

September 14, 2014

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2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NASB), ***“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.”***

As I write this I am sitting on the train on the way to Budapest Hungary. Tomorrow morning our Romania mission team will fly out of Budapest headed for home. What a great week this has been; we have had the great opportunity and blessing of serving the Lord in several ways while in Bucharest Romania.

Since there were twelve of us on this trip we could afford to split the team and help with several different ministries. Some of us went and shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with prisoners in two different prisons in the Bucharest region. We also had the great blessing of helping with a Vacation Bible School at Betel Baptist Church in Bucharest, and we also helped in any way that we could at an orphanage. In addition to all of this we had some great times of sharing the gospel door to door and in the parks of Bucharest.

One of the greatest joys for me as a pastor has been to observe the members of this team grow in Christ in the ten short days we have been here. It has been such a pleasure to watch as each and every member of this team from Calvary Baptist Church has given of themselves completely to serve Christ and His kingdom.

In 2 Corinthians as Paul is once again writing to the wayward church at Corinth he reminds them and us that we are to be a different and peculiar people. We are different because we are now controlled by ***“the love of Christ...”*** Before one is saved by the grace and mercy of God their life is controlled completely by their lust and selfish desires.

Christ died for our sins and therefore has defeated the *“old man”* that each of us was as we were in our sins. Not only does sin separate us from God but sin also enslaves us to a life that is completely dominated by ourselves and what self wants. Most people think that they are only truly free if they are free from God and free of His Word. The opposite is actually true. Romans 6:16 says, ***“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”***

So as Christ followers who have been redeemed, we are not just ***“saved”*** from our sins but we are created to live a new life in Christ. We are no longer to live lives that are completely centered around what we want, what we lust after, or what we are addicted to. Instead since we have this new life as it says on down in verse 17, ***“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come,”*** we now live completely for Christ. He died for us so we put the old self to death on the cross and live the new life to Christ.

As we make our way home we are overjoyed with the joy that comes from serving the Lord faithfully. Serving Him is rarely convenient as is attested to by each and every person on this trip. Everyone of these missionary's has sacrificed time and money to come on this trip and many other faithful saints have sacrificed their time and money to help us prepare for this trip. We are so thankful for God's many blessings and we pray that His Word has found tender hearts in Romania. We also are very thankful for our brother in Christ Ninel Lazar and his wonderful family: his wife Monica, daughter Johanna, son David, son Philipp, daughter Rosie, and son Andrew. We look forward with anticipation to seeing them again and serving the Lord together.

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