

How We Are Motivated

Life in a Tent, Pt. 3

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I. PRAYER

- i. Would you capture our hearts this morning with both fear and love. Help us to see how big and glorious you are so that we tremble in your presence. But would you also help us to comprehend the depths of your love for us in and through Jesus Christ.

II. SERIES PLUG

a. This morning, we will be continuing in our series called “Life in a Tent.”

- i. And this series is a study of 2 Corinthians 5 (one chapter, one letter) where the Apostle Paul explains the worldview that he had in this life.
 - And Paul uses the analogy of a tent.
 1. He saw himself and his body as a tent.
 2. It was temporary. It was fragile. It wasn't the most comfortable.
 3. But God had promised him and all of those who follow Christ that at the end of this life, we would live in God's kingdom and our lives and our bodies would be like a building.
 4. Permanent, Stable, Immortal.
 - And so, in 2 Corinthians 5, we learn how to live this life in a tent.
- ii. And really at the end of the day, we can have one of two worldviews
 - We can believe that this life we're in now is all there is and that the purpose of my life is to make the best of this life.



- Or, we can believe the Bible that says that this life is not all there is, the best is yet to come when we go to God's Kingdom, and right now God has me in this tent and he has an assignment for me while living in this tent waiting to go to God's Kingdom.
- iii. **Over the first two sermons in this series, we discussed the implications of those two worldviews.**
- We specifically discussed how when we live with a worldview that this life is all there is and I have to make the best of it, I rob myself of the joy that God desires for me.
 - But when I live with the worldview that this life is not all there is, the best is yet to come, and right now I am in a tent on assignment from God, that that is precisely where joy is found.
 1. So, if you missed those first two sermons, I encourage you to go online or to our podcast and listen to those.
- iv. **But here is what I want to talk about today.**
- How do I find the motivation to live my life according to the worldview that Paul had?
 1. How do I find the motivation to live my life according to a Christian worldview?
 2. I mean, this is easier said than done.
 3. It's hard not to be caught up in all of the worry, anxiety, and stress that this life throws at you and just be able to say: "Ah, that's okay...the best is yet to come."
 - How is my heart captivated by what is to come so that I can live this life in joy and obedience to Christ?



- How is my heart not simply captivated by trying to make the best of this life?
 1. Well, this is the question I want to ask of the text as we read the next few verses in 2 Corinthians 5.

III. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-15

a. But before we read it, I want to remind us of some of the context behind this letter.

- i. Remember, Paul planted this church that he is writing to in Corinth.
 - And over the years, some people in this church began to question Paul's leadership and authority as an Apostle.
- ii. So, one of the purposes of this letter that Paul is writing to this church in Corinth is to defend his ministry and his Apostleship.
 - So, it's important to keep that in mind as we read our text this morning.

b. Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15 (mentioning who Paul is referring to with "we.")

- i. So, here is what is going on here. Some people within this church here in Corinth did not feel that the Apostle Paul was worth following because:
 - V.12 seems to indicate that he did not fit the outward appearance that maybe an Apostle should have.
 1. Who knows what this really means.
 2. The Bible does seem to indicate that Paul was not a very good speaker and he did not have a strong stature.



- V.13 seems to indicate that Paul did not demonstrate or perform these crazy, mysterious spiritual wonders or miracles that these people felt that an Apostle should perform.
 1. When Paul says: “when I am out of my mind it is for God...” he is referring to this state of spiritual ecstasy or amazement.
 2. And Paul says that is for God but when he is ministering to others, he is of a sound mind.
- ii. **So, Paul here is explaining to us his motivations.**
 - Paul says in v.11-12 that he wants the people of the church to know why he has the worldview he has and he wants them to know his heart.
 - Paul wants to boast about his heart...he is not interested in boasting about his outward appearance.
- iii. **And Paul identifies the source of his motivations and the things that has captivated his heart in v.11 and in v.14.**
 - In v.11 he says it is the “fear of the Lord” that compels him to persuade others about Christ.
 1. The fear of the Lord drives his ministry and his worldview.
 - In v.15, he says it is the “love of Christ” that controls his motivations to engage in the ministry that he has and live his life with the worldview that he has.
- iv. **So, here is what motivates Paul.**
 - His fear of God.
 - God’s love for Paul.



IV. FEAR & LOVE

a. Now, I am going to explain what that means, but I want to start by thinking about the opposite.

- i. (Gesture) Paul's fear of God and God's love for Paul motivated him to live for Christ
 - v.15 is clear about that.
- ii. But, v.15 is also clear that this motivated Paul to no longer live for himself.
 - It motivated him to no longer have the worldview that this life is all there is and my job is to make the best of it and experience as much pleasure as possible.

b. My question = What motivates us to live for self?

- i. It would be the opposite of the fear and love of God.
 - We are motivated to live for self when instead of fearing God we fear the people around us and instead of receiving the love of God, we strive hard after receiving the love of the people around us.
- ii. **We all fear the people around us.**
 - We fear what they think about us. We fear they secretly make fun of us. We fear that we're always the joke of the party, right?
 1. And this fear is rooted in our desire for people to love us. Our desire for people to approve of us.
 2. And we strive after the love and approval of other people.
 3. And the more we fear them, the more we strive after their love and approval.
 - And the result is a selfish life.



iii. So, at the workplace...

- When a group of people are getting together and talking bad about the boss behind their back.
 1. Now we fear our co-workers.
 2. We want them to think positively of us.
 3. We don't want them to think we're self-righteous or unable to just have a little fun, right?
 4. We want to fit in.
- And our fear of them causes us to pursue their love and approval.
 1. Which means that instead of living a life that is different than the world with a different perspective, we actually just live for self.
 2. We jump in and join the boss bashing because we care more about what people think about us in this life than we care about living for Christ.
- You see how our fear and desire for love drives this worldview...
 1. Get it?

iv. And our desire for love and approval of others can also cause anger and conflict...

- This happens in your marriage.
- We fear our spouse.
 1. We fear what they really think about us.
 2. Do they regret marrying me?
 3. Are they annoyed with me?
 4. Do they really love me? Respect me?
- And that fear generates a pursuit for their love and approval.
 1. And when we don't get that love and approval we expect, we get angry and conflict erupts.



2. All of the sudden something that was careless turns into something that is personal.
- So, when your spouse leaves their clothes on the floor again after you have talked to them about it.
 1. That fear in you tells you that this was intentional.
 2. That they really do disrespect you and they do not love you.
 3. That this is really about you!
 4. And so conflict erupts, because something that wasn't about you, became about you.
 5. We care more about living for ourselves, getting for ourselves what we deserve, then living for Christ in that moment.
 - How much of our conflict in marriage is really generated by two people who can't get along because they're both living for themselves.
- v. **Last example...even the good things we do can be tarnished by a motive of living for self.**
- This happens in the church all of the time.
 - We fear the people around us at church!
 1. We want them to think that we're mature in our faith, that we're committed, that we're humble.
 2. And we want their love and approval.
 - So, that can become the motivation behind our serving.
 1. That can cause us to pretend that we're more spiritual than we are.
 2. We say we read the Bible more than we do.



3. We're less willing to ask for help when we need it because we don't want to be seen as a weak Christian.
- Again, the fear of people and the desire for the love of people cause us to actually live for ourselves and not for Christ.
- vi. **Do you see it?**
- And here's the thing. Living for self is exhausting...
 - Why? Because we live in a tent in a broken world.
 1. And if we fear others and strive after their approval.
 2. Our fear of others will never be relieved and the love and approval we seek from them will never be fully received.
 3. It's exhausting.
 - But you know what...God never designed us to live for ourselves.
 1. We were created as image bearers of God...not image bearers of ourselves.
 2. We were designed to live for Christ and that is where our joy is found.

c. And in our passage this morning, we see that Paul's motivation to live for Christ and not for self comes from his fear of God and the love he receives from God.

- i. What does it mean to fear God?
- When we talk about the fear of God, we're talking about a reverential fear.
 1. It's not that we're scared of God because he is abusive, oppressive, or evil.



2. No, this is a fear of God because of how big, how glorious, how pure, how holy and righteous he really is.
- I heard one pastor illustrate it this way.. we have a healthy fear of the sun.
 1. Now the sun is life-giving. We don't exist on this planet without the life-giving energy and resources from the sun.
 2. The sun is a good thing.
 3. But the sun is also more powerful than we could ever imagine.
 4. There is no negotiating with the sun. There is no arguing with the sun.
 5. If you go to the beach and don't put your sunscreen on, you will get burnt, you keep doing it, you will get cancer.
 6. If you stare at the sun, it will hurt your eyes.
 7. If we send a spacecraft towards the sun, it will be obliterated.
 8. Don't argue with the sun. But the sun is good.
 - It is the same with our fear of God.
 1. God is good and he is the source of our life.
 2. But he is more powerful than we are and he is more wise than we are.
 3. We don't negotiate with God. We don't argue with God.
 4. So, when we look upon God, there should be fear, reverence.
 - So, Paul's motivation to live for Christ is informed by his fear of God.
 1. God has called me to live this way.
 2. God has said that living for Christ is better than living for self.



3. If this all-powerful, all-wise God disapproves of me, that is not good!
- ii. **But, it's not just the fear of God that motivates us, it is the love of God and they complement each other.**
- Because this all-powerful God whom we do not argue nor negotiate with has said that if you want to live for eternity, if you want to go from the tent of this life and into the building in His Kingdom...then you must be holy as he is holy.
 1. You must be righteous as he is righteous.
 2. If you want him to approve of you. To accept you, you must be perfect.
 3. And if you are not perfect, if you do anything in this life that tarnishes your righteousness, then you deserve eternal death.
 - And our fear of God ought to make us tremble as we think upon the standard that he has and how all of us have fallen so short of that standard.
 - And listen to me. Get this...
 1. It's only when you have a trembling fear of God...
 2. ...that your mind, your heart, and your motivations will be changed by the love of God.
- iii. **Because, Paul says this in v.14-15.**
- Paul says that Jesus came and died and was raised from the dead for our sake.
 1. The one death of Jesus, the only righteous man, was sufficient to be a substitute death for all those who trust in and follow Christ.



2. If you trust in Christ this morning, that means that you trust that his death was sufficient to cover the death that you deserved to die.
 3. This is what Paul means when he says: “one has died for all, therefore all have died.”
 4. And for our sake Jesus was raised to new life.
 5. So, Jesus is alive today and his life today is also a substitute for our life.
 6. He is righteous. He is holy. He is approved and accepted by almighty God.
 7. And when we trust in Christ, his life becomes our life and now when God looks upon us, he sees righteousness.
 8. He sees holiness. He sees perfection.
 9. He approves us. He accepts us.
- So, yes, we live in fear of God. But we don't have to strive after the love and approval of God like we strive after the love and approval of other people.
 1. You are fully loved and fully approved by God through the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus.
 2. This God that is so big and so powerful loves you so much that he made a way where you can be fully approved simply by grace.

V. MOTIVATION

a. And this here is the source of Paul's motivation.

- i. This is what energized Paul to have this worldview.



- ii. This is what compelled Paul to live for Christ and not to live for self.
- iii. See, because the grace and love that we receive from God through no effort of our own is a glimpse, a taste of the Kingdom of God where we will spend all of eternity.
 - So, we live our lives today knowing we are fully approved by the God that we fear and knowing that he is preparing a place for us in His Kingdom.
 1. So, when you're with your co-workers, you don't have to participate in the boss-bashing because your approved by God and headed to his kingdom no matter what your co-workers think about you.
 2. You can live for Christ and not for self.
 3. When your spouse irritates you and is careless, you don't have to throw down with them. You don't have to take every offense personally. The security that we have in the love of Christ allows us to love and serve our spouse rather than just focusing on being loved and served.
 4. You can live for Christ and not for self.
 5. When it comes to the church, your approved by God and headed to his kingdom no matter what they think about you.
 6. So you can focus on growing in your faith, being honest when you need help, and focusing on serving and loving others in their pursuit of Christ.
 7. You can live for Christ and not for self.



8. How amazing would the church be if everyone in the church was focused on loving and serving the other rather than trying to impress one another?!?

b. So, here is what I want you to see: Your heart will be more captivated by living for Christ the more your heart rests in the finished work of Christ.

- i. Think about it: what would your life be like if you could be free from the chains of fearing other people and needing their approval.
 - If your joy and your worldview were fueled by the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - Does the possibility of living in this freedom captivate your heart? Does living in God's Kingdom for all of eternity captivate your heart?
- ii. **We grow in that motivation and our desire to live for Christ, the more we rest in the finished work of Christ.**
 - For many of us, the gospel of Jesus Christ is an initiation ceremony into the church and the Christian faith but it is not the fuel for living out the Christian life.
 1. But the Gospel is not how you're accepted into the faith then you need to live the rest of your life in fear of God and trying to earn his approval...
 2. That's basically Catholic theology...
 - No! The Gospel says that you're accepted by God through the Gospel and the only way you can stay accepted by God is through the Gospel.



1. We struggle in this life!
 2. Sin still haunts us!
 3. We are not perfect.
- And we have a holy, righteous God who is worthy of our fear.
 1. And this God whom we fear fiercely loves us and accepts us continually because Jesus died in our place and he was raised in our place.
- iii. **The only way we find the motivation to live our lives for Christ is when we rest in the work of Christ.**
- When we believe that being accepted by God takes no effort or work of our own.
 - When we realize that the one whom we should fear the most has fully and completely accepted and approved of us.
 1. Repeat???
- c. **So, my prayer is that your heart is captivated by the fear and love of God.**
- i. That your heart is captivated by what could be if we lived in this tent fully in the freedom of the Gospel as we wait the building that is to come.
 - That's the only way we find the motivation to live with this worldview and to live for Christ.

VI. COMMUNION

a. So, where are you this morning?

- i. Are you resting in the truth that you have been fully approved by God in and through Jesus Christ?
- ii. Is your Christian life defined by trying to earn God's favor?



- iii. Do you spend your life in fear of people and seeking their approval.

b. Freedom is only found in the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ.

- i. This is why, this morning, our first response to this Scripture should be to go to the Communion table.
- ii. As Christians, Jesus started this tradition of eating bread and drinking wine (juice) together as a way of remembering the love of God in Christ.
 - Because at the Communion table is bread. And when we break that bread, we are reminded of the broken body of Jesus.
 - 1. His body was crushed so that we would not be crushed under our sin.
 - There is also juice. The juice represents the shed blood of Christ that was given so that our sins could be forgiven.
 - 1. We are literally cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
- iii. **So, this morning, if you are a follower of Jesus but your discouraged.**
 - Discouraged because you don't feel that sort of freedom in the gospel.
 - Discouraged because you fear others and spend your life seeking their approval.
 - Then come to the table.
 - You don't have to clean yourself up before you come to the table.
 - The table represents the very thing that cleanses us from our sin.
 - So, come, be washed, and rest in the finished work of Christ.



- iv. If your encouraged and grateful this morning for the gospel.
 - Come and celebrate what Christ has done for us.
- v. If you're here and you don't know Jesus or you have not trusted him with your life yet.
 - We ask that you don't go to the table.
 - This is a meaningful act of worship for those of us who trust Christ.
 - But, maybe instead of going to the table, you could pray and ask God to reveal to you if everything I preached this morning is true.
 - And if you are in a place where you are exhausted by the ways of this world and you want to come underneath the grace of Christ, come find me.
 1. I'll be in the back.
 2. I'd love to pray with you and walk you through placing your trust in Jesus.

c. Communion Logistics.

VII. PRAY

