

This morning we're continuing our study of Evangelism.

- I don't have a single text for you to turn to because we're going to be considering many today.

- And our theme is Our Motive for Evangelism.

- Today is Part One of two. And we'll be considering Love for God as the chief motivation for Evangelism.

It's no secret that most Christians don't evangelize.

- I'm not saying that's acceptable. It's just a fact.

- And most don't evangelize for one major reason: FEAR.

- Fear of being mocked.

- Fear of getting in trouble at work.

- Fear of losing a friend.

- Fear of not knowing what to say.

- Fear of having a family member avoid you.

- Fear of violence against you.

- Fear of looking like a fool.

- It shows up in many excuses for why Christians don't evangelize. But it's all some kind of fear.

Fear is a seriously difficult thing to overcome.

- And, while guilt can be useful at times, it's not a strong enough or long-lasting motivator for true change.

- So I don't intend to stand here and scold or shame

anyone today.

- What we need is motivation. We need motivation that is stronger than fear.

And the Scripture says this about fear:

- “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear...” (1 John 4:18)

- Now, in context, John was saying that the more we come to understand God’s love for us in Christ, we won’t fear judgment.

- But that statement can be applied more broadly: LOVE casts out fear. Love overcomes fear.

- ILLUSTRATE:** A father hears an intruder at night. He’s afraid. But he grabs a gun and goes after the noise. Why? Because he LOVES his family. Love overcomes fear.

And the same is true for evangelism.

- Love must be our chief motivation, if we’re going to overcome our fears that hinder us from doing the work.

- In particular, LOVE FOR GOD must be our first and greatest motivation.

- Why? Because He is infinitely lovely and worthy.

- Love for God comes before love for anything or anyone else. If anything else comes first, that’s idolatry.

- So we must start with love for God as the foundational motive for evangelism. (We’ll talk about

love for our fellow men next week, Lord willing.)

So that's where we're going this morning.

•We're going to consider how love for God is THE great fuel for evangelism. That a burning love for God results in glad willingness to preach the Gospel to the world.

•So may God bless the preaching of His Word.

With that said, I'll pray. And then we'll begin.

(PRAY)

Our Triune God,

•Would you teach us now as your Word is preached?

•Father, by the power of your Holy Spirit, show us your love revealed in the work of your Son.

•Open our eyes to how you've loved us, that we might love you more.

•And, loving you, make us a People zealous to declare your wonderful works to the world.

•Reveal our coldness of heart and grant us repentance.

•And increase our love for you, that we might gladly walk in your ways, for your glory.

•Teach us your love. And teach us to love you.

•We ask these things in Jesus' Name and for His sake.

•Amen.

1.) If you're a Christian, then I know something about you.

•If you've been born again, if you've come to know God through faith in Jesus Christ, I know something about you that is beyond dispute.

•YOU LOVE GOD.

How do I know that?

•In 1 Corinthians 16:22, the Apostle says, "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed..."

•If anyone has no love for Christ, who is God, let that person be cut off and damned.

•Damnation is the result of having no love for God.

But the Apostle also says this in Romans 8:1:

•"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

•The one who believes in Christ is "in Christ."

•And for those who are "in Christ Jesus" there is "now no condemnation." God will never condemn you. You will never be damned.

•So then, I can conclude with certainty that if you're a believer, YOU LOVE GOD.

Brothers and sisters, I'm not going to question whether or not you love God.

•If you've been born again, I know you love Him.

•Now, some believers love God more than others.

That's not a harsh statement. It's a fact.

•Those who are holier in heart and conduct, love God more than others. And that's because love for God results in holiness.

•So some Christians love God more deeply than others. That's why some Christians are further along in godliness than others.

•BUT every Christian loves God with equal SINCERITY. It's all true love, even if it's in greater measure in some.

•And ALL are constantly GROWING in love for God. Slowly but surely. Bit by bit. All are deepening in their love for God, evidenced in their growth in holiness.

So this morning I want to work with what I already know is in your hearts: You love God.

•And why do we love Him?

•Two main reasons:

1. Because He loved us first.

- “We love because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:18)
- And how did God love us first?
- “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10)
- HE SAVED US.

We did not love Him first.

- We were His enemies. It was our joy to rebel against Him. It was our highest pleasure to ignore Him.
- We loved our sin and hated His righteousness.
- We attempted each day to cast off His bonds that we might live for ourselves in every way.
- We ran headlong into sin. Defying Him at every step.
- Worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.
- Hating Him, as evidenced in our lives of unbelief and glad rebellion against His Law.

Friends, we did not love Him. BUT HE LOVED US.

- We deserved nothing but His righteous wrath. BUT HE LOVED US.
- We deserved death and eternity in Hell. BUT HE LOVED US.
- We deserved His holy hatred. BUT HE LOVED US.

He loved us and sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

- The Son of God took on flesh, that we might live and know God as His children.

- He humbled Himself and took on the form of a servant **TO SERVE HOSTILE REBELS!**

- Christ, on our behalf, kept the Law that we've broken, that we might be declared righteous in God's sight through His righteousness.

- He obeyed so that **LAWLESS ONES** might receive His righteousness as a gift.

- And Christ satisfied God's wrath against us for our sin at the Cross. He took the curse for all we've done.

- He, the Righteous One, suffered the punishment due to **WICKED ONES**, that they would be spared for His sake.

IN THIS, the love of God is revealed.

- IN THIS**, we see how God loves us.

- My dear friends, what else but an incomprehensible love can account for these things?

- The very God we've sinned against is the God who came into the world to save us from our sins.

- The Father sent His Son into the world, to obey and suffer for us, who have **EARNED HIS HATRED.**

- There is no greater love than this!

Has anyone else died for you? Has anyone else saved your soul?

- To love is to do good for another. And God has done the greatest good for us in Christ.

- And the fact that He's done it for wretches who deserve His hatred **MAGNIFIES HOW GREAT HIS LOVE IS!**

- It was nothing in us that caused God to love us. We are completely **UNLOVELY**.

- There was nothing in us worth saving. By our sin, we've all become **WORTHLESS**.

- I wouldn't have done this for someone like me. And you wouldn't have done this for someone like you.

- BUT THERE STANDS OUR GOD!** The great Lover!

- Nothing explains our salvation except infinite, matchless, unfathomable **LOVE**, proceeding from the God who **IS** love.

Brothers and sisters, God has loved us more profoundly than we'll ever understand.

- For all eternity, we'll still be trying to sound the depths of His love for us.

And now we, having come to know the love of God for us, having come to trust in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself up for us, WE LOVE GOD.

- We can't help it.
- How could we not? How could we do anything but love Him?
- As His creatures, we're under obligation to love our Maker. But as His redeemed ones, we can't help it!
- Having been so loved, our natural response is to love in return. We're overcome with joy and gratitude.
- "We love because He first loved us."** (1 John 4:19)
- And the more we dwell on His love for us in Christ, the more we love Him in return.
- The more we get this in our hearts, the more our hearts pour out love for God.
- Having been loved, we love.

2. But not only that, though that's enough. We love God because He's put the principle of love for Himself in our hearts.

- And He did this when He caused us to be born again.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 says,

"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to talk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

- Everyone who has come to trust in Christ has

received these things from God.

He's given us new hearts.

•The heart is the “inner man,” the seat of the affections.

•And God says we've received NEW ONES.

•In our sin, we had stony hearts that were hardened against God. But now we've receive hearts of flesh that beat for Him!

•We've received a new spirit from Him. A new demeanor. New desires. A new will that longs to please Him.

•And we've received His Holy Spirit who enables us to love Him and, therefore, walk in His ways.

I point this out to say that we don't love God ONLY from a sense of gratitude. (Though that's true.)

•We love Him because He's given us the ability to love Him. AND He's given us new affections FOR HIM.

•He has put love for Himself into our hearts.

•We formerly hated Him. But NOW WE DESIRE HIM!

•We want to please him. We want to know Him. We want to worship Him. We want to serve Him.

•He's worked in our hearts and now WE LOVE HIM!

Brothers and sisters, love for God is the great mark of the believer.

- Why? Because He has put love for Himself in our hearts AND has revealed His great love for us.

- We have a new nature and the strongest pull of gratitude that we could've ever imagined.

2.) I point those things out because love for God is the chief motive for the whole Christian life.

- Everything we do as believers starts there.

- Just consider the Greatest Commandment. Our Lord said that “The most important is, ‘Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’” (Mark 12:29-30)

- Love for God is the centerpiece of our Faith.

- If God has our hearts, then He has everything: Our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Without love for God, we can't do anything He commands of us.

- Why? Because the first thing He commands is that we love Him!

- All other Christian obedience flows from there.

In particular, love for God is the chief motive in evangelism.

- Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. I want you to see

something important.

- In the surrounding context, the Apostle Paul is talking about his ministry. And, obviously, his ministry was one of preaching the Gospel. (Evangelism was part of his job.)

- In v11 he says, “knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.” (Persuade others to repent and believe on Christ.)

- In v18, he says that he received “the ministry of reconciliation.”

- And in v19-20 he says that he’s been entrusted with “the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us...”

And in the middle of him talking about the ministry he’s received, he tells WHY he continues on through all kinds of adversity and opposition.

- In vv14-15 he writes, “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that One has died for all, therefore all have died; and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised.”

- LOVE is what fueled Paul’s preaching ministry.

He says that Christ’s love FOR HIM controlled him.

- A better rendering is “constrains.” It tied him to Jesus.
- Christ’s love was manifested in His death for His People, among whom was Paul.
- And that love so captivated Paul, that it bound him to Christ. It pulled him in. It controlled him.
- All for whom Christ died and have believed in Him, have also died.
- Died to what? They’ve died to themselves. They’ve died to their own wills.
- But they’re alive in Christ. They have spiritual life because Christ has saved them and made them new.
- And Christ died for them, that they, dying to themselves, “might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised.”
- Christ died to save His People, so that they would love Him so fiercely in return that they’d live for Him.

Christ’s love dominated Paul and caused him to live exclusively for the glory of Christ!

- He was overcome by Christ’s love and, therefore, loved Him in return. He counted everything in life to be rubbish except for knowing and pleasing Christ.
- And THAT is why the Apostle preached.
- That’s why he endured so much suffering for the Gospel.
- That’s why he continued to appeal to sinners to be

reconciled to God.

Love for Christ, love for God, is the chief motivation behind all preaching.

•And evangelism is a form of preaching that we're all called to participate in.

So, to summarize so far:

1. Christians love God because He saved us and has given us new hearts, by His grace.

2. Love for God is the chief motivation for everything the Christian does.

3. Love for God is especially central in the work of evangelism.

3.) Now, let's think on how love for God comes to bear on evangelism.

•What role it plays. How it motivates us to do this hard, life-long work.

Friends, if you don't love the Lord, none of what follows will make sense to you.

•And that's because what follows is "holy logic."

•But to those who love God, it'll make all the sense in the world.

1. First, because we love God, WE WANT TO AND

WILL OBEY HIM.

- In John 14:15, our Lord said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

- Those who love God DESIRE to obey Him.
- Obedience to God is what comes out of love for Him.

1 John 5:3 puts it this way:

- “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

- This is the way we love God: By keeping His commandments.

- This is how we show our love for Him.

- Friends, love WANTS TO BE EXPRESSED. Love wants to please the object loved.

- And since God is our Maker and Lawgiver, love for Him must express itself in glad submission to His will.

And that’s why John said, “And His commandments are not burdensome.”

- They’re not a burden for us who trust in Christ.

- Why? Because the Law can’t condemn us anymore. Christ has saved us from the curse of the Law by dying in our place.

- So what’s left is that the Law teaches us how to honor the God we’ve come to love.

- And WE WANT TO PLEASE HIM! So those who love

Him, love His Law. Those who love God find it their delight to obey.

In other relationships, don't we desire to please those we love?

- Don't we love making them glad?
- Don't we love showing them honor?
- Husbands, don't you delight in doing things for your wife? Likewise, wives?
- Parents, don't you love making your children glad?
- Children, don't you love doing nice things for your parents?

Why then would it be less with God?

- Do we think love for Him is a mere sentiment?
- No way! Love for Him is a desire to, humanly speaking, bring a smile to His face.
- And He's revealed in His Word that HE DELIGHTS IN OUR FAITH AND OBEDIENCE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE!
- He loves it when we trust and obey Him.
- So that's we do! And His commandments show us how.

Furthermore, when we love God, we love the things He loves and hate the things He hates.

- And He hates disobedience but delights in

righteousness.

- So we gladly submit ourselves to His ways.

And He has commanded evangelism.

•Our Lord and God said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19)

- And the first step in making disciples is evangelism!
- And that command, first given to the Apostles, has been passed down through the Church to us today.

Brothers and sisters, if we love Him, we'll evangelize because we desire to please Him.

•We'll obey this command because, having been captivated by the love of Christ, we no longer live for ourselves but for the One who died and was raised for us.

•We'll set aside our fears, saying, “Whatever will bring a smile to my Redeemer's face is worth doing, no matter what the cost. If He died for me, I can speak for Him.”

Friends, it's our delight to preach the Gospel because we love the God of the Gospel.

- St. Augustine said, “Love God and do what you will.”
- Amen! If you love God, your will is to do His will.
- So, because you love Him, go and preach.

2. Because we love God, WE WORSHIP HIM.

- Worship is making much of the LORD.
- In worship, we declare and hear about His worth, dignity, majesty, supremacy, and wonderful works of creation and redemption.
- In worship, we put on display His supremacy, righteousness, and goodness in how we live our lives in joyful obedience to Him.
- Worship is what we do here as we sing songs about and God, offer prayer and praise to Him, hear His Word read and preached, and see His work of redemption in the Lord's Supper.
- And it's what we do in our daily lives as we walk in His ways by faith.

**And maybe you've never considered this, but
EVANGELISM IS WORSHIP.**

- How? Just listen to the Psalms:

Psalm 96:2-4:

•“Sing to the LORD, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised...”

- Telling of His salvation, declaring His glory and His works among the nations/peoples (unbelieving peoples) IS WORSHIP!

Psalm 105:1-2:

•“Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; tell of all His wondrous works!”

•Again, making known His deeds among the peoples of the world and telling what He’s done is worship!

Just think about the message we proclaim and see how it lines up with Psalms like these:

A. GOD

•God is holy, righteous, sovereign, majestic, glorious, the Creator, the Lawgiver, the judge of all men.

•We declare His glory!

B. MAN

•Man is under God, obligated to Him, sinful, deserving of punishment. We debase man.

•We say, “Get on your knees before this God and see Him as He is! And see yourself as you are.”

•By lowering men, we exalt the Lord.

C. CHRIST

•God is the Savior in Jesus Christ.

•Christ’s life, death, and resurrection has purchased forgiveness and righteousness for His People.

•We’re declaring the wonderful works of God to save a

People for Himself!

D. RESPONSE

- God demands repentance and faith.
- We're making known the promise and faithfulness of God to save whoever will repent and believe on Christ.

Brothers and sisters, THAT IS WORSHIP!

- In evangelism, we're lifting up God in the sight of men.
- We're declaring how glorious and awesome He is.
- And we're showing His worth by our willingness to obey His command to evangelize.
- By both word and deed, we're engaged in worship when we preach the Gospel to unbelievers.

And a glorious thing to consider in this is that EVEN IF NONE are converted, WE STILL WORSHIP GOD when we evangelize.

- The message is intrinsically worth telling. Because it's the great revelation of God's glory.

ILLUSTRATE: It's like singing a hymn in the town square.

- People might ignore you. People might tell you to shut up and go home. But you're singing God's truth.
- The unbelievers around you didn't worship because

they didn't believe and join you.

- BUT YOU DID!

- God is always worshipped when we proclaim the Gospel because WE'RE WORSHIPPING.

And because we love Him, it's our JOY to worship.

- Therefore, it's our JOY to evangelize.

- We always love to talk about the greatness of the ones we love.

- So we love to talk about our Savior and make much of Him.

3. Because we love God, WE WANT OTHERS TO WORSHIP HIM.

- The Psalmist said, "My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law." (Psalm 119:136)

- The Psalmist was upset, weeping, because God is not honored and obeyed.

- And to love God is to obey God. So we see that the Psalmist was weeping because God is not loved by all men.

- He wanted to see God cherished and glorified by all His creatures. And the thought that many in this world rejected God brought him to tears.

- The Psalmist loved God. Therefore, he wished others loved Him, too.

We see this concept again in Acts 17:16-17:

•“Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was PROVOKED within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. SO HE REASONED in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.”

•Paul was provoked, was disturbed, was upset because he saw that the people worshipped idols instead of the Living God. And that moved him to preach.

•That’s LOVE FOR GOD!

•Love for God and a desire to see Him worshipped is what moved Paul to open his mouth and proclaim Christ.

•Paul hated idolatry because he loved God.

•He longed for sinners to worship God because he loved God.

Brothers and sisters, everyone who loves the Lord wants to see Him loved by others.

•And it vexes us, to look at the world and see God dishonored.

•Loving Him, we want others to love Him.

Isn’t this how we love others?

- We love our friends, and want others to love them, too. We hate seeing our friends despised and dishonored.

- Whoever we love, we want to see loved by as many as possible. AND we want to play a role in it.

- The culmination of love is to lead others to delight in the object loved.

And how are worshippers made? How are lovers of God created?

- By conversion to Christ.

- And how do conversions occur?

- “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

- EVANGELISM is how worshippers are made, by God’s grace.

Brothers and sisters, it’s our JOY to see God adored.

- Therefore, we evangelize. We want to take part in the creation of worshippers.

- We want to see men give up their idols and turn to Christ, because we want to see Christ loved.

- To modify a quote from John Piper: “[Evangelism] exists because worship does not.”

- And we want God to be worshipped, because we have seen His glory and know that He is worthy.

So, because we love Him, we evangelize.

- We can't help it. The love of Christ controls us.

4. Lastly, because we love God, we want to see Jesus receive the fullness of the reward for which He died.

•Revelation 5:12 says, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

•We who love Christ long to see Him receive everything that He deserves.

•And He died to purchase a People, that they would belong to Him.

•Titus 2:13-14 says that "Jesus Christ..gave Himself... to purify for Himself a people for His own possession..."

•He died so that every sinner for whom He died, WOULD BELONG TO HIM.

The Elect of God, the sheep for whom Christ died, ARE HIS REWARD.

•The Father gave them to the Son, so the Son would redeem them, so the Son would own them forever.

•His People who will love Him forever are the reward for His suffering.

•And as sinners come to Him in faith, He receives His reward one person at a time.

•And it's through our evangelism, that sinners come to

Christ.

So, in a mysterious way, it's through our evangelism that Christ receives His reward.

•HEAR THAT: God USES US to bring Christ's reward, His People, to Christ.

Evangelism, then, is something of a love-gift to Christ.

•NOT in the sense that gifts are given by grace to the undeserving. (That's how we give gifts to each other.)

•NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL! This is a "gift" that Christ deserves!

•But IT IS something that we get to give to Him.

•It's a gift that Christ already purchased. It's a gift already given to Him by the eternal election of the Father. But, nevertheless, it's a gift that we get to give!

•When a sinner is converted through our preaching, it's as if we say, "Here, Lord! Here's another one that you've saved! Be pleased to receive him from my hand."

•We get to bring something to Christ that makes His soul rejoice, for He loves His People!

ILLUSTRATE: It's like a King who conquers a nation. All those in the nation now belong to him.

•And we get to bring those conquered servants to the king.

- He did the work. But we get the glorious job of presenting the fruit of the king's work to the king.

- In evangelism, by God's grace, and with His sovereign blessing, WE GET TO GIVE SOMETHING TO CHRIST.

- We get to bring a gift to Him.

You know, I'm a drummer. So I've always kind of like the Christmas song "The Little Drummer Boy."

- That song, while not biblically accurate, says something that's always struck a chord with me: "I have no gift to bring that's fit to give the King."

- We have nothing, of ourselves, worthy to lay before the Throne of Christ.

- But, O, how we long to give to something of value to Him!

- We long to bring a smile to the face that once was covered in the shame of our sin!

- We yearn to make glad the heart that bore our sin and carried our sorrows!

- And in evangelism, WE GET AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT!

- We get to bring Him a gift that He loves.

- WHAT A PRIVILEGE!

So, because we love Christ, we go out into the world with the Gospel, eager to find His sheep and

bring them to Him!

- We go out looking for treasure that He purchased, that He might receive all that belongs to Him and be glad.

- What better motivation could be given to you?
- Nothing is better than this!
- We get to give a gift to Christ!

The cry of the Moravian missionaries was, “May the Lamb who was slain receive the reward of His suffering.”

- That’s the cry of everyone who loves Him.

4.) So then, brothers and sisters, we love God.

- Therefore, we obey Him, worship Him, want others to worship Him, and want to bring our Lord gifts.

- We love God, so we evangelize.
- That’s our motivation to do the work!

Christian, hasn’t your heart been stirred by the things you’ve heard this morning?

- Don’t you agree in your heart of hearts that you want to obey this command?

- Don’t you desire to worship God this way?
- Doesn’t your heart long to see Him worshipped?
- Aren’t you excited at the thought of bringing a gift to your Savior?

I know these things have grabbed you to some degree or another, Christian.

- And why? Because YOU LOVE GOD.
- So then, in love, put your hand to the work.

May God give us grace to do so.

- Amen.