

Compelled to Love

Scripture Reading — 2 Kings 4:1-7; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13

Christ's love compels us. . . . 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. — 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The use of the word “compel” in connection with loving God and our neighbor may sound strange. How can you compel real love and kindness? Shouldn't it flow naturally?

The Bible often shows that hatred flows naturally from the human heart, and hatred can be as relentless and destructive as a powerful river that flows wherever it wants. The same is true of greed and other selfish desires. Only an outside force—a system of levees or dams—can compel a swollen river to change course to prevent flooding and destruction. But if a levee or a dam breaks, watch out!

Only a supernatural outside force can derail our natural passions. That's why Paul points to the compelling, unconditional love of God in Christ.

God's love doesn't just redirect our natural passions and impulses, it transforms their source: the heart. Just as the widow's empty jar flowed with enough oil to meet all her needs, so Christ's love fills the hearts and lives of those who love and serve him.

When the love of God fills our hearts, it compels us to love as we are loved. And because it leaves no room for hatred or greed, the love of Christ frees us from our selfish desires.

Have you experienced Christ's love? If so, is that love flowing from you to those around you?

Prayer

Most loving God, author of all love, may we love as you love us. May your love flow through us to a world that desperately needs your love. Amen.

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Printed on October 24, 2018

