

Compelled by love * 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

May 10, 2020 * Langford Community Church * Graham Gladstone

Many of you I think will know Robert Munsch's book 'Love you forever.' 'Love you forever' tells the story of a mother who loves her son through all the crazy stages of life. He pulls all the books off the shelves, he won't come in for dinner, he even says bad words whenever grandma comes over.

And yet through it all, the mother keeps on loving him, making sacrifices for him and again and again singing 'I'll love you forever/I'll like you for always/as long as I'm living/my baby you'll be.'

Eventually the mother grows old and the son comes over to visit. She begins to sing, but can't finish the song because she's gotten sick, and so the son picks her up and rocks her back and forth and says 'I'll love you forever/I'll like you for always/as long as I'm living/my mommy you'll be.'

And then he goes home at night and picks up his newborn daughter and he sings her the same song that his mother sang to him.

It's a beautiful story. The mother's love motivates the son to love her in return and to love HIS child with the same kind of love and devotion that his mother showed him. It's a beautiful story.

And it's a perfect picture of how Jesus' love should motivate us. (Jesus' sacrificial love compels us to love Him and live for His glory).

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15:

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

15 And 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.

The love of Christ compels us to live for Him.

See, out of His great love for us, He chose to lay down His life *for us*. We were guilty of sin and in danger of death, but Jesus died for us so we could be forgiven. We pulled the books off God's shelf (as it were) and said bad words about Him but Jesus choose take our place and give His life so that we could live.

His intention though is not that we would then go on living our own lives, living for ourselves, taking God and His mercy for granted. He died so that all who receive His grace should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died and returned to life for them. His love, expressed in His sacrifice on the Cross, compels us to give our lives to Christ and live for Him.

I've got another kids' book for you here – Shel Silverstein's 'The Giving Tree.' 'The Giving Tree' is about a tree who loves a boy and gives him shade to play in and then as he grows older, the tree gives him apples and then wood for a house and then she lets him cut her down to make a boat and then when he's old and gray, all she has left for him is a stump and that's all he really needs. Lovely story.

But I always thought that it was a little off – because this tree gives EVERYTHING for the boy and the boy seems to be oblivious to it. She gives him everything and he just keeps on living for himself. If I were to

rewrite the story, I would say that the boy should be so taken by the love of the tree, that he gives his life to extending the tree's love to others, rather than simply living for himself.

That's how the love of Christ should work in our lives – not that we take and take and keep living for ourselves – but that we receive and internalize the invaluable gift of the redeeming love of God and let that point us away from ourselves and to the God who has loved us so perfectly.

The love of Christ compels us to live for Him.

So that begs the question. Who are you living for? Who are you living to please? Are your plans and priorities and desires fundamentally pointed towards yourself, or is your very essence oriented towards God? Has the unconditional love of God taken hold of your heart such that you've intentionally decided to live for Him? Or are you essentially just living for yourself? Are you coming back to God for what you can get from Him or are you so captured by what God has already given that you can't help but share it with others?

Jesus has loved you with a love that you will never fully comprehend; God will always sing over you – 'I'll love you forever/I'll like you for always/for all of eternity/my child you will be.'

Let that love compel you to live for Him.