



## **Compelled:** Gospel-Fueled Transformation

**Summary:** Paul, a man who was once a religious Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians, was now planting churches and writing letters to correct and exhort followers of Jesus throughout the region. Paul did not speak with eloquence, and he was facing suffering and persecution as he was carrying out his ministry. Outwardly, he did not portray strength and authority, so why did the church at Corinth listen? Because the church at Corinth was evidence of Paul's ministry! The Holy Spirit was working in the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 3:3) and any power that Paul had came from Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

Paul had an encounter with Jesus that changed everything, and he wanted everyone around him to know the love of Christ. He told the church at Corinth to carry this message then, and we are called to do the same. This message is the gospel. "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:21) The gospel changes everything. As we journey on through the book of Romans, let's take a week to reflect on what compelled Paul so deeply to write to the Romans, Corinthians, and many others.

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 3:1-3, 5:11-21

### **1. The Church was Paul's Letter of Recommendation.**

#### **2 Corinthians 3:1-3**

"Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? Are we like others, who need to bring you letters of recommendation, or who ask you to write such letters on their behalf? Surely not! The only letter of recommendation we need is you yourselves. Your lives are a letter written in our hearts; everyone can read it and recognize our good work among you. Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This "letter" is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts."

## **2. The Love of Christ was Paul's Compulsion.**

### **2 Corinthians 5:11-14**

“Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life.”

## **3. The Church Is Called to Be Ministers of Reconciliation.**

### **2 Corinthians 5:17-20**

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!”

## **4. Ambassadors for Christ Must First Be in Christ.**

### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

“For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

## **Life Application Questions:**

1. What does Paul mean when he describes the church at Corinth as a “letter from Christ?” (2 Corinthians 3:2) In what ways do you see this evidenced in our church today?
2. In what ways has the love of Christ compelled you to act or speak differently in the church, in your school or workplace, and in your home? Can you specifically identify a recent time when Christ’s love motivated your actions or decisions?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-10. How does this description help us understand God’s power displayed in our weakness?
4. Reflect on the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:21. How often do you personally reflect on the gospel? Does this impact your urgency to share with others?