

BaptistWay Bible Series for November 13: Get motivated to minister

November 1, 2011

What motivates you to get out of bed in the morning? Is it your job or school? Perhaps you are a morning person who loves getting out of bed early. Maybe you are just in the habit of setting the alarm clock and then getting up when it screams at you in the morning. Still, others may have a strong sense of responsibility to perform a certain task for the day.

My motivation is my Chihuahua. She has an uncanny knack for knowing when five o'clock in the morning arrives. That is when she begins nosing me out of bed for her morning breakfast.

Do you roll out of bed in the mornings thinking about the opportunities you will have to serve the Lord? What motivates you to minister for God?

In 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2, the Apostle Paul continued defending his ministry to the Corinthians. With this section, he revealed the core of his ministry which is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:11-15

With verse 11, Paul quickly was on the defensive. His motivation to minister came from the "fear of the Lord." He recognized that one day he would come face to face with God where his actions would be judged. In light of his future judgment, Paul was motivated to persuade the world about the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Paul continued his defense in verse 12 by asserting his message was one

the Corinthians could take pride in, for his focus was not on the externals of life but upon the renovation of the heart. Then in verse 13, he noted the two-fold purpose of his ministry, “for the sake of God” and “for you.” Paul would be a fool for God if necessary to further the gospel. His faithful evangelism showed his love for God. Paul also would diligently work to meet the needs of others, especially their spiritual needs. This work showed his love for people.

One recalls the words of Jesus when asked what was the greatest commandment. Jesus replied we are to love God and to love people (Matthew 22:34-40).

What motivated Paul to act in such a way? “Christ’s love.” He was motivated by divine love that is sacrificial and beneficial for all. Jesus Christ died on the cross, the extreme sacrifice, and he died for all people, so they no longer have to live for themselves. They can live for something bigger than themselves—namely, for Christ who died for them.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

At this point in his argument, Paul focused on the work of Christ in regard to reconciliation. He noted in verse 16 that he no longer regarded people from a worldly point of view. The world no longer dictated to him how he should value others, nor how he should value Jesus Christ. What is the value of people? As for believers, they are new creations.

Paul used the phrase “in Christ” to describe believers. He meant those who live in the realm or under the influence of Jesus Christ. These believers are new creations. “The old has gone, the new has come.” The old way of viewing people, the world and reality has been so radically changed in believers, they have been created anew. The new way of living life in response to Christ’s love displays this new creation in believers.

The way Christ creates new believers is through reconciliation. This is the

process of bringing into harmony God and people. Sin negatively impacts the relationship between God and people. Only God can put that relationship in its proper place of harmony. This is reconciliation. To make reconciliation possible, Jesus died on the cross, so people's sins would not be held against them. He took the punishment for those sins. The one who never sinned, Jesus, became sin for all people on the cross.

Truly, this is great news that needs to be told to everyone, and that is exactly what Paul did. His ministry consisted of telling others about the message of reconciliation. Thus, Paul was an ambassador for Christ. He spoke for Jesus Christ, and what he spoke was the good news of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

In these verses, Paul turned from defending his apostleship to urging the Corinthians to action. They had received God's grace, and it was incumbent upon them to act accordingly and not in vain. They needed to proclaim the message of reconciliation. "Now," Paul said, "is the day of salvation." The time to spread God's message of salvation is now, so those who hear the message and accept it may experience God's reconciliation in their lives right now.

Conclusion

What motivates you to get out of bed in the morning? Maybe, nothing does. You would just like to lay in bed all day long. What motivates us to minister? For some people, nothing does. They just do not do anything for God all day long.

Our passage teaches Christ's love is what should motivate us to minister. This love is seen clearly on the cross. Our sins resulted in the death of Jesus. Our sins are serious matters. So, too, is the death of Jesus that brings reconciliation with God to us.

How should we respond to Christ's love? Like Paul, we should act for God and for people. We should show our love for God and for people, as Jesus taught. From our passage, we should act as ambassadors of God. An ambassador represents the rule or reign of a government. For Christians, we represent God and his kingdom.

Our lives as ambassadors should be lived in obedience to God. Living obediently involves a high moral lifestyle. It also will involve telling others the good news of God's reconciliation.