

Intro: **(Question)** What is it that drives us? What motivates us? What is it that causes us to do what we do? What compels us?

- We go to work to pay our bills
- But what is it that drives us or **“who”** is it that motivates us.
- For some people its greed.
- For some it's fame
- For many some even in ministry there can be a vain motivation for why we do what we do.

Paul said in Ch 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Paul's saying the deciding factor in my life, the one thing that motivates me or holds all things together is Christ's love..... displayed at the cross.

- That He died for me
- So since He died for me than I will no longer live for myself but for Him who gave His life for me.

I will live with purpose; with and end in mind.

- Last week Pastor Trent shared that. “What is it that will be important when we’re 80?” Now begin to work that backwards and make that important now.
- A Hall of Fame Football player now turned Pastor who played for the St Louis Rams named Aeaneus Williams said at his induction into the hall of fame “Begin with the end in mind; and Die empty”

- **Begin with the end in mind.** Whatever we're doing in life we should have a purpose. Too many of us are aimlessly wandering around not knowing what it is God's called for us to do. We haven't searched out our purpose.
- **Die empty.** Leave it all out on the field. Aeaneus said that there is tremendous wealth in the cemetary. People who died rich with ability and potential and took with them only to be buried in the grave.
 - The graveyard is rich with buried ability

Paul, in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians has been more candid, more open hearted than in any of his letters. He's having to defend his ministry to a group of believers he's fathered. So his heart is broke, his spirit is challenged to continue loving this church under the weight of their rejection.

If you've ever felt that way Paul has traveled that road before us and reading his letter can bring great encouragement. But the one deciding factor through if all is right there in the 14th verse of ch 5. **"For the love of Christ compels us". "To no longer live for self but for Him"**.

Now from there Paul is pleading with this church to be reconciled back to God. In other words some had taken a step backwards from serving the Lord when they began the rejection of Paul's ministry. We have to be careful cause many times backsliding starts at the point of rejection to rebuke when the heart is fed bitterness and it sets like cement.

With this in mind lets read the end of Ch 5 into Ch 6 as we continue taking a look at the heart and character of Paul's ministry to those in Corinth as we apply that to our ministry to the lost around us. (Chapter breaks were not in the original writings)

I. THE CHARACTER OF PAUL'S MINISTRY

1-2 A. Paul's Plea As A Worker To Receive God's Grace

There are a few interesting points Paul brings up in this section.

- First of all the contrast between those who were influencing the Corinthians away from Paul and those who were on Paul's ministerial team.
 - The difference between us is that of appearance and that of heart.
- Then again, as we already pointed out Paul claimed that it was not appearance or anything else that caused him to continue ministering to this church but Christ's love.
- Then he said if you are in Christ you are new. The old things have passed away behold all things have become new.
- How did they become new? Well, God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ.
 - It was all a work of God. *Reconciled = to win over friendliness; to bring into agreement or harmony.*
- Then, Paul says because of that, we have been given the word of reconciliation. As Christ ambassadors, as though God was pleading through us, we implore you (beg) on Christ's behalf "be reconciled to God"
 - Paul's not going to let this gap between him and this church remain because God didn't let the gap remain between Paul and Him.
 - Paul's pleading with them for reconciliation. I believe his heart is for reconciliation personally but he knows the problem really lies with their backslidden hearts with God.

1a

1. **"We then, as ministers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain"** Look how Paul sees his ministry to those challenging him.

a. As a man that's been changed by the love of God himself. One who has been made new and reconciled on the road to Damascus He personally understands the grace of God. Personally.

- i. So he carries that along with him as He considers himself a co worker with Jesus.
- ii. And he pleads with them "Don't let it all be in vain"

2. Don't "receive the grace of God in vain" How can someone receive the grace of God in vain? What's Paul talking about?

a. I think there's a couple things to keep in mind here #1 Not everyone who's in church or claims to be a Christian is truly born again. (not everyone has received the grace of God)

- i. Why? Well some have never truly let go of their own good works and seen their need for forgiveness. ("Don't need grace I'm a good person") **Lk 18:9 Pharisee- tax collector**
- ii. Paul doesn't take for granted that everyone in the Corinthian church is saved.
- iii. You don't have tomorrow. It's promised to no man.
- iv. Therefore Paul quotes Is 49:8 (read vs 2)

b. The other thing to remember when it comes to receiving the grace of God in vain is what Paul mentions in his first letter.

* Paul had a very sinful past- Pharisee – When God's grace was given he made sure it counted for something.

- i. 1 Cor 15:9-10 **For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church**

of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

So Paul, as a man who received this wonderful grace of God in his life personally; considered himself a coworker with Jesus to minister that grace to others. And he takes it serious. So serious that he lives his life in a way that always seeks to draw people to God. No matter what he goes through he's gonna use it to draw others to Christ.

3-10

B. Paul's Urgency & Focus As A Minister Of God

"We give no offense in anything , that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God;" (Pause)

1. "We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed" Paul's saying I live my life in a glass house, fully aware that my service to the Lord is at stake.

- a.** "I don't want anyone to be stumbled by choices or behaviors in my life, so as to keep people from Christ"
- b.** What a sense of passion for the lost!!!
- c.** When most of us are thinking how we can have some room, some privacy to do a little of what we want, Paul's absorbed in this lifestyle of sacrificial living.
Or we call it integrity.
 - i.** Living above approach
- d.** The greek word used here for offense is the word NT:4349 ***proskope***. And it really means to put an obstacle in someone's way so as to dash their foot. To cause to stumble.
- e.** Remember what he told them in the last letter?
1 Cor 10:23-24 **All things are lawful for me, but not all things are**

helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

- i. (One big reason people don't come to the Lord they say is because if Christians.)

How can Paul have such dedication to others in his life? Cause he knows what his purpose and calling is and he's living with the end in mind. He's a minister of God first. (Servant)

2. **"But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God:"** In all things? What do you mean in all things Paul? "Well in all things that I go through, no matter what comes my way **I know that it's the will of God for me as a servant.**

4b-5

 3. It's what proves ourselves as true ministers of God. (Commend)
 - a. **"in much patience, in tribulations** All these explain what Paul has gone through because he serves the Lord.
 - b. This is what we go through because we're in the ministry and what proves that we are true servants of God.
 - c. Paul had a very hard life. Remember Jesus told Ananias **"I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name sake."**
 - d. Paul understood as a servant of Christ that he would suffer for the gospel. That's in sharp contrast to the gospel sometimes shared today.
 - i. "Come to Jesus and everything will be better"
 - ii. If we live our lives like servants of the gospel we won't be offended or shocked at trials.

e. **Warren Wiersbe** . Paul continued in **Patience**- had not quit when things were tough. **Tribulations**- trials under pressure, when you are pressed down by circumstances. **Needs**- the everyday hardships of life. **Distresses** – refer to experiences that push us into a corner where there seems to be no escape. The Greek word means “a narrow place”.

5a 4. **“in strips, in imprisonments, in tumults in labors , in sleeplessness , in fastings”** Paul had been whipped, imprisoned and caused riots for the gospel. He will go on to tell a little more detail about this in Ch 11. Vs23-33

a. Paul’s been through all these tough times and what he boasts about is not his ability to handle them but his weakness and how even through that, God has used him. He’s not turned back.

b. **Phil 3:12** Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Paul pressed on in order that the purpose for which the Lord laid saved him might be fulfilled in him. (How about us?)

Paul will now mention some ways he’s continued to conduct himself while going through these tough times while serving the Lord

6-8a 5. **“by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering**
(expound)

8b-10 6. **“as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known”.....”**

11-18 II. **AN INTIMATE OPEN HEARTED CALL LIVE HOLY**

11-13 A. **Paul’s desire for reconciliation**

11 1. **"Oh Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open"** You can almost hear Paul's love.
 a. Ever had your heart just wide open for somebody?

12 2. **"You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections"** What's Paul saying? He saying "We're not whats holding you down or hedging you in....its your own inward affections (bowels, what the Greeks described the inward passions come from) Inward affections for what? The World.... Paul explains in verse 14

14-18 B. **Paul's call to break the yoke from the world**