

# COMPELLED: Expend

Jeremiah 29:1-9; Matt 5:13-16

**MPS:** Christians live compelled by God's love to expend their life for Jesus so God is glorified before others.

**OBJ:** Every person can understand what it means for God's love to compel a Christian to Expend life by two principles.

## INTRO The story of Ken Beck and Black Widow Bows<sup>1</sup>

At the age of 15, Scott Beck came home one day from High School one day and handed his dad a recurve bow he had made in shop class. None of them were bow hunters at the time, but Scott enjoyed making the bows so much that he made four, one for the shop, one for himself, one for his brother and one for his dad. When he gave the bow to his dad he said, "Here dad, now we can hunt together." Bow season was just around the corner. And Ken and his two boys, Scott and Dan, went hunting that year.

Ken says they didn't even see a deer that year, but that didn't matter. The three of them had so much fun that they developed a lifelong love for bowhunting. As the next year's bow season approached they all planned to spend opening morning together in the woods again. But just before season Scott was killed in an automobile accident. When they came home from his funeral Ken asked his other son, Dan, if they could ever hunt again together. And, they enjoyed hunting together again. Scott had sparked a passion in his father. Ken says his passion for was greater because of Scott. Every time he hunted he felt closer to Scott's memory there.

Ken originally moved to Missouri after a devastating hail storm destroyed his hopes for farming in Colorado. But his Missouri farm would not fare much better. After losing most of his cattle he was forced look for other work. He went into sales and business, and enjoyed a good measure of success. But he sold his business when he had the chance to buy a small manufacturing operation, the Black Widow Bow Company.

The Black Widow Bow Company started in Springfield, Missouri, in 1957, specializing in recurve bows. But in the early 70's a new kind of bow hit the market, the compound bow, and caused the recurve bow market to take a downturn. By 1980 the market was down by 80%, so they decided to sell the company. Ken knew it was a big risk, but there was more in this business venture for him.

Today Black Widow Bow Company is one of the top bow manufacturers in the world. Ken had more than just success. He led the company to be the best of the best by crafting the finest recurve and longbows in the world. Ken no longer owns Black Widow Bow Company today, but it is still located in Nixa, MO. And, sometimes unexpectedly and unknowingly, you can catch Ben hanging out to catch up with today's owners in the shop. That's what happened to me one day when Ken told me this story. And in his words he said, "it was a way for me to stay close to the memory and my love for my son."

**TRANS** Now, you may be wondering, "WHY do I begin with this story?" I want to ask every person to consider this question, "What is compelling your life today?" Have you ever loved something or been loved in a way that moved you to action?

We are in a series entitled COMPELLED, considering God's love for us that grows a life of full devotion to live for Him. Compelled means that we "live as we've been loved." Christians are COMPELLED by God's love to live SENT.

The letters of the word SENT form an acrostic of four life postures by which the love of God compels our life. The first posture we considered last week was Surrender. Today we look at the second posture of living COMPELLED by God's love, EXPEND our lives.

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17*

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Bertalan. Traditional Bowyers of America: The Bowhunting and Bowmaking World of the Nation's Top Crafter of Longbows and Recurves. (East Lansing, MI: Envisage Unlimited Press, 1989). This is a portion of chapter 14 that tells the story of Black Widow Bow Company.

**OBJ:** Two principles guide the Christian to live compelled by God's love to EXPEND their life for His glory.

## **READ** Jeremiah 29:1-3

*These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. <sup>2</sup>This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: <sup>4</sup>“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup>Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. <sup>6</sup>Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. <sup>7</sup>But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. <sup>8</sup>For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, <sup>9</sup>for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD. **Jeremiah 29:1-9***

Jeremiah 29 is a letter written to a people in a foreign place, Jewish exiles living in Babylon. (.1) When Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, they scattered them all over the kingdom to live among their people as a strategy of conquering them.

**What made Babylon a foreign place to the Jews?** For starters, it was not the first place of their citizenship. The land and climate was different. The people were different. The language was different. Their customs and celebrations felt odd. The food tasted different. Everything was different from home, and that made it all feel foreign. They wanted to be back in Jerusalem. They were hearing from so-called “prophets” that things seemed to be improving, and that they should expect to go back soon. (.8-9) Imagine that, people speaking in God’s name and pretending to speak “for God”, but only saying things that made people feel good instead of what God had actually said! Interesting! I guarantee those were the biggest crowds.

Jeremiah says, “It’s not time for you to return.” (.10) The Jews longed to be home. In response to their desire to return, God had a different plan to use them where they were.(.4) God wanted them to know that though they were exiles, they were not abandoned or forgotten. God had a divine purpose for leaving the Israelites in Babylon.

**Jeremiah redirects their thinking from the discomfort of their situation, to focusing on God’s purpose.** He begins by telling them that they are exiled in Babylon because God put them there. (.4) It can be a hard truth to accept, and even a bitter pill to swallow, when we learn that the discomfort of our lives is ordained by God himself. Christianity is the story of God saving people from sin through Jesus Christ for His glory and sending them to make Christ-followers of all nations. It’s not a story that secures or guarantees our comforts and conveniences so we can be happy with our situation.

Instead of promising comfort by returning home, Jeremiah commanded them to get comfortable in Babylon. He tells them to make this place home, put down roots, build their families and multiply in the land. And, if that’s not disheartening enough, they are to seek the welfare of the city in all their doing, building, living and praying. The Israelites in exile are to bless the city by the way they live and worship. And, they needed to understand that their welfare would be found in the city’s welfare. God would do through them in order to provide for them. God’s plan was to display his glory by blessing those who hated and reviled Him through a people who loved and served Him.

Jeremiah concludes by reminding the people to stop listening to people who tell them what they want to hear. They must be very careful to listen to the word of the Lord. False prophets and teachers always lead people astray by appealing to their comforts and conveniences, and telling them what they want to hear. God proclaims His Word for His people to bring about His glory in the world.

**TRANS** The first principle of a Christian compelled to EXPEND life is the Principle of Purpose.

**#1: Principle of Purpose:** Christians glorify God by blessing others to demonstrate the shalom of God on our life because Jesus is IN our life.

**Verse 7 has one key phrase that helps us understand all God is saying:** “*seek the welfare of the city*”. The New International Version interprets this phrase as, “*seek the peace and prosperity of the city*”. The Hebrew word for *welfare* is *shalom*. *Shalom* is a word that means a comprehensive blessing on life, including prosperity and wealth, health and well-being, influence and favor, and happiness and joy. *Shalom* is the earthly recognition of a divine presence and blessing on life. This is a special command because this is the only place in the Old Testament where prayer for one’s enemies and for unbelievers is commended.<sup>2</sup> There’s nothing worldly about this. *Shalom* brings earthly recognition to a divine reality, God is with us. **God never intended that the Christian witness in the world would win others by showing Him as our “bling”, but by living as conduits of His blessing under His Lordship.**

**God’s plan is this: He displays His glory in the world to bless people by being a blessing through His people.**

Christians display God’s glory by laboring and praying for His reigning peace to prevail, as it does within us by His presence. If you only live and operate in the city to ‘get from or out of it’, you are not living as a citizen of God’s Kingdom first. Jesus commanded us to “go and make disciples of all nations” because Christ-followers live to demonstrate God’s glory by living fully under His Lordship as citizens of His Kingdom first. The Christian’s first allegiance to God’s Kingdom above every other makes us better citizens because we aim to bless the city in all we do. **Christians live distinctively-oriented to Jesus to testify to the blessing of His Lordship by being a blessing in the world.**

**APPL** God wanted the exiles to know what He wants you to know: He is never far away. He knows where you are every day. He knows your needs, wants, struggles, ‘secret’ issues, pleasures and joys of life. God knows his children. And, He knows where you are is where He has you for this time and for His purpose.

Are you living in this conviction? **OR**, are in the paralysis of another love or desire?  
Are you expending your life for God’s glory where you are?

**Christians live compelled by God’s love to EXPEND their life for Jesus so God is glorified before others.**

**TRANS** SO, if God has a plan, how does a Christian live here in this world? How is the church to display the glory of life under King Jesus in His Kingdom?

**TRANS** The second principle of a Christian compelled to EXPEND life is the Principle of Practice.

**#2: Principle of Practice:** Christians glorify God by living as salt and light to glorify God before people.

Jesus began with an understanding of the “WHY” for God’s people when He explained the “HOW” with personal, practical application for His followers. He shattered the rules of religion and worldly values when he teaches what we have come to know as the Beatitudes. Immediately following this re-alignment of life values, he explains the “Why” for each Christian, and the church. This second principle is not simply about what you do, but how you do all that you do.

**READ** Matt 5:13-16

<sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. **Matthew 5:13-16**

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<sup>2</sup> F. B. Huey, [Jeremiah, Lamentations](#), vol. 16, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 253. Huey writes, “Volz points out that this is the only place in the OT where prayer for one’s enemies and for unbelievers is commended (cf. Matt 5:43–48; Rom 12:21; Titus 3:1–2; 1 Pet 2:18).”

Jesus' teaches that people who live in God's redeeming love operate by divine, world-transcending values that translate into life-altering, real, glory-producing practices. Two common images explain HOW Christian's practice expending their life in this world, salt and light.

**First, Christians live as salt of the earth.** Salt has several valuable benefits, it flavors or seasons, it preserves and it also holds health benefits with antiseptic value, able to limit bacterial growth.

**ILLUS** Salt on an ulcer in the mouth is so soothing and relaxing, removing the sensitivity and pain of the ulcer, immediately after the eye-watering, body-flouncing, and sometimes cursing caused from the initial pain.

**Christians live as salt of the earth, or the created order.** Christians relate to all things with Jesus' redeeming power and participate in the created order with a focus on our eternal redemption. There are some things that we enjoy naturally, but with greater "flavor" because it is from God and He is glorified through our enjoyment. This is one reason why we pray to give thanks before every meal. There are some things we abstain from or avoid because it holds no redeeming value. The Scriptures do not give a comprehensive list of these matters as much as they provide guidelines for wise discernment so as to not enter into sin or cause others to do the same. And, there are other things that we hold to or participate in, but in a "preserving" manner that demonstrates our distinction to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. [In all of these matters, Christians live wisely according to God's eternal counsel that we might walk in a manner worthy of the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.](#)

Think about this, Christian. This is the way that you are to practice all that you do in your life. The Christ-follower brings a savory flavor to the world NOT by copying everyone else and for the same reasons, but by doing all for Jesus' glory. Nothing adds value and benefit that is attractive, appetizing and appealing to this world like the redeeming power of the gospel applied to life against the dull bore produced through idolatry, immorality and addiction. [The person exhausted by sin's dull deception finds the pleasure-filled, satisfying savor of true life in Jesus through Christians living as salt.](#)

**TRANS** But what if it loses its saltiness?

**Real salt losing its saltiness is an impossibility.** It can be used up, but it cannot lose its principle property. This is Jesus' point. When Christian's fail to live by faith under King Jesus in this world, their life reflects nothing more than anyone else in the world. And that creates a false testimony about Jesus, and about their life. [Righteous living by faith in obedience to King Jesus flavors, preserves and heals in this world as it spreads the gospel.](#)

**Second, Christians live as light of the world.** Light also holds powerful properties for life, including orientation or direction and security. But light can also mean goodness or righteousness in opposition to darkness. Jesus' teaching encompasses all of these meanings. World references a sphere of existence and influence where people live and operate.

Christians live among all people of the world as a force for good and righteousness, that gives others direction in life. The Psalmist reminds us that the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is the light of our life, both to guide our direction and order our steps. <sup>Psa119:105</sup> The light in which we live provides light for others. There is no better way for a Christian to demonstrate the potency and power of light for others than to walk by the light of God's Word in their life.

When we live by faith in obedience to King Jesus, we display the light by which we "walk" in life. And, when we savor the joy that it brings to us, the peace that following Jesus provides for life, we show how His light gives security to life. It doesn't make every situation or surrounding in life a distinctively "good" one, but it does mean that we are not driven by those things. [Living by faith in obedience to God's Word gives a stability, a certainty, and a calming peace to life at all times and in all situations.](#)

When we walk in the light, and *together* as light, we shine a light of God's glory. And Jesus says this is the principle reason for everything that we do, that others may see our good deeds to give glory to God!

Christians live compelled by God's love to EXPEND their life for Jesus so God is glorified before others.

The Principle of Purpose and the Principle of Practice guide the Christian to live compelled by God's love to EXPEND their life for His glory. But I want to pause here and return to my first question; **"What's compelling your life today?"**

Why do you live the way you do? Is your life EXPENDED for the glory of God? Does God get all the glory from your life... ..in all your relationships and friendships? ...in your work? ...in your recreation? ...in your church participation? **Is there anywhere God does not get glory from your life?**

#### **ILLUS A recent email from a LPer**

I received an email from a LifePointer wanting to be intentional about being a faithful witness in their work. They stated: "God is 'unsettling' my heart to a point I feel I must move forward! I feel almost as if He is calling me a mission field—a local one. I am beginning to believe He is calling me to use my business as a ministry," –

**YES, Christ-follower, you are COMPELLED by divine love to EXPEND your life!**

**LifePoint is a missional church and kingdom mission begins here with every person.** We've prayed and served. We started the year in prayer, "Prayer is the first act of love, the first labor of mission." God ordains that His will would be manifested in the world through the labor and prayers of His people. We focused on training for gospel conversations. But we are not breeding 'good little church attenders'. We're equipping the church to inhabit our "second city" AS the church for the glory of God through the worship of the nations. We labor to equip you as salt and light, to spread and shine all over our city every minute of every day to spread the gospel. Do NOT live in any sphere of life unintentionally without redemptive purpose or practice. There should be a rich aura over our region because LifePoint is unleashed in the city for the glory of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. **LifePoint is the church at all times to live compelled by God's love to EXPEND our lives for God's glory.**

Christians live compelled by God's love to EXPEND their life for Jesus so God is glorified before others.

#### **CLOSE Where are you? What's compelling your life today?**

When you surrender to the Lord, you begin by embracing the place, position and people to expend your life for God's glory. **Have you surrendered to expend your life for Jesus' Kingdom?**