-19. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Now, God talking through the apostle Paul tells us, that we ought to allow Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith, that we ought to let Him live in us through our faith in Him, and through the faith of the gospel of Christ. Allow Christ to live in our hearts.

And then he says that we ought to be rooted and grounded in love. We ought to have as our foundation, our love for God, and His love for us, as shown so beautifully in His beloved Son Jesus. And it ought to keep us rooted and grounded in the gospel, that we have such a great show of love that has been given to us, by God in His Son. And that's something that is special to us. And he says, that we may be able to comprehend or understand with all of the saints, the great dimensions of the love of Christ: the height, the depth, the width, the length. God is saying, His love is so tremendous that it ought to fill our hearts and minds, it ought to fill our lives, and it ought to be manifested, shown in our lives in serving others. He said that love of Christ passes knowledge, that is, there is no greater show or manifestation of love than that which the Father has shown to us in His beloved Son, and then that which Jesus has shown for us, in His life, humiliation, suffering, death, blood, resurrection, and ruling in heaven as King of kings, and Lord of lords. So we ought to be rooted and grounded in this love of Christ. And we ought to know that love of Christ, and allow that love to fill our hearts and minds, that we might be more like Him every day of our life.

Then in the book of 2 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 9, verse 15, 2 Corinthians 9, verse 15. "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." Paul, at the end of this context, bursts out in thanksgiving to God. And we believe that the gift that He's talking about in this particular context is the gift that those faithful Christians had given to help other Christians who were in need at that particular time. But what we want to focus in on is that the attitude of thanksgiving expressed by Paul, and the way that we ought to follow that example. In our case, we ought to be thankful to God for the gift that He has given to us. We ought to be thankful to God, that through His grace, He has made possible salvation through His Son, and

all that He has done for us, and all that He is doing for us today, in His capacity, as King of kings and Lord of lords. So our hearts ought to be filled with thanksgiving to God, and people ought to know: this person truly is thankful to God for what He has done for me.

Then also, in the book of 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 14 and 15. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 14 and 15. "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." We ought to allow the love of Christ to constrain us. The word translated "constrain" means to confine, to restrict. And I believe the idea that God is revealing to us here is, that we ought to let Christ's love for us, and our love for Him, constrict us to the straight and narrow road, which He has given to us, in His Word, the New Testament of Jesus Christ. We ought to constrain ourselves, we ought to restrict ourselves, deny ourselves of those things that are wrong, and walk in the path that Jesus walked. Follow Him, and our motivation being: our love for Him, and His love for us.

That word also has in it, the meaning of: it motivates us, it compels us, the love of Christ pushes us to do the things that He says we should do in His Word. That love, if it's rooted and grounded in our hearts, then will motivate us to do something. What does he say in this verse? He talks about the fact that one died for all. We know of course, the one to whom he was referring, was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He died for all mankind, including you and me, and that thought ought to fill our hearts and minds, too. And he says, "One died for all," then all had died. And he's talking about all human beings who are responsible, who have the ability to do what God says, died spiritually, in their trespasses and sins. And thus, we needed someone to give us the ability to have new life, to be born anew. And, of course, that someone was Jesus, who came and lived and died, so that we can live, and live eternally in Him.

But then in verse 15, God tells us that Jesus died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves. We should not be selfish, we should not be self-centered. Instead, we should be selfless and centered on others, and centered on Jesus. He said we should no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died for them, and rose again. So Jesus died so that we should live for Him and not ourselves. Every day of our life, then, should be dedicated to Him. We should be striving to live His way, according to His will. And our motive, the propelling force that encourages us to do that is our love for Him, and His love for us, as manifested in all of the things that we've studied in this particular lesson. So we need to let Christ's love for us and our love for Him, constrain us to live for Him who died for us.

Then in John's account of the gospel, in chapter 14, verse 15. John 14, verse 15. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Very simple words, but it requires effort on our part to live those words. Jesus said, "Here's the test of your love for Me. If you truly love Me, you'll strive to keep my commandments, you'll strive to be obedient to Me." So that love that constrains us, constrains us, compels us, to obey Jesus, because we love Him, and because He's manifested His wonderful love for you and me.

And we see that thought also, in Galatians chapter 2, verse 20. Galatians, chapter 2, verse 20. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." What a beautiful passage of scripture that is. The apostle Paul here, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is giving us a pattern, a model to follow. He said, "I have been

crucified with Christ.” Now we need to think about, when we read that verse, is he saying that he literally was crucified with Christ? No, that's not what he was saying. He was still alive, when he wrote those words. Then what is he saying? He's saying that when he was converted to the Lord, when he was willing to obey the gospel of Christ, including his baptism into Christ, that Paul decided he was going to kill his old manner of life. He was going to crucify that old selfish person that he used to be. He was going to nail that old person to the cross, and no longer strive to live that selfish, ungodly life. And that's what God wants of us. He wants us to crucify that old person. And He wants us to work daily to strive, to have less of us living in us, and more of Christ.

Paul said, “It is not I who lives, but Christ lives in me.” Do you see the replacement, the substitution, that Paul was talking about? He's saying to us, "You take yourself and you put yourself down, your selfish desires and interests and wants, and you elevate Christ in your life. You allow Christ to be seen in the way that you think, and talk, and act, the deeds you do.

And he said, “The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” Do we want to know how it is that we can have Christ living in us? That's the inspired answer. We have to live our lives by the faith of Jesus Christ, that is, by the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We have to be reading and filling our hearts and minds with His Word, and meditating upon it, and striving to live it in our lives. That's how we'll replace ourselves with Jesus Christ in us.

And notice the bright ray of hope, and the bright joy that is at the end of this passage. Paul said, speaking of Jesus, “Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” To Paul, Jesus was not some abstract person, far, far away from his mind. To Paul, Jesus was real, and He was alive. And he knew in his heart that Jesus loved him and gave Himself for him, and that pushed him to be the kind of person that he was. And when you and I think that way, we're going to be more like Jesus. And that's what God wants us to do. Allow that love to fill our hearts and push us to live like Jesus, and for Jesus, every day of our life while we're here.

Then in the book of Ephesians, the fifth chapter, and verse 24. Ephesians 5, verse 24. "Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” We want to focus in on the first part of that passage of Scripture. God tells us that the church is to be subject to Christ. That is, the church is to submit to Christ, to be obedient to Christ, to yield our will to His will. When there is a conflict, we deny ourselves, and we do what He says to do. That's something that you and I need to strive to improve in every day. Saying to ourselves, we must deny ourselves, and we must submit ourselves to Jesus, because that's a command from God. Who is the church, the church is individual Christians, purchased with the blood of Jesus. And so he says we ought to submit ourselves to Christ, we ought to be His slaves, His servants, who commit ourselves totally to Him, our body, our mind, our soul, all of us, needs to be in submission to our Lord Jesus.

Then in 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 5, another passage of Scripture. 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5. “Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Now we want to focus in on the last part of that particular verse, and see that God is telling us that we ought to bring every thought into captivity, unto the obedience of Christ. Picture in your mind, a person who is on a horse, and he's going after a calf, a small cow, and he has in his hands a

rope that he's going to use to throw around the neck of that calf, and bring that calf back to him, and bring it into captivity. That's the kind of picture language that God is using for you and me here. Sometimes, our thoughts stray, they go in directions they ought not to go. They go in areas where God would not have our thoughts to be. So, we need to constantly be on guard and be vigilant, and bring those thoughts back into captivity, bring them back under control. With what goal? To the obedience of Christ. That is to the point where we obey Him, where we do what He wants us to do. So we're talking about a war here, a battle, if you will, a battle for our mind. Satan wants us to stray, and to allow our thoughts to stray into areas that don't belong, and continue in those areas. But God wants us to maintain self discipline, and self control, and bring our thoughts and our mind under control so that we will obey Christ.

And I also think that God is saying, here's the standard of your obedience. That is, here's the pattern of your obedience. What is that? The obedience that Christ showed while He was here on this earth. And as we've seen, He obeyed to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians chapter 2). So God wants us to bring our minds under control, bring our thoughts into captivity, with our goal being: obeying Christ, and obeying like Christ.

Then in the book of Philippians, Philippians chapter 1, verse 20 and 21. Philippians 1, verse 20 and 21. "According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" What a wonderful passage this is. Paul talks about his great expectation in his hope, that he would never do anything that he would be ashamed of. And that's a goal. We know that we do fall short. But we need to have high goals like this, that we would never do anything that we would be ashamed of before God.

And then he talks about his desire, that Christ should be magnified in His body. What do we think of when we think of something being magnified? We think of something being made larger, being made clear, seeing clearly. So what's Paul saying? People ought to be able to see Jesus Christ in our lives. And that was Paul's goal, to live in such a way that people could see in him, Jesus Christ. And that's what we ought to do. Every day we ought to strive to get a little better at showing others Jesus, by our thoughts, by our words, by our deeds. And he says, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Now, there's an interesting thought. Paul is saying that, "Whether I live, or I die, as I live, I'm going to magnify Christ, I'm going to show Him to others." And even in my death, I am going to show Jesus, I'm going to show my love for Him, my dedication to Him, my willingness to give all for Him, even to die, like He died.

And in verse 21, he said, "For to me to live is Christ." Christ is not something that we put up on the shelf, on days other than when we go and worship the Lord, or study the Bible with our Christian brothers and sisters. He is our life, our reason for living, our purpose in life is to be like Him, and to live for Him. And if we have that attitude, we will be like Paul, in saying that, "To die is gain." That is, it is profitable. It is valuable. Why? Because the Christian will depart and be with Christ, which is far better, Paul says later in this context in Philippians 1. So we ought to live in such a way that we magnify, show others, Jesus and glorify Him in our daily life. We hope that each one of us, including myself, will strive in the period between this class

and the next, to live in such a way that Christ is magnified in our body, by our life, or our death.