

Sermon 2: Purely Motivated to Perform Our Duty: 2 Corinthians 4:1-7

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:1-7 “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us...”

Purpose: 2 Corinthians 4 is Paul's humble answer to his skeptics who criticized his ministry because of their rebellion against Christ authority and their own selfish ambition. This passage gives us some very simple truths to motivate us to take the answer to the world's brokenness into the nations with pure motives.

Proposition: God wants us to have a purely motivated heart as we engage in missions.

Interrogative: How can we have a purely motivated heart to reach the lost around us?

Introduction: Two great dangers lay before Christian's who has been properly confronted with God's word regarding “Declaring His Glory Among All Nations.”

- **The danger of being disobedient.**
- **The danger of being obedient with self-promoting motives.**
- **This was the great sin of the Pharisees in Christ's day:**
 - **Matthew 6:1-6** “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly...”
- **2 Corinthians 4 gives us an excellent pattern to follow:**

Truth 1: Pure motives flow from a sense of duty not ambition: 4:1-2 “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God...”

- **Paul emphasized God's sovereignty in his work:** “We have this ministry...”
 - **An apostle:** Sent out by Christ with a commission and bearing His authority

- **An ambassador:** One who represented Christ to the unbeliever
- **A church planting “missionary:”** Someone who faithfully took the gospel to the uttermost extents of the world.
- **He emphasized what sustained him in that work:**
 - **He knew that God was the one who sustained Him:** “We have received mercy...”
- **He emphasized how this sense of duty to God shaped how he did the work:**
 - **He faithfully persevered through ministry hardships:** “We faint not...”
 - **He carefully submitted to the authority of Scripture:**
 - “We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty...not walking in craftiness...nor handling the word of God’s deceitfully...”
 - **His ministry was so put that he could appeal to people before God to evaluate the integrity of what he was doing and why he was doing it:**
 - “Commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God...”

Truth 2: Pure motives flow from a love for others not self: 4:3-4 “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them...”

- **This will be developed more fully later, but for now:**
 - **His focus was on the desperate condition of the lost:**
 - **They were lost:** “It is hid to them that are lost...”
 - **They were blinded:** “The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not...”
 - **They were walking in the darkness:** “Lest the light of the glorious gospel...should shine into them...”
 - **It is easy for us to live lives that are comfortable with little thought of the people wandering and broken outside these walls.**
 - **Pure motives flow out of hearts that take time to stop and let that sink in.**

Truth 3: Pure motives seek God’s glory, not our own: 4:5-7 “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us...”

- **Four statements that demonstrate that the focus of Paul’s ministry was on God’s glory:**
 - **The message was about Him, not us:** “We preach not ourselves...”
 - **The message started with Him, not us:** “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts...”
 - **The message was transmitted through fallible/ordinary instruments:** “We have this treasure in earthen vessels...”
 - **The power to save was entirely rooted in Him not us:** “That the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us...”

Practical:

- What role has God given me in this work of reaching the nations.
- Have I willingly embraced this role, or do I desire to take a more prominent role?
- Am I serving out of a sense of sacred duty?
- How is my mindset shaping the way I serve in this role?
- Is He the object of the message I preach or am I preaching myself?
- Is the work ultimately about me or Him?

Conclusion: God wants us to have a purely motivated heart as we engage in missions.