

become the righteousness of God." I hope you can memorize that verse! At the cross, God divided all of the world into two groups—sinners and perfect people. On the perfect people side, how many were there? One. Just Jesus! On the sinner side, how many were there? Billions. Us! And God took all our sin, and he put it all on the perfect One. He made Jesus who had no sin to be sin for us. To die for us. I hope there's a part of you that shouts out, "That's not fair!" You're right! God's whole plan of salvation is terribly unfair—to Jesus! That's what grace is—undeserved love.

But God didn't stop there. If Jesus only took our sins away, it would be like if you wore filthy clothes and someone took those filthy clothes away. That's great, but there would still be a problem. You need new clothes! So God took Jesus' perfection—Jesus' righteousness—and he gave it to us to wear. That's God's great exchange. Jesus took our sin. We received Jesus' perfection. This is why you better not look at yourself in a worldly way. You aren't a failure. You aren't a mistake. You aren't worthless. You are the righteousness of God! If I have problems with my identity, I am making Jesus too small, because Jesus' opinion is all that matters. He's fully committed to you!

Being "fully committed" really isn't about me or you. Your life doesn't depend on how committed you are. Being "fully committed" is about Jesus. Jesus is fully committed to you in a way that no one else can ever be. I mentioned before that every single person is committed to something. Every single person has non-negotiables in their life. Here was Jesus' non-negotiable—you. Heaven? He gave that up. Comfort? He gave that up. His life? He gave that up. The only thing Jesus has always refused to give up is you! That's being fully committed! Jesus is and always will be fully committed to you.

So now "*Christ's love compels us... 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.*" So are you a chicken or a pig? How can I not be fully committed to Christ? I heard someone say recently, "It's an honor to owe everything to Christ." I hope you believe that. It's an honor to owe everything to Christ. Like these MVL students are ambassadors for their school, every person is an ambassador. Are you going to be an ambassador for yourself or for Jesus? It's simple. Christ saved us. We serve Christ. Christ saved us. We serve Christ. It is an honor to owe everything to Christ.

There's only one prerequisite for serving God: A full heart. Without a heart filled by Jesus, things will always be about me. Who I am can only come from Jesus. Then every day leads me to say, like Jesus, "Not my will, but yours be done." Then every difficulty leads me to say, like Abraham, "The Lord will provide." Because nothing really is at stake. Nothing really is in the balance. It's all complete. It's all finished. I'm secure. I'm saved. So here is what I want out of life: I want to know Christ and to be found in him. I want to live for him who died for me. I want to be a pig! Christ's love compels us to be fully committed.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21
Pastor Nathan Nass

MVL Sunday
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¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin^a for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Fully Committed

"Fully Committed." That's what you see on your bulletin today: "Fully Committed." What comes to mind when you hear those words? I can't help but think about something I said in a sermon two years ago. I'm sure you all remember! Let's see: The difference between just being involved in something and being committed is the difference between bacon and eggs. Remember this? With the eggs, the chicken is just involved. With the bacon, the pig is committed! There is a difference between surface involvement and deep commitment. And when we look at life, it often seems like there are lots of people involved, but few people are really committed.

Except that's not true! You can't go through life without commitment. Every single person is committed to something. It's just a matter of what you're committed to. We spend incredible amounts of time and energy on all sorts of things. Some people are committed to coffee. Some to work. Some to video games. Some to the Twins. Some to fishing. Some to their favorite TV shows. There is not a lack of commitment in the world. People are fully committed. Maybe even over-committed. The question is, "What are you committed to?" What are your non-negotiables? The things that you absolutely refuse to give up? You are fully committed. To what?

Now, we're sitting in church. What do you think I'm going to challenge you to be committed to? You're right. Potlucks. No! Jesus! I want to challenge you today to think about your commitment to Jesus. At our pastors' conference this week, I heard an interesting stat. 79% of Americans call themselves Christians. Yet, what percent do you think say that their faith changes the way they live? Just 18%. Let that sink in, then do the math. 61% of Americans say they're Christians, but openly admit that their faith doesn't change the way they live. Is that faith? It's not that we're not committing. People commit to more than

ever before. It's just fewer people seem to be committing to Jesus. What about you?

Let's look at the apostle Paul. There was something driving him. Something that affected every part of his life. Here's how he described it, "*Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*" So was Jesus a chicken or a pig? I don't want to be the one to call Jesus a pig, but that was his level of commitment to us, right? He died. He was all in. And notice how Jesus' commitment affected Paul. "*Christ's love compels us!*" He talks about Jesus' love for him as this overwhelming, compelling force that drove everything he did in life. Jesus had died for him. How could that not change him? Compel him? Motivate him?

It did. What about you? Here is a verse that could serve as a guide for you every day: "*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.*" Every person is committed to something. Here's what Jesus is committed to: You! So here's God's encouragement to you: Let Jesus' death and resurrection motivate and compel you every day of your life. When Jesus died, I died. When Jesus rose, I rose. Jesus was fully committed to me. How can I not be fully committed to him? How can I not want to live for Jesus?

It's just that it's hard. Paul says that "*those who live should no longer live for themselves.*" The truth is that we're used to living for ourselves. I can't read your mind, but I can say with confidence that the person who is on your mind more than anyone else is you. Because for me, it's me. It's the most natural thing for us to live for ourselves. It's great that today I have a whole group right up here in front of church for me to pick on. In high school, it's very easy for you to live for yourself. Each day is a constant battle to prove yourself, based on your appearance, based on your talents, based on your intelligence, based on your friendships. Part of maturing is learning to live less for yourself and more for others. The problem is most of us don't grow up.

And when you live for yourself, we naturally regard people from a "*worldly point of view.*" To look at people in a worldly way is to look at them only outwardly or superficially. It's to look at people and judge them based on their outward appearance, their age, their gender, their education level, their income, their abilities, their race. That's what we do, isn't it? That's the worldly way to look at people. It's to look at people like objects whom we can manipulate for our own personal benefit. How many people don't you look at as enemies, as competition, as below you...? Those who live for themselves will always look at other people from a "worldly" point of view.

Does that describe you? This is a problem that we have. We look at people in a worldly way when we look at them and think, "What can I get from them?" When you look at that classmate and think, "How can they benefit me?" You look at people in a Christian way when you look at them and think, "What can I give to them?" When you look at that coworker and think, "How can I be a benefit to them?" Do you see the difference? Who you

are committed to isn't just a question that you think about on Sunday mornings. Contrary to what those 61% of Americans say, your relationship to Jesus affects the way you look at every single person around you.

Including yourself. Because the person you most often look at in a worldly way is you. When you look at yourself, what do you see? You are looking at yourself in a worldly way when you look at yourself and see a person who is not as attractive as you would like to be. When you see yourself as a person who is not as talented as you would like to be. As a person who is not as loved as you would like to be. As a person who is used and abused. As an object. If you look at yourself from a worldly point of view, it's disappointing, right? Do you feel used? Worn-out? Worthless? When I don't look at my life through the lens of Jesus, it's a sad thing.

Because that's not who you are! Here's who you are: "*From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.... If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" Jesus frees you from the curse of having to live for yourself. Jesus frees you from the curse of looking at yourself in a worldly way. Your whole worldview shifts when you become a believer in Jesus. God has made you a new creation. You are not the sum of your mistakes. You are not defined by your past sins. You are more than your appearance. You've been remade as God's child. If you have problems with your identity, you are making Jesus too small!

Because here is what Jesus has done: "*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*" Jesus reconciled us. That's a big word—reconciliation, but you've heard it before. You've heard of "irreconcilable differences," right? To reconcile is to bring together two sides that had been at odds. If you want to talk about "irreconcilable differences," there were irreconcilable differences between us and God. Except Jesus took everything about you that wasn't right, and he forgave it. He took everything about you that wasn't good enough, and he perfected it. He took everything about you that wasn't the way it was supposed to be and reconciled it. That changes everything!

Without Jesus, you and I are exactly what we see in the mirror. We would have a right to be disappointed in ourselves, because God himself would be disappointed in us and our sins. But not anymore! When Jesus died for you, your status in God's eyes changed. God doesn't count your sins against you anymore, because Jesus died for them. You are no longer the sum of your mistakes, you are the sum of everything good Jesus has done for you! And if ever you doubt that Jesus really meant to do that for you, look at what Paul writes: "*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ.*" Are you part of the world? Then Jesus has done this for you!

There's one verse in our lesson that describes what Jesus did in some of the clearest terms possible: "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might*