

The Love of Christ Constrains

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath emphasizes the transformative power of Christ's love, which compels believers to live as new creations in Him, embodying His message of reconciliation to the world.

Duration: 1:00:02

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 5:15-17, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Philippians 3:1, Philippians 4:1

Topics: "Love Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of being on a plane that faced difficulties during takeoff. Despite the challenges, the plane managed to take off and ascend to a safe altitude. The speaker then draws a parallel between this experience and the Christian life, emphasizing the power of the law of the spirit of life in Christ that sets believers free from the law of sin and death. The sermon highlights the concepts of substitution and identification, explaining how Jesus' death on the cross serves as a substitution for our sins and how believers are identified with Christ in his victory over sin and death.

Transcript

Welcome to a convention meeting. We're going to open with the familiar hymn 187. Praise my soul, the king of heaven, to his feet thy tribute bring.

May we bring the tribute of our hearts in this time of worship. Hymn 187. Let us unite our hearts.

Almighty God, our loving heavenly father, we thank thee for this further opportunity to join with those in the family of God and to praise our God and father. Father, we praise thee because thou art a great God and greatly to be praised. We praise thee for all thy wondrous works.

As we look round about us and see the splendor of this universe, thy handiwork, Lord, we rejoice. As we recognize afresh thy power and thy might. But we thank thee, heavenly father, that thou has revealed thyself to us in the person of thy son, Jesus Christ.

And we thank you there that we see love and compassion, mercy, long-suffering, patience, and grace. Oh, heavenly father, we thank thee that in Jesus we see the face of the living and the true God. We thank thee that we see the full expression of thy love as we turn our thoughts to Calvary and see the son of God who loved us and gave himself for us.

We thank thee for that work of atonement, recognizing that salvation is of the Lord. And through the perfect work of the cross, we are indeed, as the hymn is reminded us, ransomed, healed, restored, and forgiven. So we praise thee, almighty God, for that wondrous work of redemption, for the wonder, the miracle of rebirth to be adopted by thy spirit and brought into the family of God.

This morning, heavenly father, we give thee worship as thy dearly loved children. And we come with a sense of need. We long this morning to hear the father's voice.

We just pray, heavenly father, to prepare our hearts that by thy spirit, Lord, that would give to us a sense of expectancy, that would give us ears to hear, hearts to understand, and wills to respond, that everything might redound to thy praise, glory, and honor for Jesus' sake. Amen. Good morning, everyone.

Thank you very much. Let's sing a chorus together, shall we? Not in the book, we had it last evening. Thank you, God, for sending Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus, that you came. Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about his lovely name? New Testament, 2nd Corinthians, chapter 5. 2nd Corinthians 5, and we read some verses here, and then sing that chorus again for our morning. 2nd Corinthians, chapter 5. And we read from verse 10.

I am reading from the Authorized Version. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

But we are made manifest unto God, and our trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again to you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause, for the love of Christ's constraineth us.

Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you, in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, he who knew no sin, that we might remain the righteousness of God in him.

This is the word of the Lord. Shall we sing that chorus with bowed head and bowed heart before the Lord. Thank you God for sending Jesus.

Be still and know that he is God. The smallest of meetings becomes the greatest, when we recognize the presence of the Lord Jesus, and that he has something to say to each one of us from his word. Ask him to speak to your heart.

Thank you dear Lord for all that you have been saying to us thus far this week. When we come to you this morning, as hungry as ever. For if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we shall be filled.

Therefore Lord, we trust you to fulfill that promise, to hide the messenger behind the Lord. That he may be the only one who shall matter. Help me to make much of you, Lord Jesus, get the glory in each one of our lives today.

In Jesus name, Amen. Now you have your New Testament open at 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, I hope. 2nd Corinthians chapter 5. Let me just read verse 17 to you, as it appears in the authorized version.

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

Slight difference in the RSV or the NIV, both of which put it this way. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come.

That's Paul's definition of a Christian. Perhaps one of the most dynamic and revealing definitions of a man or woman of God that you can find anywhere in the New Testament. If anyone, not the few people who decide to live their lives on a different standard from others, but if anyone is in Christ, that is, in whose life the miracle of the new birth has taken place, they've been born from above.

And like the branch is in the tree, the vine, and the vine, the tree, is in the soil, he's in Christ. And he's a new creation. New, as the real word is, not in the sense of buying a new coat or buying something new like that, but in a sense of being a totally different kind of person altogether.

I rather like the Living Bible paraphrase of it, which says, when anyone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He's not the same anymore. A new life has begun.

That's thrilling. Because at the moment of new birth, there's come to live within us a new life. And because of that, we should be governed by new principles, arrested by new motives, moving in new company, and surrendered to a new objective.

This isn't a question of somebody reforming their lives and making them a bit more religious, and trying to be good, and getting some new things in place of some old ones. Not changing a few practices, but if anyone is in Christ, he's a totally different kind of person. All things have passed away.

All things have become new. Notice the contrast. If anyone, all things, the Holy Spirit isn't in us and hasn't come in order to produce a few super-deluxe people who call themselves Christians.

A few super-deluxe people and leaving the rest of us all third class. But he's come, as Watchman Nee would say, to enable us to live a normal Christian life. And that prompts me to ask this question this morning to you.

I've already been asking it to myself. What sort of a person am I? If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. All right.

What sort of people are we? If that's the New Testament definition of a Christian, how come? That I am what I am. And in the light of some conditions that exist in Britain today, I believe that's one of the most significant questions we as Christians should face. We claim to be in Christ, and therefore have him in us.

And therefore, what kind of people are we? You notice that this verse begins with the word, therefore. And of course, whenever you have that word, you ask, what is therefore? It's the outcome of reasoning and argument. And in defining the terms of what a Christian really is, Paul comes to the conclusion, absolutely inevitable conclusion, that if this man is in Christ, he's a totally different kind of person.

And there will be certain evidences and characteristics about him. Going back to the context in a moment. Look at verse 11.

What we are is known to God, and I hope also known in your own consciences. In other words, there are some things about us, because we're in Christ, which are so self-evident that we don't have to argue for them. They are clear to God, and I hope they're clear to you.

But remember, as Paul goes on in his argument in verse 12, we're not commending ourselves to you, we're not boasting, but we are giving you reason to glory on our behalf, and to answer people who simply judge by outward appearances and profession, instead of inward reality. Then Paul begins to produce those evidences in support of his argument. If any man's in Christ, he's a totally different kind of person.

What are the evidences? Well, there's one in verse 14. There is a fervor which is revealed through my life constantly. The love of Jesus constrains me.

I want to stay with that for a moment. The love of Jesus, not my love for him, but the love of Christ. How do I define that? However can anybody ever express what the love of Jesus is? I don't know.

It's too much for me. That love was eternal. It had no beginning, no ending.

It was long before the foundation of the world. It was absolutely selfless. Our dear Lord had nothing to gain, had he, by that scoop he took from the throne down to the manger.

The love of Christ. Why, the highest place that heaven affords was his by sovereign right. But he pursued it all, humbled himself, made himself nothing, of no reputation.

The love of Jesus that was so patient, that went on loving when he came to his own, even though they didn't love him, and didn't receive him. And yet he loved them to the end. The love of Christ.

They took him right to Calvary, that bared his heart to the spear, and the sword of the justice of God buried itself in his heart. The love of Jesus. They took him through all the shame, and all the spitting, and the despising.

And as Paul sums it up in the last verse of this chapter, the love of Christ who was made sin for us. I love the Living Bible paraphrase of verse 21. God took the sinless Jesus and poured into him all our sin, and in exchange he poured all God's goodness into us.

Oh, I must say that again. God took the sinless Christ and poured into him all our sin, and in exchange he poured all God's goodness into us. If I really saw that in my heart, boy, it almost makes me want to hit the ceiling.

That's the Christian life. Not self-improvement, but Christ's replacement. Him instead of me.

Poured into Jesus all my sins, all of it poured into him, and in exchange he poured all God's goodness into me. Did you know that the only good thing about you is Jesus? The only good thing about me is Jesus.

Thank the Lord I don't have to sweat it out and try and be better.

Oh no, getting up that long ago was hopeless. But a great thing to take by faith every day, the life of Jesus. That's Christian living.

And you know the Holy Spirit had shown this to Paul, and it wasn't any theory. He got something of the glory of the love of Christ in his heart, and it constrained him. Now this is something.

That word constrained is a little difficult to translate into the English language from the original. It has many meanings. It could be used for instance this way.

The love of Jesus restrains us. Like the rein on a horse holds the animal back, holds it in check, keeps it on the right path, turns it round a bend. Paul says the love of Jesus has so got hold of me, it keeps me back from doing the thing that otherwise I would do, and I'd be so ashamed, and it would so grieve the Lord.

It's the love of Jesus that holds me in check, stops me from doing it. Another meaning would be of course the RSV has the love of Christ controls us, or the NIV, the love of Christ compels us, or the love of Christ coerces me. I sometimes look up commentaries.

You know I have to confess to you that most of them seem to comment on everything except the thing I'm looking for, and sometimes this is very self-assertive. I don't agree with what they're saying. But Jenson, Fawcett, and Brown, their commentary upon this verse says, there is an irresistible object which has so controlled the life of the Christian that he lives with one objective in view to the elimination of any other possible consideration.

Oh, I want to swallow that and digest it. Let me repeat it. There is an irresistible object which has so controlled the life of a Christian that he lives with one objective in view to the elimination of any other possible consideration.

Just like a river in flood is dammed up and restrained, and then hemmed in in order to be constrained, and takes all its power and flows and bursts into the ocean. So the love of Christ holds me like that, and that love makes it impossible for me to consider another alternative. Is any man being Christ? You see, he's a totally different kind of person.

Something has gripped him and possessed him till everybody says he's a fool. He's a fanatic. And even possibly some one or two might be saying to me this morning, you know, you're going too far, as a Christian life is lived by faith.

All right, that's fine, but faith works by love. And if my faith hasn't got hold of me, so that in some measure I'm gripped, like I've been describing by the love of Jesus. It isn't saving faith, no matter how orthodox it is.

It's the ex-Persian, I think, I'm right in saying, who said, there's your faith does not drastically change your behavior, it will never change your destiny. That needs thinking through. If my faith doesn't revolutionize my behavior, it will never change my destiny.

The love of Christ grips you. That's the fervor that's revealed in Paul's life. And after all, I would remind you that people who count for anything in the world, whether good or bad, are people who are controlled by just one thing, one principle.

People who are something for a little while, and something else for longer, don't accomplish anything. They're rather like this jet stream that comes out of a plane, it just vanishes in a few seconds, meaningless. But a man who's gripped by one principle is the reason why you have in history men like Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, Khrushchev, all the rest of them.

Bad men, evil men. Men of one passion, one principle. But that's also why you have Hudson Taylor, John and Charles Wesley, Whitfield, Johnson, Finney, Dale Moody, C. G. Stutt.

I wouldn't venture to come into the present generation, but if I did, and was tactless enough to do so, I might speak of men like Billy Graham, men like George Bower, but I would have to speak of people like, oh hundreds of them would come to my mind, one lady I think of, whom I went to see a missionary with the Africa Inland Mission in Zaire. I went into a little wooden hut, talked with her. She was 72 years of age.

She'd been there 40 years. Nobody knew her. She translated two or three languages, Zandi and others, the Bible, into those languages.

And I said to her, when do you expect to come on your next furlough? And she looked at me and she said, in heaven, the love of Christ. I stand beside a person like that and feel so glad. And Paul had looked into the heart of God.

The love of Jesus impelled him, constrained him, along one particular line, to the exclusion of any other attraction. And somebody might say, oh that must be awful bondage. A Christian must find that kind of life is terrible.

Oh no, that which consumed Paul's whole life and governed every principle of living, seven days a week, was so tremendous that nothing had any secondary consideration. It is the love of God that impels me, he said, to will and to do his good pleasure. There's nothing can drag me from it.

No rival, and he's the happiest man in the world. And some people might say, well now that's terribly emotional of course. But is it emotion? The fervor? It was based not only that fervor that constrained, but it was based on facts that thrilled him.

Listen to them, verse 14. We thus judge with spirit and lightened minds and eyes, that if one died for all, then we all died. Paul rejoiced in this constraint, for that which gripped his life was not mere emotion, but that emotion was based on two tremendous facts, that I must take a moment or two to share with you.

The first fact was the fact of substitution, and the next one was the fact of identification. Bearing shame and scoffing, ruled in my place. Condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood.

Hallelujah, he's my savior. Substitution, he died for all. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.

The task of men which procured our peace was laid upon him, Isaiah 53. The great fact of the substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus is of course basic. When we accept it, it's that which lights the fire in our heart.

It's that which causes the flame to begin to burn. But that's not the only fact. There is identification.

If he died for all, then we all died. Now let me put this very simply to you, but let the fire begin to burn again in my heart and yours, as I think of it. Paul would tell us, as I see in the cross, that in my first birth I was

involved in a life of condemnation, a life of rejection, guilt, sin, and judgment.

I was involved by my second birth in the Lord Jesus, in his life, a new life. And that life came into my heart by God's Holy Spirit, and that life, oh, it's already died. It's been to Calvary, and that life rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and received from the Father the right for us all to live.

That life which has been bearing shame and scoffing rude, has borne all my sin, that life triumphed over death, rose to heaven, and that life has come back to live in me. The fact of identification. In my second birth, I was involved in this new life which has already died and risen from the dead.

Therefore I died in him, and in him I was buried. I rose with him, ascended with him, and bless the Lord, today in 1986, my feet are on the ground, but my heart's in heaven. And I have resurrection life there, living in me, day by day.

I'm identified with, therefore, his victory is my victory. His triumph over temptation is mine. His resources are my resources.

His grace is sufficient. His strength has made perfect in weakness. Oh yes, his patience, his love.

I'm identified with him, just as I was one with Adam by my first birth, and one with Jesus in my second. Now I'm not sure how many of us have really realized that. I owe, under God, an awful lot to many people, none more than to Major Ian Thomas, who is principal, as you know, of Cape Mary Hall.

Years and years ago, I don't know how many now. I'll have to work it out on the computer. I think it must be, I don't know, 86.

Yes, well I'll leave it at that. But you know, in the little mission hall in the north of London, I was sweating away, trying to do something about it. And he was speaking and said to the congregation, there weren't more than a dozen there, what do you think God expects of you? And I sort of wished I could get under the seat, because I was making such a mess of it, and my life was a complete failure.

I'd been a Christian for some seven, eight years, but it didn't mean much. And I thought the whole thing was off-putting. I couldn't get it.

And when he said that, oh I know, he's going to tell me I ought to be some tremendous person. I never will be that. And then he said, do you want to know? Nothing but failure.

I pricked up my ears and sat on my feet and said, my, I'm a candidate. What's he mean? He said, God expects of you nothing but failure, but he's given you the Holy Spirit that you need never fail. And that transformed my Christian life.

It wasn't a second blessing. So I believed in the same years, and of course it was a belief in the Spirit. And today without a blessing, a million of them.

But there was a crisis when I realised it's no more I who live, but he who lives in me. And he is adequate for everything that ever I can say. Stupid fellow.

He has I been a Christian for fifty years. I'm only in kindergarten learning that. It takes years and years and years of lifetime to learn it.

Do you remember when Paul joined the club and he had a thorn in the flesh? And immediately when that thorn came, I'm not discussing what it was. Personally, I believe it was his lack of eyesight, because he said to the Galatian church, how gladly you'd have plucked your eyes out for me, but you didn't. But when that thorn came, he said, three times I besought the Lord, take it away.

Lord, I can't go on. This is too much. And the answer from heaven, no, my grace is sufficient for you.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore, would I glory in my infirmity that the power of Christ may rest on me. If you think that through and pray it through, I wonder if that's why you've been allowed to go through something that you would million times rather have sinned from.

Jesus is adequate. He's the opposite to all that I am. And it's simply stupid to narrow the gap between his holiness and my sinfulness.

Try and make myself a bit more holy, polish myself up, make me a bit better. That old nature of mine, I had no ability to overcome. Once with Paul, the things that I didn't want to do, I did.

And the things that I hated, well, those I did. I was poor, wretched, miserable. And in the flesh, in myself, I'm no different now.

I won't be long before I'm 80. Wonderful. I find heaven becomes more wonderful as I approach it.

But the problem is getting there. Because you get weaker in yourself, more helpless, hopeless, and more completely cast on God for daily strength and daily enabling for everything. That's wonderful when you learn to do it.

But I have to realize that I could leave this service this morning and be capable in one minute of committing any sin you can imagine, but for the grace of God. The only good thing about Alan Redspark is Jesus. Always wonderful to know that.

Christian living doesn't improve your old nature, at least it isn't worse. It replaces that with Jesus. Hallelujah.

Excuse me, I can't help getting excited. I'm going to tell you, oh yes, I'm all right so far, tell you a little story which you who know me will ask you. You can go to sleep for a couple of minutes.

Maybe you've been there already, I don't know. But it comes to my mind because it's something that I'll never forget. Do you like flying? I don't.

I've had too many incidents. I don't call them accidents, but incidents that make me very, I'm not scared, but I'm very careful when I get in planes. And some years ago now, it doesn't matter how many, when I was at Cape Henry, I began traveling in various parts of the world in missions.

And of course, you have a British passport, so would I. Have you ever read the inside page of a British passport? It's really quite fantastic. It's got word, it's something like this, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State requests the safe custody of the bearer of this document into whatever country he may wish to travel and that he may receive with every respect or something. Well, that gets you to London Airport.

And at that point, you have to have a visa. That's a wretched business. That means getting a photograph.

And I know a place in Edinburgh, I was living there at the time, how I had been, where you can get a passport photo, 12 of them, for 50p. I don't know if the place is still open, but it was then. So I went and got this, and you go to the little booth, you know, you sit in it, and you put your 50p in a slot, and out comes a dozen passport photos.

And then a very charming young lady comes and touches them up and rubs off the whatever it is, and stamps it on the back, unfinished proof. And I took it home and didn't bother to look at it. But when I got home, I got the shock of my life when I opened it and I thought, Lord, it's surely not as bad as that.

Well, it was. It was terrible. And I saw on our piano the family photograph, which was taken in Chicago, had me looking like a film star, and I thought, that's really me.

And then, of course, my wife came into the room, and you know that a good wife always knows what her husband is thinking. And she looked over my shoulder and said, now, dear, don't get any wrong ideas, that's really you. Isn't it interesting that that photograph is called an unfinished proof? And Jesus is the one who always knows about the unfinished proof.

Well, it was that photograph that got me eventually to travel for the first time into Africa, Ethiopia, and down to Johannesburg. I had to come back then. I got into a plane at Jo'burg, a Boeing 747, British Airways, if you'll excuse my commercial.

And I got into it. I don't know how many people it holds, but it was full. And I thought, there's too many people around here.

And didn't somebody tell me the other day that this thing weighs one and a half million pounds? You never get it off the ground with a weight like that. And I sat down, and a steward came and sat beside me. So I thought I'd have a word with him.

And I said, do you like flying this plane? He said, no sir, not at all. I said, why? It's too often going wrong. Oh, yeah, yeah.

He said, yes, as a matter of fact, he said it was taken out of service two or three weeks ago through engine failure. And again last week. And I said, thank you for telling me.

So I looked at the cockpit and said, Lord bless him tonight. And we got along the runway, you know, and began to rev up and all that. And then it began to go.

And I have a little watch here with a stopwatch on it, and it tells me the seconds. And I knew that a 747 jet fully loaded with passengers and gear takes 46 seconds to get off the ground. It might take a second or two more with wind speed.

And we went off, and I checked it. And I saw my little watch going back. And at 35 seconds, suddenly it began to slow down.

And I just held my breath. And then I tell you a roar like I've never heard a plane roar in my life. And it shook, the whole thing shook.

And it went on and on, 40, 46, now a long way short of the required speed of takeoff, 48, 50, 55, 58, Lord how long is this runway, 58, and 60, and 62 seconds. And we made it, only just when I saw the light through the end of the runway coming under. And we went up and up and up and up.

And the plane was vibrating. I don't know how it didn't split in two. Shaking terribly.

And no words from the captain, the no smoking sign kept on, the start of the seatbelts kept on, went on for half an hour. And then suddenly he came on the intercom. And he said, he had an awful Oxford accent.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry I have been so long in speaking to you, but I have to tell you I have some sad news. I have lost an engine.

Now how would you say to that? How would you react? I said, well, think thyself, don't worry about that, old boy. I'd better get up and jump and get it for you. But of course, that wasn't what he meant.

He meant he'd lost the power of the thing. And he said, our next stop, our next stop is Nairobi. And with a full load of passengers and full load of guests, I don't think we'll make it.

And so he said, with your permission, how unnecessary, with your permission, we'll return to Jo'burg and we'll lend you there. And you'll be put on another plane. And you'll make London that way.

Well, we were. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here to tell you. He made it.

But you know, you may say some humour in that, but to me, it's an amazing illustration of what the life of Jesus is. I'll tell you why. That plane moved along that runway, full blast, all the time controlled by the law of gravity, held to the ground.

At 35 seconds, an engine cut. Three engines are put on emergency power to make it. It was too late to return.

And with three engines, he went on and on, until at 62 seconds, he had reached a quiet speed, about 150 knots, and he pulls a stick. Excuse me, that's very amateurish language. But he turned the nose of the plane up into the air, and immediately it's grabbed by another law that lifts it up, up, up, up, up, up and up above the law of gravity, which still functions.

If we'd lost another engine, we'd have known that. It would have pulled us back. But that law of aerodynamics pulled it up and up and up to 30,000 feet.

It was mastered by a new law. Get it? Who? The law of the spirit of life in Christ has set me free from the law of sin and death. There is now no conscience.

That makes me want to jump up and hit the roof. Free in Christ. Brother, sister, do you know anything about that inward pull of the life of Jesus? The constraining power that lifts you up above the thing of which you're ashamed and you hate, and Jesus pulls you up, and you've victory.

Excuse me, but I couldn't help that. Finally. I do remember that Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, and in chapter 3, verse 1, halfway through, he said, finally brethren.

Said it again in chapter 4. This really is, you'll be there for lunch. Oh, but you see, I want you to understand the tremendous thing that happens as a result of that upward pull. Fellowship, there is, these are facts, and they're absolutely constrained.

But there's a fellowship that's recognized in daily life. Look, he died for all, verse 15, 16. The thing which lived should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again.

Therefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh. The RSV says, we regard no one from a human point of view. Though we have known Christ that way, now henceforth know we him no more.

Have you ever noticed the significance of that? A fellowship with heaven, and a fellowship in the earth. Vertical, horizontal, henceforth not living for themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again. The love of Jesus, oh dear friend, get it.

And let me get it to you. The love of Jesus has been answered in my heart, in which he's come to dwell, by the love of Christ burning like a fire. And the Holy Spirit in me is responding to heaven.

Love knows no limit to endurance, no end of its trust, no fading of its hope. It can outlast anything. It is the one thing that stands when everything else has fallen.

That's the love which the Spirit of God has begotten in my heart when I've been born again, with a new nature in me, capable of reliving, echoing back love to heaven. It's expressed very beautifully by F. W. Faber. Do you remember this hymn, one verse of it? Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord, forgive me if I say, for very love thy sacred name a thousand times a day.

I love thee so, I know not how my transport to control. Thy love is like a burning fire within my very soul, but burn, burn, oh love, within my heart. Burn fiercely, night and day, till all the draughts of earthly care is burned and burned away.

Oh Jesus, Jesus, sweetest Lord, who art thou not to me? Each hour brings joy unknown, each day new liberty. Lord, do I know anything of that? Love which answers your love, deep that calls unto deep. In a life so cold, so barren, so dead, the Holy Spirit has come and killed the flame of sacred love.

It's not that my old nature loves God. It's absolutely capable of doing that. If you sense the love of Jesus in your heart, if you sense the Holy Spirit pulling, pulling, pulling, the upward lift, if not you, don't think you're getting better, don't think you're getting good, it's the Spirit of God in you echoing back the love of heaven, fellowship, your heart in heaven, the love of Jesus.

Jesus, thy all-victorious love shed in my heart abroad, then shall my soul no longer rove rooted and fixed in God. Oh, that in me the sacred fire might now begin to glow, burn up the draughts of base desire and make the mountains flow. And brother and sister, that is not only a heavenward thing, it's an earthly thing, the love of Christ constraint.

If only the church could get hold of that today. I think the church today in many ways, though we do thank the Lord for every evidence of touch of blessing and revival and renewal, it must make the Lord weep. As people who love him start fighting with each other have never learned to disagree agreeably and not to break fellowship.

The old things and the love of Christ constraints, the old things that mark our likes and dislikes are buried in forbidden territories. Distinction of class and color and race and nationality, that's all gone. We know no man after the flesh is born.

No, because the Holy Spirit has come to live within us. And therefore I'm going to love people regardless of their skin and color, regardless of anything. Indeed, I'll not only love nice people, but I'll love people I don't like.

That's difficult, is it? But it's a good job Jesus did. It's a good job he didn't only love nice people. It's a good job he liked people and went on loving them all the way to Calvary, people who hate him.

If he hadn't done that, we'd none of us be Christians. The love of Jesus holds me in check, constrains me. Does that love get through you and others? I believe the future of our nation is in serious peril unless the revival of that kind of love, the devil is having an absolute millennium in the church with all these divisions and hurtful things that go on.

Have you ever read a book by Leslie Lyle, late of the OMF, called *Come Wind, Come Weather?* Tremendous book. Tells the story of China under communism. Inside story from 1950, days when communism came as a sort of angel of light and promised religious freedom, self-propagation, self-government and self-support, you know.

It worked for a while and then pressure was put on. And people discovered that that meant total allegiance to the communist regime. And for the next 10 years, if there was a Christian in China true to the word, he either was put in prison or banished to some area, it would kill him off.

In that little group of people who had been so brainwashed until they were nearly mad, there were those who would stand true to the Lord in any situation. And he tells a story in the book of persons who used to say to each other, goodbye for now, we'll see you inside next time. That meant in prison.

And there was one girl whose story was told, when she was arrested because of her fearless testimony, they came and put handcuffs on her. And she held out her hand and said, I'm not worthy, not worthy. She didn't care.

The love of Christ constrained her. And my sincere wish for us all here today is that we might hold out our hands to Jesus and say, Lord, put the handcuffs on, take possession, take me under your complete control. I'm not worthy, but I'm yours, driven by one master passion, the love of Jesus, that there be no other rival claim.

I haven't time to go into this, but you on your own sometimes, would you read verse 20 by yourself, on your knees, the love of Jesus? What's that verse, Dennis? Well, when two people have a strong disagreement, and one hates another, who's the one to put that right? Surely it's the one who causes, has been the cause of the disagreement. But as God, as if God did beseech you in Christ, we, we pray you, be reconciled to God. And as I go out to evangelize, and you do, and maybe as you have differences with other Christians, and I have too, who is the one that has to put it right? Who put the quarrel, if I may use such a word, such an inadequate word, between God and men, right? And I close this morning with the thought, which I must develop.

Here's the Lord Jesus, kneeling at our feet, and saying, I beg of you, be reconciled to God. Let's just close in prayer a moment. Forgive us, Lord, that we've so often hurt you, so often been resentful, so often chosen an easier path, so often rejected.

You and your will, draw us nearer, blessed Lord, to the cross to which, in which thou died. Thank you so much that you went all the way for Calvary for us. And may we truly be reconciled to you, in a fellowship with you, born of your Spirit, and let the love of Jesus just flood our lives, and flood our hearts, and reach out to a world that's in desperate need, not of us, but of him, through us.

Lord, the love of Christ, and the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, and all for whom we would pray, now and until Jesus comes again, and then forevermore. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/5/SID5360.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/alan-redpath/the-love-of-christ-constrains/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net