

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And 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.

Easter in two verses. V 14 explains Good Friday. V 15, Easter Day, the Sunday that follows.

I recently travelled by road interstate. I have discovered that the appeal of the billboard is slowly dying. Against a black background the advertising agencies had written three words in bold white type: Watch this space.

There are those who are committed to this time-honoured form of advertising. Of course the effectiveness of billboards is branding. And efficiency of message.

NSW Police will tell you in 5 words 'Stop it or Cop it'. McDonalds simply displays three: 'On your right'.

If I had the opportunity the Easter billboard would likewise contain just three words: In our place.

V 14 of 2 Corinthians 5:

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And 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.

The author of this passage is writing about a personal discovery and a universal reality. I will deal with those in reverse order.

The Universal Reality

The universal reality. In our place.

We could also say 'In my place' and that would be equally true. But it would not say enough.

The word 'all' is mentioned three times in these two verses. The grammar deliberately plural.

Easter declares we have a common humanity. It invites us to share a common eternity.

Our common humanity is expressed in Romans 5:12:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned

Our common eternity is explained in Romans 5:18:

Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.

Universal realities. The first we inherited in Adam. The second received in the cross of Christ.

In our place. Jesus Christ our substitute.

If you have been granted Power of Attorney over another's affairs. If you have served in the legal profession and advocated for your client. Perhaps in your sporting days you have been on the bench ready to replace the injured or fatigued. You may have been a substitute teacher.

If you have heard the compassionate parent say to their suffering child "If only I could take your place." The loving spouse who says to their ailing partner "If we could switch I would".

In our place. To pay our debt. Jesus Christ our substitute.

Last Christmas we heard of the anonymous donor who walked into a Toy store on the Gold Coast in Queensland and paid off all its layby's. Totalling \$16,000.

A second person did likewise not long after. In Gympie. Paying off the debts of 80 customers.

A universal reality:

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

In our place. Jesus stands before the Father and takes upon himself the penalty due to us. The death we deserved. The debt we could not pay.

The Personal Discovery

This universal reality leads to a personal discovery. If the three words of the Easter billboard don't grab our attention shortly down the highway we place a second ad. With four words: It's not about you.

V 15:

And 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.

1 Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Our problem with Easter is that we just have too small a view of the exchange that has taken place. We treat it like an eftpos purchase. We hope we have enough money in our spiritual account so that the transaction will be approved.

You can't buy this. You can't bargain. You can't broker a deal.

His death. For your debt. Jesus is your substitute. You're bankrupt.

But the power of this verse is that the more deeply I recognise Jesus as my substitute in his death the more deliberately I long to enjoy being like him in his resurrection.

In his commentary on 2 Corinthians New Testament scholar Dr Paul Barnett calls this double-dying.

One has died that all might be reconciled to God, and all are to die to themselves.

We soon discover that 'In our place' is a life-long blessing reaching into eternity. The Christ who stands for us is the Christ who stands with us. And on the last day when we enter God's throne room at the final judgment we will see that Christ stands by us.

In our place. Past. Present. Forthcoming. Is Easter the time to be refreshed by the universal blessing made available to all?

Has Jesus stood in your place?

The Golden Arches of the McDonald's chain are perhaps the most recognisable of all billboards. Shortly after those three words 'On your right' was a second red billboard with the yellow M. Three words again: 'Just missed us'.

This Easter don't go past the universal blessing.

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.