THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

"A New Life"
2 Cor. 5:14-16

Introduction

1. The amazing change which takes place in the life of a believer is more than pen or tongue can ever tell. A totally new creation comes into being — glory to God!

2. With this new creation, there is spawned a totally new life. The expression of this life is beyond description. But let some of the characteristics of it be known.

3. Consider, then, with insight the new life in its extension in these directions:

1. TOWARD CHRIST

   The key point here is a demination by love (v. 14). The essence of this love is best set forth in two statements:
   a. Love for Christ — objective love.
      Here is a blessed external control for those who accept His death for them.
   b. Love from Christ — subjective love.
      This is the burning of His love in the soul with consuming energy. This internal dynamic will bridge every gap which a straying human heart might offer.

   NOTE: These two statements about love are ruled by the forceful verb "constrain". It means to be "hemmed in" or "pressed from every side". See Luke 8:45; 19:43; 12:50; Phil. 1:23.

2. TOWARD SELF v. 15.
   a. Negatively.
      The whole argument of the apostle here is that self should no longer have prominence. To prac-
tice a life lived with personal gain in view is unthinkable for the apostle. This is a patent truth throughout Scripture, cf. Mark 8:34.

b. Positively.

If anyone feels there is no room for personal development and satisfying fulfillment in the Christian life, let him take a long hard look at this: live unto Him which died for them! The high doctrine of Christ's vicarious suffering carries with it a correspondingly high obligation on the part of those who live because of Him. Now there is no life which can be lived, but UNTO HIM. Rom. 14:7-9.

Selfishness is ruled out when the terms of the ministry are properly understood. Personal gain is diminished to nothing. See how this is illustrated in 2 Kings 7.

3. TOWARD MEN v. 16.

From the time that a person gets a true understanding of the love of Christ and His effective death for him, there will be an entirely different view of people:

a. Stated.

The facts of the case are declared by the apostle: we know no man after the flesh. What a magnificent statement. How deep it is. Is this true? The standard of the flesh really has no basis in the light of His love and death!

b. Illustrated.

Paul's past knowledge of Christ (he used the perfect tense) was on the same terms that men were known and seen before the love of Christ and the death of Christ made an impact on his life. All according to the standards of the flesh!

But now, something has happened: experimental knowledge of Christ is entirely in the light of His death and the captivation of His love! He is known in a different way now!

Conclusion

As died for men, believers have a different view of the Lord Jesus Christ. They look upon men as died for individuals. Indeed, their view of themselves is all in the light of Calvary love! This is an entirely new kind of life. It is demanding, yet rewarding. If men are really looking for a creative sort of life -- here it is! God grant us full and overflowing joy in it.

Amen

NOTES: