

“Peace, so be it. So be it, let it be so. Yes, exactly.

All right, you feel free to use it anytime you want to this morning. Thank you.

It also means you agree with something. All right, one scripture, one verse of scripture, 2nd Timothy chapter 1, verse number 6. Paul is talking to Timothy, who he refers to as his son in the faith.

Paul and Timothy are separated right now. And Paul is the greatest cheerleader in the entire New Testament. He is constantly cheering people on.

He is constantly encouraging people.

Okay.

And that's what he's trying to do here with Timothy. He reminds Timothy of his heritage of faith through his grandmother, through his mother. And then he also says this in the sixth verse.

He says, Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands. He said, I want you to remember. I want to stir something within you.”

“He is doing his very best to motivate Timothy. Now, there are people today who are making a lot of money as motivational speakers, okay? And I want to talk about motivation this morning.

A very loose definition. It's taken from the dictionary, but I've kind of reshaped it a little bit. Motivation is that which causes action.

Motivation is that which causes action. Okay? And this is not my word.

This is what I've copied down here. It says, in regard to human behavior, it may be fear of punishment or hope of reward, or both, for that matter. It may be desire to please someone, a sense of responsibility, or a product of character or attitude.

In any case, motivation causes action.

Got a few questions for you here.

What motivated you to be here this morning? What motivated you to come? For some, perhaps, it was because your kids are still excited from Bible school, and they motivated you to bring them.”

“And if that is the case, I'm sure you're still trying to find where that poodle and cat are in the Bible. For those of you who weren't at Bible school, you don't know about poodle and cat. If you'll come to hear the closing one time, you'll know about it, all right?

Maybe you're here this morning out of obligation. I told them I would come, and I'm finally doing it. That way, they'll just kind of leave me alone and get off my back, you know?

Maybe you're here this morning because it's just a habit. It's Sunday. That's what we do.

I don't care what motivated you to come. I'm just glad you're here. I want to be clear on that.

But there was something that motivated you to be here this morning. What motivated you to put on what you got on? Now, it could be a variety of things.

Only thing that's clean. Only thing that fit right. What my wife told me to wear, you know?

Something motivated you. What motivated me to wear this tie?

You know?"

"Now, obviously, I think it matches, and you may think you don't know what you're talking about. But still, something motivated me to put on. Something motivated you to put on what you got on.

What motivated you to sit where you're sitting?

Preacher, I always sit right here.

That's the number one motivation if we're making a list. I got that. But still yet, this is a big old building.

We got lots of pews. What motivated you to sit where you're at? Somebody you knew sitting there?

Whatever it was. You understand what I'm getting at? We are creatures of motivation.

Things motivate us. Things stir us. Now, you know I don't deal.

Try not to deal in what if, but I'm going to deal in one here this morning. And before I do this, understand we are not doing what I'm getting ready to say. I got to get that out there, because this could cause a whole big mess.

But what if?"

"We put it out on Facebook, because that is where everybody learns everything about everything. That next Sunday morning, every person that walks through the door gets a crisp \$100 bill. Again, we are not doing that.

Do not put down a, preacher said \$100 to everybody that comes in.

Woo-hoo!

We would have a packed house, because the motivation would be \$100 for goodness sake.

But they would everyone be here for the wrong reason.

So motivation has to be done the right way. Motivation has to be used in the right manner, okay? And I'm only going to hit a couple of things this morning about motivation.

There's a multitude we could talk about, but I'm only going to hit a couple of them this morning. And I want you to understand the importance of motivation.

All right?

And we're going to look in the Book of Matthew real quick. We're going to look at Matthew, the 22nd chapter, we're going to begin in verse number 34, and read down through, including verse number 40. This is Jesus."

"He has already talked to the Sadducees, and now the Pharisees want to get involved. So beginning in verse number 34 in Matthew chapter 22, the Bible says this, but when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. What motivated this bunch to come?

Well, he already hushed up the Sadducees. Now the Pharisees want to kind of take him to task and see what they can gather from what the Lord is doing. Okay?

So that was their motivation. And when they came together, one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him. There's the lawyer's motivation.

I want to tempt him. I want to see if he really is what he says and if he's really all that, you know. So he asked him the question.

He said, Master. Now, usually Master is a term of respect, not in this case. He's not calling him Master because he respects him.

He's calling him Master because he wants to mock him.

Okay."

"Now, he says, which is the great commandment in the law? Because you see, until Jesus died on the cross, the law was all they've had. They lived by the law, the law that was given to, from God to Moses and passed down from generation to generation.

And the Pharisees and Sadducees were strict adherences to the law. And he said, what is the greatest commandment in the law? And Jesus answered in this manner, thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

What Jesus is saying here is, the way you should love God is with your entire being. Not just a head knowledge, not just a heart knowledge, not with just this eternity bound soul, but with all three combined together. Jesus should not be just a part of your life.

He should be your life. And when we just compartmentalize him and say, well, I'm going to give the Lord this part of my life, but the whole other part, I'm going to keep that for me. That's not the way it works."

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"And Jesus was trying to set a precedence here. And He said, thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your soul.

All right.

We can all agree on that one. Then He went a step further. And thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself.

Or if you'd only stop putting them in the head.

I mean, come on. I hope you've got great neighbors. And I do.

I have good neighbors.

I'm very fortunate to have good neighbors. But everybody don't. All right.

Now, you may have heard this story. I'll tell stories on me before I tell stories on you, okay? I had a neighbor.

I live here. He lived over here, and he owned a piece of property over here, but he had to keep mowing. And he'd mow his, and then he'd go over and mow that one.

Well, instead of driving down the road, he cut through mine. I hadn't mowed, hadn't had time at the time.

He mowed past.

He didn't even stop mowing. He mowed past, right through my yard. Right over on his, mowed his whole way."

"He could have mowed my yard too, but he didn't. He just mowed a strip. Well, as you can imagine, I was not as pleased as I should have been.

And this, I'm going to tell you how long ago this was. They didn't have cell phones. So the phone company came out, and there was a pedestal in the corner of my yard.

Because they were in a hurry and didn't have time, they just ran a cable across to his yard, through my yard to his yard. Well, it came time for me to mow.

The one on this shoulder, on the red shoulder, said, cut it.

All right, fortunately, I did the right thing. I didn't cut it.

I wanted to.

I'd have felt justified in it.

But I didn't. But I didn't.

You gotta learn to love your neighbor, even when they're in love with you. And your neighbor ain't just people that live around you, near you. Okay?

It's people you come in contact with. It's the people you know. It's the people you don't know."

"Jesus said, the first great commandment is to love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. And the second is like unto the first. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Let me share with you, this is from Clark's Commentary. Okay, I printed this off, so I want you to hear it. Talking about the first and great commandment.

Ten things. In its antiquity, being as old as the world, and engraven originally on our very nature. That's the first and great commandment.

We were designed from the first atom all the way till the time Jesus comes back to love God. Did you realize that? We were created to praise our Creator.

In dignity, as directly and immediately proceeding from and referring to God. In excellence, being the commandment of the New Covenant and the very spirit of the Divine Adoption.

In justice, because it alone renders to God his due."

"It prefers him before all things and secures to him his proper rank in relation to them. In sufficiency, being in itself capable of making men holy in this life and happy in the next. In fruitfulness, because it is the root of all commandments.

The first and great commandment. It is the root of all commandments and the fulfilling of the law. You see, they're asking him about the law, and he is intertwining the spiritual with the physical law.

In virtue, because by this alone, God reigns in the heart of man, and man is united to God in extent. It's leaving nothing to the creature, which it does not refer to the Creator. God is not asking us to do something he doesn't do.

In necessity, it's absolutely indispensable and in duration.

How long?

It's to be ever continued on earth and to never be discontinued in heaven, the first and great commandment. And then he said to hang all the law and the prophets on this commandment. And I began to ponder this and think about it, and I look again in Clark's commentaries."

"I look at many commentaries, and they gave this reference, and it's spot on. Ladies, you can kind of relate to this, but fellas, have you ever had, like we used to call them log chains? I don't know what they call them now.

Back in my day, we called them log chains. Just a big old chain that you strap something down with, or you pull somebody out of a ditch with it, and all that stuff, you know. Chains are what they had before they had these fancy toe straps.

They had chains. Now, think about a chain.

It was all important. But the first link and the last link are what the ones that made the difference. The first link and the last link tied the whole rest of the chain, whether it was 3 feet or 30 feet long, together.

First link and the last link. The first great commandment, and the second is like unto the first. Those two commandments tie the whole chain together.”

“Jesus said they are the basis and the foundation for everything else. This chain, no matter how long it is, no matter how short it is, the first link and the last link hold the entire thing together. And without the first link and the last link, you got nothing to hook up with.

You've got to have those things. Love is the fulfillment of the law. Paul said that in Romans 13 and 10.

Love is the fulfillment of the law. We must learn to love people. We must learn to love one another, and we must learn to love God.

That should be our motivation for everything in this life. We need to learn how to love people and to love God.

Okay?

Now, I'm going to hit on two topics here. It won't take very long. You're going to be early to the restaurant this morning, most likely, right?

What is our motivation to pray? Well, preachers, when the food wheels fall off the cart, our prayer life gets serious. I don't doubt that a bit, but it's got to be more than that.”

“You can't wait till the wheels fall off the cart and the cart's in the ditch to get this chain that's going to drag it out, all right? What is our motivation to pray? Do you know how much the Bible talks about the subject of prayer?

It starts in the book of Genesis and goes all the way through the book of Revelation, and it talks about the need and the necessity of prayer. And it's all throughout the Bible, and Bible scholars have had long, long debates on the proper posture of prayer. Do we pray hands folded, head down, eyes closed, hands up, eyes up?

Do we pray standing? Do we pray kneeling? Do we pray sitting?

Do we pray loudly?

What is the correct posture?

Well, I'm no Bible scholar, but I'm gonna give you my opinion.

It don't matter how you pray. It don't matter. You just pray.

You just pray.

Because prayer don't come from the outside church.

It should, back up.

Prayer shouldn't come from the outside. Prayer should come from the inside. Prayer should come from the heart."

"We must be a people who are praying. I'm gonna give you more scripture than you want about prayer, and it's just a drop in the ocean about what's in this Bible. Okay?

Matthew 7 says, Ask, and it shall be given you. Speak, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luke 18 and 1, it says that men are always to pray and not to faint. Verse 25 and 17 says, Pray without ceasing. Isaiah 58 and 19 says, Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer.

Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Hear, I am. God will hear your prayers. You need to understand that God will hear your prayers.

Zechariah 13 and 9 says, They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will hear them. 2 Chronicles 7 and 14, Church, you need to know this one.

You ought to have this one highlighted and underlined. If my people, which are called by my name, that's Christian people, shall humble themselves and pray. And when you're praying, you should be seeking his face."

"That's what it's about. It's not you telling God, I want this. It's not a Christmas wish list, but you've got for God.

It's you praying and talking to God, and then listening as God will talk to you, all right? Sneak my face, turn from their wicked ways, and then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land. If you don't think our land needs to be healed, where you been?

It'll only happen not by who you put in office, but by people on their knees crying out to Almighty God. I don't care who's in the White House. I know who I'm serving, and His name is Jesus.

Alright?

Prayer was what's going to change things. Mark 11, 24, Therefore I say unto you, What things, soever ye desire when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. James 5 and 16, Confess your false one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

"And the effectful fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James 4, 4, 2, and 3, it says, ye have not because ye ask not, ye ask and receive not, because ye ask to miss, that ye may consume it on your own lust. And this last one, this is one of my favorites, and I got a lot of them.

This is one of them, Acts 4 and 31. And when they pray.

That's the church, by the way.

That's the church. When they prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together.

Now, I don't want a huge earthquake. Oh Lord, what I would give for a slight rumbling. During church.

Yeah. Yeah.

Just a little shake. When we're having the Earth First Prayer. People start getting right then.

When they prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. They spoke the Word of God. Prayer is a motivating factor of church."

"Prayer changes things in this life. And if we would begin to grab hold of the power of prayer, things would change. Now, you need to understand prayer is about you talking to God, and then you listening when God talks to you.

Prayer is a two-way communication. It's a two-way street. You know, we need to learn the power of prayer.

Verse Chronicles 4 and 10. And right in the middle of Chronicles, there's a couple of verses there about a man named J.Bess. And J.Bess, this is his prayer.

Now, J.Bess called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh, that thou would bless me in thee. And you say, well, that's a selfish prayer. No, no, no, no, no.

Hear him out. Hear him out. J.Bess wanted to be blessed so he could further the kingdom of God.

All right? He wanted to be blessed for that reason. And enlarge my border.

I'm reading from the New American Standard Version. And enlarge my border. He's not saying I want more property."

"He says, I want to reach out for the glory of God. I want to go beyond where I've been. Instead of just walking across the street, I want to walk through the town.

I want to witness at Walmart. I want to be able to reach people for the cause of Christ. He said, Lord, bless me indeed and enlarge my border so that your hand might be with me.

I don't want to tell people about you if you're not there with me because I don't have the word. But if you'll go with me, I'll have them. And I'll say what you want me to say, the way you want me to say it, and the spirit and attitude you want me to say.

That's what the Holy Ghost does. He said, and that you would keep me from harm, that it may not pain me, that you would do all that stuff. And then you know what the last line in that says?

And God granted him what he requested. Some of y'all wonder, how come God seems to be answering everybody's prayers with mine? You see, we get a little spiritual jealousy going sometimes."

"They look like they're doing so good.

They look like they got it all together. Truth be known, we can't even find it half the time, let alone get it together. That's just the way we are.

We are all a train wreck, saved by the grace of Almighty God, and able to take one step after the other because Jesus walks every step with us, church. You need to understand, just because everybody looks like they got it together, we don't. I don't.

But every step I take, I have God's word and God's promise, He'll take it with me. Every place I go, I know God's done been there, and He's going to lead me through whatever I go through. That is what happens when you have this relationship with Jesus Christ, and you learn and understand the power of prayer.

I have walked hospital hallways and told the enemy, You can't have my grandchild. And he didn't. I know the power of prayer.

You know the power of prayer.

But are you using it?"

"What motivates you? Does it have to be when everything goes wrong that you begin to really bear it out and pray? How about you pray when everything is going right?

How about praying when things are going good?

All right.

The next one. We need a motivation to serve God. We need to be motivated to serve God.

We are called to serve, church.

We are. First Corinthians 10 and 31 says, Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. This was last week's scripture reading, Colossians 3.23.

Just work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Got some more questions. Now you're getting tired of questions, but got some more questions here.

Are we doing things for ourselves?

Or for God?

What's our motivation? Are we on our own schedule?

Or are we on God's schedule?

Are we more concerned with building our own lives than we are on building the kingdom of God?

What's our priorities?"

"What's our motivation? I asked Barb to put this fetch quote on the screen. I found this a long time ago, and I've written it down, and I've looked at it over and over, and I've found it there, and it fits so perfectly.

Our greatest fear as individuals and as a church should not be of failure, but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter. How much time and effort are we putting into things that when they're all said and done, they don't really matter more than we care to admit?

But we get content with them, and we feel like, well, we are doing things for God, but what's happened?

What's the result of it?

You know, what's our motivation for doing the things we're doing?

In the fourth chapter of Genesis, there were two brothers, their names were Cain and Abraham. And both of them were to present an offering to God.

And they did. They both brought an offering for God.

One provided a blood sacrifice of the first of his flock, a lamb without spotting wounds. And one provided the fruit of his own labor, something he had done on his.
“One offering was accepted, and one was not.

If you read Hebrews 11 and 4, it says, By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

Why? Because one was by his own hand, and the other was by the best of the flock. God deserves our best.

Our motivation for serving God should be the fact that we should love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind.

And we should love that neighbor as ourselves. That should be our motivation.

I want to close with one more scripture.

And this is out of a book that I'll bet I haven't quoted out of this book more than once or twice in my entire 40 some-odd years of ministry. This is out of the book of Malachi. And I'm reading it from the New American Standard Bible.

God said, Oh, that there was one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on my altar.”

“You had to bring an offering. And there was a fire constantly burning in the temple. And those offerings were placed up on that fire.

And God says, Oh, that you shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on my altar. He said, I am not pleased with you, says the Lord of Hosts, nor will I accept an offering from you.

God was saying in Malachi, no offering at all is better than a half-part of an offering. Man, that's tough.

I read that and I thought, do I really want to share that?

Well, it's in the Word, you need to share it with people.

Man, that's tough.

That is tough.

What God is saying is it's better to just shut the doors than just serving half-part of them in our worship. What is our motivation?

Now, if that were today, how many churches would have the door shut?

Because we have gotten so content in the age we live in to just go through the motions and not have worship.

We start our services.

Greg asked almost every Sunday before he, when he first gets up, are you ready to worship?"

"Are we ready to worship?

What motivates us to that point that we want to worship the king of kings and the lord of lords? That fact alone should be enough. We tend to say, oh, we got next week, and we got the week after, we got this, we got that.

We don't have the next minute without God or danger.

Years ago, the Lord so impressed upon me that you preach like it's the last message you'll ever preach. We're living the days that we're living. And I will, and I try, whether there's 300, 3,000, or 3.

I'm going to preach the same way.

I can't do it any other way. But I'm telling you, what motivates us, the music should motivate us, the messages should motivate us, the Word of God should stir us. Paul said to Timothy, I want to stir up what's in there, because I know what's in there.

It's in there, people, with all of us. It's in there. God put it in there."

"If you're here this morning and you don't, you haven't understood a thing I've talked about, you need to know Jesus. If you know Jesus and you still didn't understand a thing I've talked about, maybe you need to be a little deeper in the Word. The more you get of the Word in you, the more you'll get into the Word.

Okay? You know, and most people say that backwards. The more I get into the Word, the more I'll get into God.

No.

The more you get into Jesus, the more the Word you'll get into.

That's how it works.

You know, this is not a book of suggestions. It is the Gospel.

Preacher, I've researched it.

A bunch of men wrote that. We'll dig a little deeper.

They, you're right.

You are exactly right.

Well, God ain't never inspired me, preacher.

Maybe that's part of the problem.

He's saying, well, how do you know He will? How do you know He won't? Have you ever asked Him to?"

"Have you ever opened yourself up to it? Well, I don't want to be one of them hand raising, hollering people. You may be and you may not be.

Very few people start out like that. They end up like that, but they don't start out like that. What happens?

They grow. They gain. They get more comfortable in the word, and the word gets more comfortable in them.

Do I have to shout to go to heaven?

No. But you be out of practice when you get to heaven. They shout in heaven.

Yes, they do.

Motivation. Yes, sir.

It's a little thing that you can go to all the seminars and hear all the good speakers and all that other stuff, but motivation comes from inside, and it works its way out.

And once you get motivated, go mine.

There'll be no holding you back.

There'll be no stopping. God will open doors for you. God will show you things that you never thought you'd see.

You'll be part of things you never thought you'd experience. You have to be willed. And I know, I know, I'm focused here very early on.

I know."

"What were they thinking? What motivated them to do that and look back like whatever?

Do you know what I know? I'm only responsible for motivation.

Now, I can promise you this, you get motivated, somebody else gets motivated too. Yeah, excitement is contagious, and motivation creates excitement.

It sure does.

Stand with me,