

THE MINISTRY: ITS COMPELLING MOTIVES

2 CORINTHIANS 05: 11–16

Introduction

What is it that drives and compels a person to minister? What is it that constrains a person to enter the ministry? When ministers are attacked and criticized and opposed so much, what is it that makes them continue on in the ministry? When ministers have to deal with so many problems and are so troubled and pressured, what is it that forces them to stay in the ministry? This passage discusses the compelling motives of the ministry or the minister.

- I. The fear of the Lord compels the minister (v. 11).
- II. The testimony of a genuine heart compels the minister (v. 12).
- III. The glory of God and the needs of people compel the minister (v. 13).
- IV. The love of Christ compels the minister (vv. 14-16).

I. 2 Corinthians 05:11 Fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord compels the minister. The word “fear” (phobon) means terror, reverence, standing in awe of the Lord. It does not mean the kind of terror or fear that trembles and shrinks back from God. Paul knows he is to face the judgment seat of Christ (v. 10); therefore he fears the Lord: holds Him in the highest regard and respect, reverences Him, stands in awe of His high and exalted position.

The judgment of Christ compels Paul — compels him to persuade men:

=> of the truth of the gospel.

2 Cor 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Acts 18:4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

Acts 28:23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

=> of the judgment of God.

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Rom 2:16 This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

2 Tim 4:1-2 *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.*

=> of the death of Christ for all men.

2 Cor 5:14-15 *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 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.*

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

=> of the desperate need for reconciliation to God.

2 Cor 5:20 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

=> of his own sincerity and integrity in the ministry.

2 Cor 5:12 *We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.*

Note a crucial point: Paul says that God knows what kind of person he is. The minister's life is inspected by God; it is plain, perfectly known to God. God knows his faithfulness...

- that he makes it his goal to be accepted, that is, to please God and God alone (1 Cor 5:9).
- that he “does not lose heart” in the ministry (1 Cor 4:1).
- that he preaches not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord (1 Cor 5:5).
- that he always carries “the death of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 4:10).
- that he does all things for the sake of the ministry (1 Cor. 4:15).

Paul hopes that the Corinthians are convinced of his faithfulness and have no question about it. Others may oppose, question, criticize and defame him; but he trusted that they knew his sincerity and commitment to Christ and the ministry.

Thought 1. Every minister should *fear the judgment* of Christ — fear it to such a degree that he is stirred to walk faithfully before God: persuading men and living a life of integrity and commitment to the ministry.

1 Tim 1:12 *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.*

2 Tim 1:11-12 *And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

1 Pet 1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

Rom 11:20-22 ...Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

II. 2 Corinthians 05:12 Genuine Testimony

The testimony of a genuine heart compels the minister. Paul was under heavy attack; a barrage of charges were being launched against him by some in the church. (See note, 2 Cor. 1:12-22 for a complete list of the accusations.) Paul, just as every minister, had given his credentials and commended himself when he first began to minister at the church. Note two points.

1. Just about everything Paul has said to the Corinthians up to this point has concerned the ministry, in particular his own personal ministry. He has been explaining the ministry and showing how he had laboured ever so diligently in carrying out the ministry. By talking about himself, there was a possibility that some would again jump on his case and charge him with boasting in himself. True, he had been sharing his part in the ministry, but his purpose was not to commend himself. As stated, he trusted his credentials were well known by now. His purpose had been to give the faithful believers more ammunition to answer his critics. The only way to solve the controversy surrounding him was to deal with it. They needed to confront and take the offensive in answering his critics. They needed to get the matter settled, for the church needed to get back to the ministry of reaching and growing people for Christ.
2. Those who opposed Paul (the minister) were those who gloried in their appearance and not in heart. They took pride in such things as...
 - their novel ideas
 - their interpretations of Scripture
 - their gifts and abilities
 - their positions of leadership
 - their spiritual zeal and commitment
 - their recognition and esteem
 - their godly roots and traditions
 - their church loyalty
 - their possessions

But note: their hearts were not upon Christ. Their hearts were upon themselves. They were not boasting in Christ and what He had done for them, but in self and what they were doing. They felt as though they were above others: more privileged, more gifted,

more acceptable, more intelligent, more blessed, more spiritual. Their profession was false, for it was not of the heart.

Mat 23:27-28 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”

Mark 7:6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’”

John 7:24 “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.”

Titus 1:16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

III. 2 Corinthians 05:13 The Glory of God

The glory of God and the needs of people compel the minister. One of the charges against Paul was that he was out of his mind (exestemen), that he was mad, insane, crazy. It means to act in the extreme, abnormally, unlike what others act. Paul was charged with being a “fool” for Christ. Note that he accepts the charge as true. But he says it is true for two reasons:

1. Paul was a fool for God’s glory.

Mat 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

John 15:8 “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

1 Cor 6:20 You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

2 Th 1:12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

2. Paul was a fool for the sake of people — to meet their needs.

Rom 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race.

Rom 10:1 Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

1 Cor 9:22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

1 Cor 9:24 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.*

Phil 3:13 *Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.*

2 Tim 1:6 *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

John 4:34 *“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”*

John 9:4 *“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”*

Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

IV. 2 Corinthians 05:14–16 The Love of Christ

The love of Christ compels the minister. The word “compels” (sunechei) means to press, to hold together, to hold fast. The love of Christ presses, compels, and stirs Paul to hold fast to the ministry. The love of Christ is the great thing that compels Paul to minister. Note that Paul does not say that he is driven to minister because of...

- the great teaching of Christ
- the great example of Christ
- the great ministry of Christ
- the great life of Christ

All of these areas of the Lord’s life are important, critically so, but they are not the foundation of our salvation and ministry. The foundation of the believer’s life is the *love of Christ*. The love of Christ is seen in three acts.

1. Christ died that all persons might die *in Him*. In the Greek this verse says:

=> “One died for all” (heis huper panton apethanen).

=> “Therefore, all died” (ara hoi pantes apethanon).

Note the exact words: “One died for all, and therefore, all died.” Paul is saying...

- that Jesus Christ died for all men; therefore all men died when He died.
- that since Christ died for all, then it follows that all men died in Him.
- that all men were represented in Christ when He died.
- that all men are counted as having died when Christ died.
- that Jesus Christ died the ideal death, the death that stands for all men.

Of course, this is simply saying the same thing in different ways so that we can more easily grasp exactly what Paul is saying. But note: the word “all” is not teaching universal salvation, that is, that every human being is saved by the death of Christ.

This passage has to be kept in context with the rest of Scripture; therefore “*all*” means all who are redeemed by faith in the death of Christ.

Very simply stated, when a person *believes* that Jesus Christ died for him, God takes that person’s faith and counts it as *his death* in Christ.

=> God counts him as having died in Christ.

=> God credits him as having *already died* in Christ.

God credits the death of Christ to him so that he never has to die.

Another way to say the same thing is this: God takes the person’s faith...

- and identifies the person with the death of Christ.
- and accepts the death of Christ as the death of the person.

Although these statements may help some to more clearly understand what Paul is saying, there is no clearer statement than the one stated in Scripture: “Christ died for all, and therefore all died [in Him].” The death of Jesus Christ was the representative death for all. His death stands as the death for all men. No person has to ever die. All he has to do is believe that Jesus Christ died for him, and God will take his belief and count it as his having *already died* in Christ. (See note, *Justification*, Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 6:11.)

The point is this: it is the glorious love of Christ that compels Paul to stick to the ministry and to serve the Lord so faithfully.

2. Christ died that all men might live for Him. Two significant facts are stressed.

a. Christ died that men might not live for themselves. Most persons are self-centred, focusing most of their thoughts and efforts upon meeting their own needs, upon satisfying themselves through...

- pleasure • fame • acceptance • power
- recognition • position • family • money
- benevolence • possessions • service

A person must take care of himself, but he is not to live for himself. Christ died so that we would not live for ourselves.

b. Christ died that we might live for Him. This is made abundantly clear in Scripture.

=> Christ died to bring us *near to God*.

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

=> Christ died that we might *live for righteousness*.

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

=> Christ died to purify us so that we would be *eager to do what is good*.

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

⇒ Christ died so that we would *serve Him as Lord*.

Rom 14:9 *For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*

Note: Christ not only died, He also arose from the dead. The minister does not serve a dead Saviour, but a risen Lord!

3. Christ died to create a new man: a man that no longer judges from a worldly point of view. Combine v. 17 with this verse and the point is clearly seen. Christ died so that we would no longer judge from a worldly point of view, no longer judge men to be only fleshly, human, earthly beings. Men are also spiritual beings who are to exist forever. Christ died so that all men could be made into new creations and into new men. Note that Christ once lived in this world and was known to be in the flesh, but He is no longer known to be upon the earth. He has risen from the dead and is with the Father, and He shall be with Him eternally.

This is the very reason He died and rose again: that man's spirit could be created anew and man could live forever. Therefore, men are no longer to be looked upon as being "in the flesh," but as being *in the spirit*. They are to be brought to Christ so that they can be made into new creations.

2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ■*