

2 Corinthians 5:14 (William (Bill) Prost) 210959

Denver Conference: 2009, The Love of Christ Constrains Us (5:14)

Address—B. Prost

Brother told me it was alright to speak. A personal incident again. This hymn came alive for me. Detroit Conference in November of 1966. Year or two ago. When our late brother Eric Smith gave it out. And it still chokes me up when I think of the meeting that he had because it changed my life. And I found out afterward, in speaking to other young people, that it changed their lives, too. And this hymn took on a meaning that it never had before. 283. When we survey. All artists. More. That hymn was written. As most of you know, by Isaac Watts. One of the fathers of English hymnary. On the slightly amusing sigh when he was a young man in his teens, he complained to his father about the quality of hymns that they sung when they went to church. And his father's terse reply was All right, young man, if that's the case. And you don't like them? Give us something better. Little did his father know what he was starting. And Isaac Watts did proceed to give them better things, but he paid a price in his life for walking with the Lord. On the human side, he was in love with a very nice girl who finally jilted him, not because she didn't like him, but as she said, she admired the jewel very much. But all the casket, that was too much. What was wrong? Oh, he'd suffered from smallpox when he was young, and it had done, as we would say today, a number on his face, and she couldn't handle that. And that really hurt. And because he was what they called a dissenter, he was an outcast in the society in which he lived because he could no longer go on with the things that the Church of England went on with. And he took his place outside of all of that. As a result, he was buried in. The cemetery for the dissenters, because in those days you had to belong to the Church of England to be buried in public cemeteries. And so he's buried on the outskirts of London there in what is known as Bun Hill Field Cemetery. Lot of good English hymn writers there, well well known, but they were most of them outcasts because they didn't go along with things that were contrary to the word of God. Well, let's pray. Our God and Father, we look up to Thee this afternoon. We read this morning. At least someone referred to the scripture and I'd like to read it again in Second Corinthians chapter 5. 2nd Corinthians 5. Beautiful verse. One that I'd like you to memorize if you haven't. 2nd Corinthians 5 and 14. For the love of Christ constrains us. Notice that it doesn't say should constrain or ought to constrain. It simply makes a statement because it is true. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of Christ has a pull, a tug on your heart.

Because we thus judge that if one died for all or. It could read since one died for all. Then we're all dead, or all had died. And that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves. But unto him which died for them. And rose again. Oh, the love of Christ has a tug on your heart and mine. The question is, do I feel? That tug. Because we have talked in the meetings about appealing to the conscience and the Lord does appeal to our consciences, but ultimately the only real motive that Scripture shows that Scripture brings before us for following Christ. Is the response of your heart and mind to his heart. And as a brother long since with the Lord used to remind us, he said, never try to love the Lord any more than you do. Can't try to love someone, can you? No, he said. Just think of how much he loves you. And that's the secret of feeling the love of Christ. You know, Scripture speaks very often of things that are of God and of Christ. You have the word of God and the word of Christ, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, the love of God and the love of Christ. What is the difference? In one sense it's the same love, but I just suggest the thought that when something concerns God. It's the nature and power of what it is. When it brings in the name of Christ, it is the practical effect of it in your life and mine. In order to illustrate this verse and what I have before me this afternoon, I'd like to turn back to some verses in the Old Testament. And we aren't going to jump around a lot in the Word of God, but we will stick to this passage. Because I believe it illustrates for us what we have in these two verses. I very much enjoyed whether Brother Robert brought before us this afternoon. It is a wonderful thing to be fellow heirs, fellow citizens, fellow laborers, fellow sufferers, with Christ and with one another. And I would like, if we could, to add to that by bringing before us something that we have very special and very, very heartwarming in Second Samuel chapter 23. If some of you have heard me speak on this passage before, forgive us if we turn to it again. Because the very book in which we are reading, the very ministry of Peter. Peter tells us that it is well worthwhile to be reminded of things even though we already know them. And here in Second Samuel 23, beginning with verse eight, we have a catalog of David's mighty men. David is at the end of his life and he is giving his estimate of those men who had been faithful to him, particular during the time, particularly during the time of his rejection. There are some surprises in this chapter. There are some things that you would not expect. And I believe that if we speak of the New Testament counterpart at what Scripture calls the judgment seat of Christ, I suggest that there will be some surprises. Scripture gives us a little hint when it tells us that there are first which shall be last, and last which shall be first. And here, in David's estimate of His mighty men, we find some things that perhaps we would not have thought. David would estimate in this way.

But let's read particularly about the first three men in the list. Second Samuel 23 and verse 8. These be the names of the mighty men whom David had. The tachmanite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains. The same was Adino the Esnite. He lift up his spear against 800, whom he slew at one time. And after him was Eliezer the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, whom, when they defied the Philistines that were there, gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone. Away he arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave under the sword. And the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil. And after him was Sham of the son of Agay the Hereaite and the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and the Lord wrought a great victory. I say there is something unusual about these three men, and I would be very happy to be corrected, but to my knowledge they are not mentioned elsewhere in the Word of God, except perhaps in the very similar account of David's mighty men given in First Chronicles. But in all the accounts of David's rejection, his time running away from Saul, his time in The Cave of a dullum, in all the exploits and wars that occurred during the time of David's reign, I am not aware that any of these three name surfaces. There are other names that are very prominent, but these three are not mentioned. And yet, when David is pleased to record those that he placed a high value on, he names these three men. That is at once a humbling and an encouraging thing, because very often those that are perhaps more prominent in more prominent in Christian circles today. Whether among those that you and I are familiar with, or whether among Christendom at large, I say, they may not necessarily be the names that are first when the Lord puts His estimate on what He

really valued. Because Christianity is characterized not by trying to take a high place in this world, but by taking the lowest place and when there were those among the Lord's disciples that wanted to have places. At his right hand and on his left in the Kingdom, when there was a strife among them about who would be the greatest. We find the Lord Jesus quietly taking them aside and saying He. He that will be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all. Oh, I covet that for myself. Permit another reminiscence. Some here will remember our late brother Armstead Barry, who has been with the Lord over 30 years now, but some will remember him well. And he had a memory like an elephant. And it was fun to get Armstead very reminiscing because he could go back, way, way back and tell stories about things that had happened in the past, in the distant past, and he could tell you details and so on. And some of us young people used to pump him for stories about the past. And he told us stories. The one he told me particularly impressed me. He said I remember going to the death bed of a man whose name is well known, too, to us here, although probably none of us remember him. Walter Potter of Chicago. And he said, I remember going to his deathbed, he'd had a stroke, I guess.

And he knew that he was not going to recover. And he said, I remember there sitting at his death bed and the last thing he said to me was Armstead. And he said it with tears running down his face. He said keep humble. And be content to be nothing. The reward will come in a coming day. But what God is looking for today is those of their brother Robert was bringing before us who aren't afraid to pick up a pick and shovel. Morally speaking. I don't mean you have to do it literally, although occasionally it may come to that. He's looking for those that are willing to do The Dirty work, the work behind the scenes, the work that no one notices. These three men did it. No, it's true. They were brave men. Notice what the first one did. Adino, the Esnite chief among the captains, lift up his spear against 800, whom he slew at one time. How would you like to fight against odds like that? How would you like to go out single handed against 800 people and have to deal with the situation? How could he do it? Say it's impossible while he was fighting at one side? Somebody sure be. We're able to get them from the back. What was the secret? The Lord was with him. And I say to you, and again perhaps, perhaps, if it's not being too. Shall I say pointed, We speak to the young people here because people like me, oh, we're thankful for good health, but we're on the down sweep in our lives and we can't do the things that we used to do. And God looks to you with the energy of youth and the ability to go forward for him. I say to you, it's a difficult day, but the Lord is just the same. And the love of Christ still constrains us. And the Lord is just as strong for you as he ever was. Slew 800 at one time a wonderful victory. We'd love to, shall we say, be. A bit able to do that in the natural sense. I was impressed when my wife and I got on the plane in Portland, OR to fly here to Denver and as the captain was reviewing a few things, as they often do, welcomed us aboard the flight. And he said, and I understand we also have some with us on this flight who are in this US, in the US military, and we welcome you on board this flight and we pay tribute to you for all that you are doing in the defense of our country and in the courage that you have to go out. And there was immediately a spontaneous round of applause that rippled throughout the whole plane. Those men were honored. And men love to honor those today and if there were someone who were able to carry this out today. Oh yes, we have more sophisticated fighting methods today, but men delight to place the Distinguished Service Cross and other certain awards for those who are brave in the natural sense. These men didn't get the Distinguished Service Cross during the actual time that these things happen, but David noticed. David noticed. Notice what happened with Eliezer, the son of Dodo the Ahohite. Says in the end of verse 9 the men of Israel were gone away. Robert was talking about fellowship. It's not nice to stand alone, but there may be times when the Lord will test you and say, will you do it? Will you do it if it comes to being faithful to the Lord, whether in preaching the gospel or whether in going on in the truth? Will you stand alone if necessary? What happened here? What did his hand hold on to? The sword. And for you and me, it's the sword of the Spirit. He held on morally speaking to the word of God, even if others. Had gone away. Others were saying this is too tough, this is too difficult, we can't handle it. And I say, and I don't throw stones at them. My heart goes out to them. There are some today who are going away.

And it shames me that perhaps there hasn't been enough. In my heart, enough energy, enough spiritual warmth. To draw them so that they do go away. Not to remember that. Let's not throw stones at those that go away. Before we take to heart what again a brother used to say, and I agree with it 100%, he said, remember that there ought to be enough power. In every local assembly to draw every true Christian in the neighborhood. Oh, I put the responsibility back on me, but when it comes to standing alone, here was a man that stood alone. What does it say the Lord wrought a great victory? Oh, you're never alone. I think about Him that we often sing together at him Sings. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. And the Lord may test you once in a while by saying, Will you stand alone? This man did. And what happened? Oh, the people came after him. What? Only to spoil. I don't want to be humorous, but doesn't it remind you of the story of the Little Red Hen? Same kind of principle, wasn't it? Who will help me eat the bread? I will, I will, I will. Everybody wanted to share in the spoils. And do we find this man Eliezer? Oh, no, no, no, no. Get out of here. Where were you when I needed you? Where were you when I had to fight these Philistines all alone? No, he let them have it. Beloved brethren. If you have to stand alone for Christ and others, come and reap the benefits. Remember. It wasn't you, but the Lord that won the great victory. Let's be willing to stand up for Christ. And let others have the benefit of it. Here's this man, Shama. He could have been excused for running away, after all. A field of lentils, A field of beans. Not worth it, let them have it. But you know what was valuable to him? It was God's inheritance. It's what the Lord had given. And. Even though other people fled, he said, I will stand here because it's precious to the Lord. The going is getting rough today for believers. It's rough in foreign countries where the persecution is a very real thing. Some of us have just come home from some time in Romania and we were enjoying the freedom that they have had, Therefore, almost 20 years now since the communist regime was toppled. But many there cannot forget the terrible persecution and the suffering that was part of the life of believers over there for many years under communism and under that awful dictator, Ceausescu. But you and I have a different kind of persecution in this country because, sad to say, it often occurs. Yes, it comes from without, but it comes more from within the House of God. And we find that the pressures are very, very great. It's not worth it. It's not worth it. Let it go. The devil will say compromise. You'll have an easier path, a wider fellowship. And what the devil is really seeking to do is to get you to avoid what Scripture calls the cross of Christ. Paul knew about that and we were talking about it a little in Gresham the other day. Paul could say to the Galatians, if I yet preach circumcision, he could say then is the offence of the cross ceased? What did he mean? He meant that if he was willing to water down the heavenly calling of the church, if he were willing to bring Christianity down to the level of an earthly religion, then things would be much easier. It would be much more popular. It would have a degree of respectability that it didn't have. And the devil is seeking to do that today. Especially with young people to say it's not worth it.

To contend for the whole truth of God in principle, he's saying that field of lentils, let it go. Shamma says I won't let it go. And once again it says the Lord wrought a great victory. The Lord will be with you, and nothing can compensate for the lack of a sense of His presence. And nothing is a greater joy than the sense in your soul and mine of having sought to please Him and sought to follow. Follow His word with a full heart. This precious book is being attacked today as never before and thank God for everyone who stands up and who is willing to say by God's grace I will not let it go. But. We are being, shall we say, attacked in every possible way as to what this precious book says, and what we are seeing around this is a gradual and tangential turn away from the Word of God. What you and I need is to make this precious book our

only authority, but more than that, as we had in our hymn and as we had in 2nd Corinthians 5, to make Christ, who is the Word, who is the Way, who is the truth, to have that blessed One before us. And that brings us to the second part of what concerns these men. Let's read on here Second Samuel 23. And verse 13. And three of the 30 chief. Now you notice here it doesn't name those that were responsible. I don't think there's any doubt about who they were. Three of the 30 chief went down and came to David in the harvest time under The Cave of a Dullum. And the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Raphael, And David was then in an hold in the Garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And to David longed and said, Oh, that one would give me drink. Of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate. And the three mighty men breakthrough the host of the Philistines, and drew water over the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out under the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it. These things did, these three mighty men. Again, it's noteworthy, isn't it, that the men are not named here. And yet, I believe that this story is ultimately the reason why these three men had the 1st place. When David spoke. Of those that meant the most to him. There were others in David's army who were very courageous. We could read on, for example, about a man by the name of Abishai who was related to David. He was actually David's first cousin, and he was a very, very valiant man, a man who was ready at the drop of a hat, we would say, to go out and fight for David's honor and glory. And more than once he was right up there when there was anything dangerous to be done or anything that required real courage. He was right there. But there's something very, very special about this story that I want to speak to my heart as well as yours about. Because here we find these men. Who had taken to heart that David was the rightful king? Here was the man who ought to have been sitting on the throne, rejected, cast out. Compelled to run here and there and everywhere while he was pursued by Saul. And not only that, but even those of his own nation who ought to have been on his side, sometimes betrayed him. You will remember a place by the name of Keela. And when the Philistines were robbing the threshing floors in Quila, David went down there and delivered them, and defeated the Philistines, and saved them from having their harvest stolen away.

But then when Saul found out that David was there, and David inquired of the Lord. If I stay here, Lord, will the men of Kila do? Well, they delivered me up to me, up to Saul, and the Lord said yes, they will. And David very wisely get out of there. But you can imagine how it must have hurt when he had risked his own life and the lives of his men to deliver them. Only to find out that when the situation was changed, they would have betrayed him and given him over to Saul. And in more than one instance, David found that those who should have been his friends and shown allegiance to him. Were rather ready to act, as we would say, with situational ethics. They would do what suited them under the circumstances. Rather than recognizing the rightful king, these men felt all that. The Cave of a dullum was about the last word in rejection. And David gives vent. To a wish. Just a wish, just a thought. I know a little bit how he felt. When I was a boy, we lived on a farm and we had water in our house that came from a cistern. But my mother didn't like that water and she used to send my brother and me up to the well up by the House of the boss. And it wasn't that far away looking back on it. But we were small boys and we couldn't carry a bucket of water ourselves. So we had to put a broom handle through under the handle of the bucket and carry it between us. And many were the complaints, I'm sorry to say that you're slapping it down my leg, etcetera, etcetera. Why? Because it was good water from that well. It was good water and you and I know how people like to have good water and when people travel if they don't get. Water that they're accustomed to, Sometimes it causes them problems. And David, no doubt, going from here and there and everywhere. Oh, there was that. Well, and you know, the Scripture doesn't put in details for no reason. It was by the gate of Bethlehem, David's hometown. The gate speaks in scripture of administration and justice. But who was in charge there? Who was there right in David's hometown? A Garrison of the Philistines. Oh, and morally speaking, I say to your heart and mind, that is the condition in this world. The Lord Jesus is the rightful King, but he has been driven out. He has been displaced. He has been rejected, He has been crucified, He's never been vindicated. And here, as it were, the Lord Jesus longs for what? Those who will give him his rightful place. No command. If there had been a command, that would have been another thing, but here there was only an expressed wish. And notice this How did these men hear it? David didn't shout it out through a megaphone or something, did he? These men were close enough to David that they heard what he said. And as far as I can tell, they didn't tell anybody else and they didn't ask David's permission either because probably if they had been asked or if David had been asked, if they'd asked permission, David, can we go and get you some of that water? David would have said no way, no way. You're not going to do that. But they didn't ask. They said we'll get it, we'll get it. And I have tried to picture in my mind's eye, if that's not going too far beyond Scripture, how it was for these men. I would probably have gone at night and kind of skirted around and gone on my stomach under the bushes or something like that, see if I could get the water without the Philistines noticing me or something. But it doesn't say that these men did that. No, it says they breakthrough the host of the Philistine. Can you imagine three men breakthrough the host? And then coming back. Well, if we can be practical about it, somebody had to carry the water, so that would have made it doubly difficult.

But they got back with that water. Oh, what does that bring before your heart and mind? That brings before us a devotedness? A devotedness to Christ that goes beyond a command. We were talking about commands in the reading this afternoon. And there are commandments connected with the new life, but there are things that are beyond commandments. Because they only are known to those who are close enough to the Lord. To be sensitive to an expressed wish, to be sensitive to what would please him in the world where he is rejected and cast out. And they bring that water to David. Oh, I say to you and to me, the Lord looks for those who will go out and win glorious victories for him. And David valued that very highly. But there was something here that he valued perhaps even more. And in that sense he doesn't even name these men. But I don't doubt that who they were. He valued that these men thought so much of him that they risked their lives in order to do something. Who for? Only for him, because of who he was, and because of his rejection. We might well ask David, why don't you? Why didn't you drink it? After all of that effort and risking of their lives, pour it out as it says unto the Lord. Why did he do that? Well, I don't know whether I can give you the whole thought. Maybe others have different thoughts, but I offer one suggestion. You know, if the David had taken a drink of that water, he would have enjoyed it, but humanly speaking, no one else would have gotten any, would they? It wasn't enough in that bucket to pass it around everybody. David pours it out under the Lord, and to me I connect that with what the Lord Jesus said when he instituted the remembrance of himself, he says. I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. Now there are different thoughts depending on which gospel we refer to there. I believe it's the heavenly side of things brought before us, and the Lord is saying, I believe I won't enjoy all of that to the full until I have my own with me. There's a day coming when he will appear, but when he appears? When he appears. He doesn't appear until you and I are with them. The last the world saw the Lord Jesus was his hanging on a cross. And they won't see him again until he comes with you and me with him. And so in that sense, if someone has remarked Christ is hidden from the world today and you and I as far as taking a public, uh. Shall we say place in the affairs of this world? We too are to be hidden when he appears. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory, And in that day the Lord will enjoy that fullness of joy. And I believe that's why the apostle Paul could say in Second Timothy

chapter four, he could say, Speaking of that crown of glory, he could say, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love is, is it a crown of glory? Maybe I'm getting it wrong here. Pardon me, righteousness. Thank you, crown of righteousness, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing, we love His coming. But are his coming? Perhaps I can think of that more in connection with what I get out of it. But if I love his appearing, it's not only because I will be manifested with Him, but it's because He will have His rightful place. And so May God give you and me to embrace both characters that we have in these men. Yes, there is a place, a wonderful place for public service for the Lord today, for those who are willing to go out to give their time, their energy, whatever they have for the Lord. And we have that pictured. In the tremendous exploits of these three men. But there is also a place to give the Lord what is his, if we could say it, to give the Lord a drink. In the world that has rejected him.

To give him a drink of that which is rightfully his. To honor him for who he is and what he is. In the place where he is still cast out and where the Philistines are still occupying the place that belongs to him. The Lord values that very highly. But again, to recapitulate. It's only for those that are near enough to the Lord to hear an expressed wish. Without an express command, it's for those who are willing to go without involving others, without making a big fanfare about it, without going out. You don't hear those men going out and say, do you hear that David wants a drink of that water in the well of Bethlehem? Hey, you fellows over here, Come on, You hear that? Listen, let's go. Let's go and get it. No, they said, we will act on our own faith before the Lord, because others did not hear that wish, and the Lord gave them the ability, the strength, the courage, the wherewithal to breakthrough the host of the Philistines. And to give that to David, which meant so much to him, not the water, although that was most blessed, that they brought it for him, but the devotedness of those who said David is worthy of that. And the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of all that we can give. I know our time is gone, but let's sing part of another hymn. 173. And we won't sing at all for the sake of time. 173. Especially verses 3:00 and 4:00. I'll read verse two a little while. He'll come again. Let us the precious hours redeem our only grief, to give him pain our joy to serve and follow him. Watching and ready may we be. As those that wait their Lord to see, let's sing verses 3:00 and 4:00. Oh le.

clickbible.org