INTRODUCTION

As I continue my communion sermon series I want us today to look at a different view of the Cross. We have been considering what Jesus accomplished on the Cross. He accomplished our redemption, i.e. He paid the ransom for our freedom from the bondage to sin. He accomplished the diverting the wrath of God for our sins by becoming the propitiation for our sins on the Cross. He accomplished our reconciliation with God by removing the hostility created by our sin on the Cross. He accomplished victory over Satan by defeating Satan on the Cross. These are called the objective views of the Cross. Their emphasis is on the objective benefits Jesus accomplish for us on the Cross.

Today we want to look at the subjective view of the Cross, i.e. what the Cross does subjectively in our lives.

This view is also called the “moral influence” view of the Cross. It focuses on how the Cross influences our response. One passage that has this emphasis is II Corinthians 5:14-15.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NKJV  (14) For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; (15) 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.

The “love of Christ compels us” to do something. The love of Christ compels us to no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died for us and rose again.

The Greek word (sunecho) behind ‘compel’ is a strong word. The word is used in Luke 8:45 to describe how the crowd was pressing in on Jesus or hemming him in on all sides. The situation was when the woman with an issue of blood touched the hem of Jesus’ garment.

Luke 8:45 HCSB  "Who touched Me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are hemming You in and pressing against You."

The word behind “hemming in” is the same word in II Corinthians for ‘constrain.’ The love of Christ hems us in and compels us to respond in a certain way to the Cross.
The word (*sunecho*) is also used in Luke 12:50 to describe Jesus being consumed by his mission to provide salvation for us.

**Luke 12:50 HCSB**  But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how it consumes Me until it is finished!

The baptism He is referring is his death on the Cross. His mission to atone for our sins consumed his every thought and action. The love of Christ should be in our every thought and action. It should consume us to live in a certain way.

Some of the other translations of II Corinthians 5 uses words like ‘controls us,’ ‘rules us,’ etc. When Paul says that the love of Christ compels him he is making a strong statement of the influence the Cross has on him. What influence does the Cross have on you?

How can we come to respond to the Cross in our thoughts and lives in this way? Let’s look at this passage in II Corinthians 5 more closely for the answer to this.

**WE MUST SEE HOW THE CROSS DEMONSTRATES THE LOVE OF CHRIST**

Being consumed by the Cross starts by seeing how the Cross is the greatest demonstration of the love of God for us.

The overpowering love of Christ for us, manifested when he gave his life for us on Golgotha, touches us very deeply. To think that the Creator God came into history as a man in order to give His life a ransom for many is the greatest act of love that could be imagined. Only love could make him do that.

**“Greater love has no man, but to lay down his life for his friends.”**

An English lady, Mary Kelly, 1868 – 1942 expressed this love in her song “Give Me a Sight O Savior”:

Was it the nails, O Saviour,  
That bound Thee to the tree?  
Nay, ‘twas Thine everlasting love,  
Thy love for me, for me.

Isaac Watts’ when mediating on the cross wrote the hymn, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” and wrote:  “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.” Anything else but my all to give to Christ what he has given me would be an offering far too small. Isaac Watts was a man that understood the compelling power of the love of Christ seen in the Cross.
Paul affirms this great act of love in Romans 5:8.

Romans 5:8 NIV But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Greater love has not God, but to lay down His life for sinners!

To look at the Cross of Christ and not see the love of Christ for you, says that you don’t understand the Cross, nor the debt of your sin, nor the cost of your salvation. But to see the love of Christ for you in the Cross will change your life. It will compel you to do something radical.

WE MUST RECKON OURSELVES AS HAVING DIED WITH CHRIST

When we see the love of Christ in the Cross it compels us to make a certain judgment about ourselves. We will see ourselves as having died with Christ in His death. II Corinthians 5:14

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

When Jesus died on the Cross, all those for whom He died, died with Him. We died with Christ on the Cross. This is important to understand if we are to be constrained by the love of Christ.

We sing the hymn, “Were You There.” Yes, we were there, not physically, but spiritually because in God’s sight we are united to Christ and died with Him. The song goes:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? (Were you there?)
Were you there when they nail'd him to the tree? (Were you there?)
Were you there when they pierced him in the side? (Were you there?)
Were you there when the sun refused to shine? (Were you there?)

Yes we were there, in union with Christ. When we understand what Jesus did for us on the Cross we will see ourselves as having died to sin with Christ, because we were there in Christ. We will see that the Cross has freed us from our bondage to our sins. We will see that the Cross has averted the wrath of God which our sins deserve. We will see that the Cross as having removed the alienation and hostility our sins had put between us and God. We must see ourselves as having died with Christ.

We can be controlled by the love of Christ because we died with Christ to sin.
WE MUST RECKON OURSELVES AS ALIVE IN CHRIST

But we don’t stop at seeing ourselves as having died with Christ; we see ourselves as alive with Christ. Paul goes on in verse 15:

and He died for all, that those who live

Not only have we died with Christ in his death, we are made alive in Christ by his resurrection. We are able to respond to the love of Christ in the Cross because God has given us new life. We have been born again. We have a new nature. We have a nature that is like that unto Jesus Christ’s.

This is the teaching of Romans 6. Let me refresh our memory of that passage.

Romans 6:5-10 NKJV For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, (6) knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. (7) For he who has died has been freed from sin. (8) Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, (9) knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. (10) For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

The realization and reckoning of our being united with Christ in his death and resurrection is the key for our being controlled, constrained by the love of Christ. Christ died to sin once for all. We died to sin in Christ when He died. Christ is now alive unto God. We are alive unto God. We are to reckon on this as Paul says in verse 11.

Romans 6:11 NKJV Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To reckon is to believe and act accordingly. To act accordingly is to commit ourselves to live unto Him who died for us

To reckon on something is to count it as true and to act on it. How many of you have a bank account? Do you ever write a check on it? When you write a check on your bank account, you are reckoning on it. You are trusting that you have the money in the back and you are acting on it. The same is true when we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. We are trusting that what God has said true and we are acting on it.
WE ARE TO LIVE FOR JESUS NOT OURSELVES

Paul concludes verse 15 with what the love of Christ compels us to do, and I’ve already been emphasizing it. It is change from living for ourselves to live for Him who died for us and rose again. Verse 15:

that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

This is what the love of Christ compels us to do. To live for Jesus. We are to be like Paul when he said, “For me to live is Christ.” Christ is my life, my goal, my passion, my everything. We can live for Christ in the power of our participating in His death and resurrection for us. The love of Christ compels us to see Christ as our all in all.

Live as if you have died to sin and are alive to God because you are dead to sin and alive to God.

CONCLUSION

This is the subjective view of the Cross, the “Moral Influence” view. This is the compelling influence that the Cross is to have on our moral life. The love of Christ compels us to no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died for us and rose again.

Mary Kelly’s song which I mentioned earlier is truly a prayer. The song title is “Give Me a Sight, O Savior.” The full song goes like this:

Give me a sight, O Saviour,
of Your wondrous love to me,
of the love that brought You down to earth,
to die on Calvary.

O make me understand it.
help me to take it in,
what it meant to You, the Holy One,
to bear away my sin.

Was it the nails, O Saviour,
that bound You to the tree?
No, 'twas Your everlasting love,
Your love for me, for me.

O wonder of all wonders,
that through Your death for me
my open sins, my secret sins,
can all forgiven be!

Then melt my heart, O Saviour,
bend me, yes, break me down,
until I own You conqueror,
and Lord and Sovereign crown.

May this be our prayer! May the Cross and love of Christ be in our sight at all times!

Amen? Amen!