II Corinthians 5:14-17 Christ Wants To Be Closer To You Than You Think
March 1, 2026

"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. Therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Question: Did you sign up to become a "new creature," or did you just want a touch-up to your good old self; a "good-enough" old self?

Ex. Today's rear view mirrors- " Objects may be closer than they appear." (Convex –shaped to give wider field of vision, which old mirrors could not do. The trade-off is that objects will appear further away, so be cautious about your lane changes, because the objects are several feet closer to you than you think.)

So what are we talking about today? Close To God; The Ultimate threat, but the only hope.

Ex. Jurassic Park movie- Giant T-Rex closing in on them! Threat of death! It looked close,, (in the rear-view mirror), **but in reality; much closer**. I think that people feel this way about God. They seem threatened even talking about being close to God.

Ex. Luke 5:8 - Peter said, "Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man." *It is how you feel, until you get to know Him.*

Ex. Luke 18: 1-8 Parable of the unrighteous judge. I do not like a story that puts God in a bad light like this, but I see why Jesus said it this way. *It is how you feel until you get to know Him.*

Ex. Matthew 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents. "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed." (Mt. 25:24b). *It is how you feel until you get to know Him.*

The Ministry of Jesus shocked everybody. **Very up- close and personal.** Not just a political Messiah who would give the Jewish people political dominance on earth and a mere peaceful earthly life. One of the objections of Jesus being the Messiah was that the consummation of the ages did not happen when Jesus came the first time.

Ex. John 4: 23-26 ",,, and now is." Close and personal; realized eschatology! Note the timing and identity!

Ex. John 11:23-27 He carries the power of resurrection in His person, and proves it in Lazarus' case! Note the identity and timing!

Ex. John 14: 1-11 "He who has seen Me , has seen the Father." The essence of the Father is seen in the Son. ("Objects may be closer than they appear.")

<u>The best we can do in the natural, fallen and sinful state? We may ask,,,,,</u>

"How can I receive things from God, without getting close to God?"

Ex. John 6: 1-71 Take note of what the people really wanted here. **Summary:** " We like you being our hero. You will make living easy! You are our free meal ticket, the ultimate welfare program. We don't like this obsession you have with getting close to God. In fact, if you could just skip the sermons, and just teach us the trick of free bread; that would be even better!" **Read John 6:26-29, 55-56, 66-69.** Not at all what they expected or desired.

Text Today: II Corinthians 5: 14-17 READ **********

Notice there is no concept in the N.T. of just "adding-on" Jesus to the life I have

<u>already determined</u> to live.

5:17 " In Christ" A critical phrase to understand! 140 times in Paul's letters.

Ex. Colossians 1:27, 3:1-4 Galatians 2:20

"New creature"- not a slightly improved, mere nicer version of the good ol' boy or girl. Not a remodel and a paint job; no, a new entity!

All who know Christ are dying to self-interest, but then set on fire with the love of God!

Read text again: (write in answers below:)

1. What is the threat, the fear, of **unselfish** living?

2. What is the threat to you if you live **selfishly**?

Ex. Samuel Smiles: "Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."