

MOTIVATIONS TO MINISTRY



TEXT: **2 Corinthians 5:10-15** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 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.*

INTRO.: A. *Why we do what we do determines the outcome and impact of our ministry. If we serve the Lord half-heartedly, we will reap meager results. If we serve the Lord whole-heartedly, like Caleb (of whom it is said at least 4 times that he "wholly followed the Lord"), then our results and also our rewards will be great.*

B. There are 3 main motives for serving the Lord (all found in our text): **1) Rewards 2) Fear & 3) Love.** They are all biblical motivations. God offers an *incentive program* for His servants: **rewards.** He speaks of *duty* because of a powerful motivation: **fear.**

Ecclesiastes 12:13 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*

Then he also tells of the *highest motivation* of all for service: **love.**

ILLUS.: Children obey and serve their parents for these 3 things: **rewards, fear & love.** Servants do the same. Everyone wants to be **rewarded** or paid for their service (what they do with that reward later is up to them – they may even return it to their master/employer.) Fear is a great incentive to work, i.e., you fear losing your position for failure. But **love** is indeed the highest motive. When an O.T. slave (servant – worker) loved his master & was set free, if he loved him, he would refuse to leave & the master would be obligated to take care of him for the rest of his life.

Exodus 21:2-6 *If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, **I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.***

TRANS.: Why do **YOU** serve the Lord? Are you a profitable or unprofitable servant? Do you visit the kids on your bus route because you expect **payment**? (If so, you won't get much around here! 😊) Do you serve because you **fear** the shame of quitting or the displeasure of those who count on you? Or do you do it because you **love** the children on your route? Where DO you serve the Lord (or **DO YOU SERVE HIM**)? Service is wonderful, but motivation is critical!

I. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST: (REWARDS) v.10

A. Incentive For Service:

ILLUS.: The Lord's incentive program includes such humble service/reward situations as simply giving a cup of cold water to someone who is thirsty; visiting the sick & the afflicted or the fatherless or those in prison, but of course includes the highest kind of service – soul-winning.

(*Reader's Digest* had an article recently evaluating the "Left Behind" series of books & was critical of the prophetic "negative" picture painted there because the "notion of an inevitable cataclysmic end of time." They say that "...if the ideas in the novels are carried to their logical conclusion, there's not much for people to do but accept Christ and wait for the Second Coming. 'From the point of view of encouraging efforts for peace (!), protecting the environment, helping victims of AIDS (interesting they single out AIDS – read homosexual – victims), or famine, the [Left Behind] mind-set works against all this...It encourages a passivity in addressing important issues...The books also portray most earthly authorities left behind as evil...'The message that comes through is profound suspicion of international organizations of all kinds, including the U.N., and of government itself. ")

This is all a grave distortion of what fundamentalists really believe and practice. Jack Hyles used to say that a fundamental church will do more good on its way to soul-winning than a liberal church on its way to changing society. No liberal church ever started or supported a rescue mission, a hospital, a Bible-teaching college, etc. They just steal them from us! (e.g., Princeton, Harvard, Temple, etc.) The liberal believes in putting a new suit on the man, we believe in putting a new man in the suit!

1. It will not just be service, but the kind of service and the motive for service which will be evaluated. **"...whether it will be good or bad"**

ILLUS.: In over 40 years in the pastoral ministry I have had all kinds of people with all kinds of motives for "service" or what they call service, in the ministry. I have had men who enjoyed being a *deacon*, but rarely, if ever, went soul-winning or even visited the people on their deacons lists who were sick or in need – and when they stopped being a deacon, even stopped coming to church! They liked sitting in meetings and having a great deal to say but didn't really want the responsibility of service. I have had *bus captains* who so loved their riders that they went out every Saturday, rain or shine, "in sickness & in health, for better or worse" – they just wouldn't miss! Some serve out of **duty**, some for **rewards** & some for **love** of our Savior!

2. Both the **"good or bad" works** will be evaluated and rewarded or judged.

II. THE TERROR OF THE LORD: (FEAR)

NOTE: The concept of fear is a major Bible theme and deals with reverence, trust, and a deep hatred of all evil. It does not mean to be afraid OF God, but to fear God as a well-disciplined child fears his parents. The child who has the right kind of parents knows that when he *does wrong* he will be corrected. His fear is based on *disobedience!* He knows he deserves discipline and fears the rod of chastening. The classic passage in the O.T. on the fear of God is found in Deut. Paul knows of this passage & may have it in mind as he thinks of the responsibility of warning the lost to turn to Christ: "Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord, I persuade men..."

Deuteronomy 32:39-42 *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.*

A. A Man Driven! V.11,12

1. Driven by the **"terror of the Lord."**
2. Driven by a genuine passion for His Savior and a love for lost souls.
 - a. For those who question his motives for service, Paul offers his critics the statement in v.12 that he doesn't do what he does for show, but from a heart of love.
 - b. To Paul motive was everything; and his critics had questioned his motives.

ILLUS.: We need to learn not to question the motives of others who appear to be serving the Lord, even if they may differ with us on some minor points. Only the Lord knows the heart.

B. A Mad Man? V.13

1. The term "beside ourselves" is the same one used by Festus when Paul witnessed to him: **"...Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad!" Acts 26:24**

ILLUS.: Zealous Christians can't win! They accused the other Apostles of being **"unlearned & ignorant men"** and here Festus accuses Paul of being overeducated! Paul is looked at by his peers in religion, in Judaism, among the Pharisees and government officials as being crazy, because of his conversion and strong witness. They said the same things about our Savior!

Mark 3:21-22 *And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.*

2. Paul also used the term **"sober"** meaning *"to be in your right mind."*

- a. Paul was not a mad man; he was a driven man.
- b. The believer is the only person who can be *"in their right mind"* because he has accepted and adopted the Bible worldview instead of the carnal worldview.

- 1) He believes that life is sacred and a gift from God, so abortion is not a matter or a right to choose, and that both abortion and euthanasia are murder.
- 2) He believes that the lives of people are more important than the lives of animals.
- 3) He believes that homosexuality is a sin and not an *"alternate lifestyle."*
- 4) He believes that drunkenness is a sinful choice and not a disease.
- 5) He believes in a purposeful creation by God, not an accidental evolution of all things.
- 6) He believes that it is more important to be biblically correct than politically correct.
- 7) He believes that it is sane to be a saint & foolish to reject Christ.

III. THE LOVE OF CHRIST: (LOVE)

A. A Constraining Love: v.14

1. One of the meanings of the word *"constrain"* here is to be preoccupied with something.

- a. Paul was surely preoccupied with Christ and His love and that it was available to all, since He *"died for all."*
- b. To be driven or constrained or preoccupied with Christ you must be convinced that His love includes everyone, not just a select or "elect" few!

John 3:16 For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

B. A Compelling Love: v.15

1. Here Paul reiterates that Christ *"died for all(!)"* because of His love, thus the highest motivation for serving Him is that we love Him! *"We love Him because He first loved us!"*
2. Because of Christ's love for him, Paul was compelled to no longer live for himself, but for the One Who loved Him; the logic is inescapable.

CONCL.: What is YOUR **"MOTIVATION FOR MINISTRY?"** Is it **rewards?** That's O.K. God has put in effect an incentive/reward program. Is it **fear?** That's O.K. It will keep you doing your duty and showing that you are reverencing the Lord. Is it **love?** That's wonderful and your love has already been reciprocated and it will be rewarded!