



The apostle Paul, in an effort to show his true motives as he writes to the Christians in Corinth, talks about the love of Christ and what it did for him. Paul lived in the midst of conflict and trial, even to the face of death, and yet he kept going. Why? He left no doubt—it was because of the love of Christ. You and I may have trials and troubles. We may have obstacles in our own lives. If the love of Christ was motivation for Paul, can it not be for us, too? We would do well to focus on the love of Christ and to renew our understanding of His love.

How does Christ love?

We are told that Christ loves as the Father loves (**John 15:9**), and we know how God loves: “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son*” (**John 3:16**). Christ loves with the greatest love one can show—He gave Himself: “*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends*” (**John 15:13**). Think of how great the love of a mother for her child can be; yet His love is greater.

Think of the words to the old song, “He Loved Me So”:

Why did my Savior come to earth,
And to the humble go?
Why did He choose a lowly birth?
Because He loved me so!

Why Did He drink the bitter cup
Of sorrow, pain, and woe?
Why on the cross be lifted up?
Because He loved me so!

He loves with a love which passeth understanding. Paul prayed that his fellow Christians might “*know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God*” (**Ephesians 3:19**).

How has Christ shown his love?

It is already established that His love has been shown by his death for us. “*Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless*” (**Ephesians 5:25-27**). “*Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood*” (**Revelation 1:5**). In what great way does His love continue to be shown? He yet shows his love for us by interceding on our behalf. “*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world*” (**1John 2:1,2**).

Whom does Christ love?

While on earth, He said that He loved the Father: “*so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me*” (**John 14:31**). He demonstrated that love by obeying him (**John 5:30**).

He also felt love for sinners. He even felt love for the rich, young, ruler who could not bring himself to give all (**Mark 10:21**). That means He loves even me.

We have also noted that He loves the church (**Ephesians 5:25**). Even though many others speak lightly of the church, and even though some speak of it so critically, Jesus loves it. Jesus loves those who are His own just as is said of His love for those who were with Him near His time of death: “*Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end*” (**John 13:1**).

What are the effects of Christ's love?

Understanding the love of Christ will cause obedience. “*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him*” (**John 14:23**).

Understanding the love of Christ will cause a willingness to sacrifice. “*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*” (**1John 3:16-17**).

Understanding the love of Christ will cause love. “*We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen,*

cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also” (1John 4:19-21).

Understanding the love of Christ will control our actions. *“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2Corinthians 5:14-15).*

Understanding the love of Christ will cause us to imitate it with one another. *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).*

What is the love of Christ to you?

We ought to abide in His love. Only then, are we living so as to please Him. He will not leave us, outside forces cannot separate us from His love. *“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).* The only way we can be separated from His love is through our own lack of love for Him. Understand His love, Be motivated by His love. Abide in His love.