

Sermon Questions

May 11, 2025 | Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 (Grace Abounds With Us)

Pre-study: 3 things from the sermon. *Note down 3 ideas, illustrations, quotes, or points that made an impression in the sermon.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Core Questions

1. How might framing our engagement with others (outside the church) as 'the ministry of reconciliation' shape how we think about personal evangelism and mission work?
2. Consider the role of an ambassador. Why does Paul choose this image to describe the role of Christians in the world?
 - a. How might verse 13 interact with your understanding of this?
3. The word 'controls' in verse 14 is often translated as 'compels.' See the overview of this on the next page and discuss the implications of how we understand this word.

Inward Grace in Action

4. Consider verse 16-17. Where have you believed falsehoods about who you are, or who other people are, that have kept you from engaging as an ambassador of Christ? How could you ask Christ to change that in you by his Spirit?

Outward Grace in Action

5. Look at verses 18-19. What would it look like to live with this in the forefront of your mind this summer?

WORSHIP THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

Reflect on these

Scriptures:

Exodus 19:1-6

Psalms 72

Isaiah 49:1-7

Luke 24:44-53

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Revelation 3:14-22

Serve:

Consider serving with the Heart of Christ

Committee to serve

Afghan refugees. Reach out to

hocc@mcleanpres.org for opportunities.

Pray:

Pray for the lord to give you deep love for lost people, and desire for his glory in their lives.

The Greek verb **συνέχω** (translated ‘controls’ or ‘compels’ in 2 Corinthians 5:14) is a simple word with a broad meaning. Etymologically, it’s so simple: **syn-** (with) **-echo** (to have), *to have-with*.^{*} In usage, it’s a little more complex. Digging into this can help us understand how gospel motivation in evangelism and mission should operate.

Core Semantic Range of συνέχω (relevant to this usage):

1. **Hold together, sustain** – as in keeping things united or cohesive.
2. **Impel or urge on** – a driving inner force that moves someone to action.
3. **Control or direct** – governing someone’s actions or inner state.

Contextual Options for 2 Corinthians 5:14:

"The love of Christ *συνέχει* us..."

Option 1: "Controls" (sense 3)

- Pastoral implication: Christ’s love governs or rules our hearts and actions.
- Case for this view: Fits well with the theme of transformed motives in 2 Cor 5; many English versions (e.g., ESV, RSV) adopt it.

Option 2: "Compels"/"Urges" (sense 2)

- Pastoral implication: We are driven by Christ’s love—it motivates all we do.
- Case for this view: Resonates with Paul’s missionary zeal in the surrounding verses and the inner force implied by the perfect tense "we have concluded."

Option 3: "Holds together" (sense 1)

- **Pastoral implication:** Christ’s love is the cohesive center of Paul’s ministry and message.
- **Case for this view:** Less common, but possible given the theological theme of reconciliation and unity in the passage.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14, Paul is expressing how the love of Christ isn’t passive or peripheral—it actively grips, governs, and drives him. Among the valid translations, the strongest pastoral sense likely comes from rendering *συνέχει* as either "controls" (emphasizing Christ’s lordship over our inner life) or "compels" (highlighting the motivational force of His sacrificial love). Either way, Paul is captured—heart and soul—by the love Christ has shown.

Translation	Rendered Phrase	Interpretive Choice	Comment
ESV	"the love of Christ controls us"	Controls / Directs	Emphasizes Christ's rule or governance over Paul's actions.
NIV	"Christ's love compels us"	Compels / Urges	Focuses on love as the driving, motivating force.
KJV	"the love of Christ constraineth us"	Restrains / Holds back	Older sense of "constrain" = compels or urges strongly; could sound like "limits" to modern ears.
NASB	"the love of Christ controls us"	Controls / Directs	Stresses internal governance or direction.
NRSV	"the love of Christ urges us on "	Impels / Drives	Dynamic, forward-moving connotation—love pushes Paul onward.
CSB	"the love of Christ compels us"	Compels / Urges	Highlights motivational aspect.
NLT	"Christ's love controls us"	Controls / Directs	Parallels formal translations but with a more conversational tone.
The Message	"Christ's love has moved me to such extremes "	Impels / Drives	Expands the metaphor for emotional and motivational impact.

^{*}*Etymology is a terrible ground for definition. But here it's interesting because these are such fundamental building blocks. -- Austin*