

LifeGroups 2.3—Compelled by Love 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Introduction

- [Video] http://www.muslimjourneytohope.com/testimonies/testimony_afshin.wmv
- Stop at minute 17:18
- That, right there, is 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. [Slide #1]

Big Idea

- **Taste the love of God and be on mission with Jesus**
- That guy, a devout and sincere Muslim, goes from being antagonistic to Christianity to experiencing the love God has for him to being on mission with Jesus. That's what it's all about. *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.* The power of God's love compels all who've tasted that love to be on mission with Jesus, without exception. **Taste the love of God and be on mission with Jesus.**

Transition

This morning I want to try to describe more specifically what exactly Jesus' mission entails—it is a mission resulting from the love God has for us. Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Paul describes here...

Organizational Sentence

- **Two results of God's love in our life**
- These two things define what it means to be on mission with Jesus. They are one and the same as the mission Jesus launched. In other words, if you want to be living out, doing the mission Jesus launched it means these two things.

Transition

Look at verses 16 and the **first result** of God's love. God's love changes how we view people. [Slide #2] Very simply, the mission Jesus launched means **viewing people mercifully**. Look at **verse 16**. *So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.* You can't do this, become this on your own.

Main Points

- Just as the guy in the video described, it is the love of God that transforms our view of people. Because of his love for us we are able to see people for who they are, created in God's image, already loved by him, and still in their sin. Before Christ, before being compelled by love, the only way we are able to view people is as Paul says, *from a worldly point of view*. But once God's love changes us, we are thrust out and onto the mission Jesus launched, and with transformed eyes, see people in a new way, the way Jesus saw them.

- Do you remember the parable of the Good Samaritan? In my mind this story Jesus told, better than any other, describes the difference between seeing people from a worldly point of view versus seeing them from the vantage point of God's transforming love. Turn to **Luke 10:30**. Listen to what Jesus says.
- *"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.*
- *33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*
- To be on the mission Jesus launched is to see people, not from a *worldly point of view* like the Priest or the Levite, but with mercy, pity, compassion like the Samaritan. In this parable, the first two men, the Priest and the Levite, without excuse, showed total lack of concern for the man beaten lying half dead by the side of the road.¹ Jesus even says the Levite not only saw the beaten man and passed him by but saw him, walked up for a close inspection, and then passed the man by. Total lack of compassion. Total lack of mercy. Total lack of love. Think **2 Corinthians 5:16**. Uncompelled by the love of God, therefore seeing people from a worldly point of view.
- How many people, by chance, without you asking, stumble into your life only for you to pass them by because your superficial judgments about them or because of their external appearance?
- Of the three in Jesus' story only the last man, only the Samaritan, the one least expected to show mercy, looked beyond external appearances and saw the beaten man the way Jesus would have seen him. And the Samaritan's vision of the man prompted him to action. Jesus says the Samaritan went to the man. That, by itself, was more than the Priest or Levite did. He bandaged his wounds. He poured wine on them to disinfect them and then oil as a medicinal. He put the man on his own pack animal and led the man to an inn. He served him; only a servant would lead their master around in this way. He took care of the man. And then when it was time for the Samaritan to resume his journey, he paid the man's debt.
- To be on the mission Jesus launched is to be the Samaritan. It is to look upon others, not from a worldly point of view, but with eyes of mercy and compassion and be so compelled by that mercy that action follows. "Mercy [by definition] is compassion in

¹ Osborne, p. 68.

action."² "[Mercy] expresses the attitude of complete willingness to use all means, time, strength, and life, for saving at the crucial moment."³

- Listen to me. The irony of this story is that, culturally speaking, a Samaritan would never have helped a Jew like Jesus tells this story. Jesus turns everything upside down. Being on the mission Jesus launched means doing the same. It's easy to help people who are like you, educated like you, same position in life as you are. That's called helping church people. And that's not the mission Jesus launched. The mission is purposefully stepping into someone else's mess; someone you normally would never touch with a 10 foot pole and showing them what love is.
- Why? Because that's exactly what God did for us. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* Back to **2 Corinthians**. God doesn't treat us as we deserve. He doesn't count our sin against us, [verse 19](#). He shows us mercy. And pours out our punishment for sin onto Christ. In place of punishment, He gives us righteousness, [verse 21](#). He sees us as without sin, righteous like Christ. Because God has loved us this way, *from now on we as followers of Jesus regard no one from a worldly point of view.*

Transition

I need you to see something else. To be on the mission Jesus launched means mercifully meeting the needs of others, [verse 16](#); but it also means sharing a specific message, [verses 17-21](#). [Slide #3] **The love God has for us compels us to a message of peace.** Look at [verse 17](#).

- *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
- To be on the mission Jesus launched is to bring a very specific message to people. [Verse 20](#). *We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.* To be on the mission Jesus launched is to plead with people to receive this message. The message of reconciliation is not that God is love so therefore we must all get along with each other. That's not the message. The message is defined by what Paul says back in [verses 18- 19](#). *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.*
- Reconciliation has to do with our status before God. The reality of the situation is dire. Without God people are far worse off than the man beaten lying at the side road in Jesus' parable. The reality is, apart from God's reconciling love, we are his

² *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 547.

³ *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, p. 600.

enemies. We have no peace with God, only strife. The *message he has committed to us, verse 19, is the message of reconciliation*. God reconciles our condition; he brings peace to the check book, if you will, by counting Christ as sin, and *not counting men's sins against them* so that we can receive God's forgiveness, so that we can have peace with God. That's the message. That's the only message. We got nothing else.

- Paul says in [verse 20](#) we share this message as ambassadors. Ambassadors speak on behalf of governments, right? They don't speak what they want to speak. Can you imagine if the U.S. ambassador to North Korea just decided to say what he felt like saying? They speak as they are told to speak. We have a very specific message; the message of peace with God. God loves you so much that He *made him who had no sin to be sin for you, so that in him you might become the righteousness of God*. .
- But more than just speaking, more than just delivering a message, “ambassadors are authorized to act on behalf of the sender.”⁴ The message we are to speak, we do so *as though God were making his appeal through us, verse 20*. It's in sharing this message that we go from being a churchgoer to being on the mission Jesus launched.
- Listen to me. Meeting people's physical needs without sharing with them this message of peace with God through the death of Christ is to miss, both far and wide, the mission Jesus launched. Social justice, social action without this message of peace isn't the mission Jesus launched. It's half the mission. The more important half is this message of peace.
- I want you to flip back to [Luke 10](#). Jesus tells us how this message actually plays out on the mission. *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. 5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.*
- This mission of proclaiming peace with God through the death of Christ is not just for pastors or trained seminarians or professional missionaries. It's your mission to share this message. And in order to do that you have to be an expert on this message—you have to know it backwards and forwards, you have to know this message of peace so well it comes out as easily, as naturally as a sneeze.
- Do you see the simplicity of what you are asked to do? LifeGroups 2.3 is about us, in small witnessing communities, being so compelled by the love God has for us that we see people differently, with mercy. Jesus never sent anyone out alone, they were always in pairs. And together, when we act to meet people's needs and then share with them this message of peace we're on the mission. That's it. That's the mission. Two things. You do these two things and you're on the mission Jesus launched.

Conclusion

- [\[Slide #4\]](#) Again all of this is moot if you haven't personally experienced God's love

⁴ *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 60.

yourself. The mission is a result of His love. The more you know and can speak of his love the more the mission will just ooze out of you, it becomes part of you. So I want to end this morning with the same appeal Paul makes in [verse 21](#). *I implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.* Are you reconciled to Him?