

TRIUMPHANT LIVING

Taught by Dr. Bruce Bickel

“Motivation for Ministry”

February 14, 2014

God’s resources at Christ’s expense. Father, we just humble ourselves before you this day, and ask that you cleanse us from all unrighteousness. May our thoughts be directed heavenly and we might think upon those things that are pure and Godly, and lovely that are reflections of You. Be our Teacher and may Your Holy Spirit guide us into all truth that we might behold You more clearly for Jesus’ sake. Amen

Let’s turn in our Bibles please to 2nd Corinthians, Chapter 5 and work our way through this passage on Paul’s instructions about how to live life in the arrangement that God has arranged for us because of the personal work of Christ. The last few weeks Paul has been teaching us in 2nd Corinthians 5 about how we view death, about how we review the act of dying. How do we, as believers, view death? He has basically told us that it is a one life, two locations existence. We have a life in an earthly tent and a heavenly home. Paul has taught us in the previous verses, in the first 10 verses that we have a heavenly home and he has taught us about our heavenly clothing, and he taught about our earthly motivation. Last week we talked about motivation in our lives. Essentially, his summary statement is that we try to do things that are pleasing to the Lord. Jesus says, “I initiate nothing on my own, I only do those things that I see the Father doing because I do those things that are pleasing to the Father.”

Now that is a big order for us. How do we try to live a life that basically says, “I want to live my whole existence in a life-style that is really oriented-motivated by my intense and internal desire to want to please the Lord?” How does one do that? Paul has been teaching us in this series that God alone is adequate and that you and I do not have what it takes to live the Christian life. God alone can live the Christian life and we trust Him to do that. There is one life that pleased God and when you and I are trusting that One Life, the personal work of Christ we are pleasing to God. So the degree to which you and I are trusting the personal work of Christ will be the means by which or the degree to which we will be pleasing to God. It is not so much our activity as it is our motivation. Paul is going to go into some greater depth today and talk to us about some motivations about how we please God.

So, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to 2nd Corinthians 5:11-13. I want to read the context of this and will read Chapter 5 beginning at verse 1, so I’ll be reading the first 13 verses and I’m reading from the New American Standard Version of the Bible. Let us hear the Word of the Lord.

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”

Now that is Paul's summary statement to the first ten verses. When you understand death correctly, as Paul has told us, it is one life, two locations. Death to the believer is essentially a change of location. We go from our earthly tent to our heavenly home and he says that when you understand that, it shapes the way that you live.

Remember, your view of dying is going to shape your view of living. Your view of death is going to determine the way that you live your life. Paul is drawing the conclusion of saying when you understand it correctly from a Biblical perspective, your desire will be to want to please Him. And now he goes into some explanation of how is it that you and I have a desire—what is it that gives us a desire to please Him? Let's pick it up at verses 11 through 13.

“Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.”

Paul now begins to show us how this life of living in a life of trusting the personal work of Christ, this powerful life, for God supplies all the adequacy that we need and he begins to show us how it begins to affect our relationships. He is talking now about the motivation for ministry. Basically, the motivation for ministry is one simple word and that is the word “reconciliation.”

Look at verses 18 to 20. “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of conversion...” No, it is the ministry of **reconciliation** and there is a difference and we will talk about that in the ensuing weeks. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation and then he defines it: ... “namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions or trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

Now Paul is going to say, if our motivation is really our desire to please God, what is our motivation for ministry. Ministry...really what we have...is the ministry of reconciliation and that is what we are involved in. All of life is about the ministry of reconciliation and that is the role of the church. That is what the gospel is about. The gospel is not about eternal life, the gospel is about reconciliation. Eternal life is a consequence of having been reconciled to God. If you remember Romans 5, we have peace **with** God; and then in Philippians we talk about the peace that passes all understanding, the peace **of** God. There is no peace of God unless you have the peace **with** God. Why is it you have peace with God? It is because of the ministry of reconciliation.

So Paul is now saying, “Look, your view of dying affects your view of living.” One of the things you need to understand is in your view of living, you have been given a ministry because you have experienced the reconciliation of God the Father through God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and now that is what you give away. Ministry is giving away to someone else what God has given you. Paul is now going to say, “What is the motivation, what is the desire to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation?” And we pick it up beginning in verse 11.

Now motivation as defined by Webster is: that within the individual rather than without which incites a person to action. That which is inside the person that incites them to action. Now Paul is going to say that there is a certain understanding of two things that will help us incite us to action in the ministry of reconciliation.

Motivation poses one of the greatest problems for the Christian life. Many people have not learned what Paul has written in these passages. Many people actually think they make a difference and that it depends upon them. Many people think that my ministry depends upon me and I can actually make a difference. One of the great insights I learned years ago is that I cannot change anybody's mind. That changes the way that you relate to somebody when you understand it—it is not my role to convince them of anything. As Paul says here, you have been given the word of reconciliation; the word will take care of itself. We might be a seed planter we might be a waterer, we might be the harvester. We just do not know how the Lord is going to use us. But Paul is now going to say that there is a desire that you have to give away this ministry because you have experienced the reconciliation of the work of God through the gospel of Christ.

Many people do what they do because they are motivated by guilt. Then they get mad at God because He has not kept what they think is His end of the bargain. Then all of a sudden they feel guilty because they actually said this, "Well, if I did this, then you were supposed to do that." So I'm motivated by this mentality that says, "I'm a manipulator, so Lord I'm going to do this to impress you and so if I do this, then the expectation is that You must do that." So they actually think that they can make a difference and they are motivated by guilt.

Scripture gives us the location of our motives in 1st Corinthians 4:5, which is in the heart. Webster's dictionary agrees with the Biblical definition of motivation: that it is something that is within, not without the person who incites us to action. The Scripture clearly states that God looks at the heart and evaluates the heart. That means this, Men, the right activity with the wrong motive is nullified. Do you understand that? The right activity with the wrong motive is nullified.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Is that a bad/good work?*

I do not know what it is; all I know is that if I do not have the right motive, it doesn't count. You know when you and I stand before the mercy seat in heaven and when God calls us to Himself and He reviews our life, it is going to be something like this: He'll say something like this, "Here is a situation where you get a credit for that." And I'll say, "Well, I realize that but what about this one over here? I mean I really nailed it that day, didn't I?" God will say, "Yes, but your motive was wrong." It doesn't count. What Paul is going to teach us this: you can do the right thing with the wrong motive and it is nullified.

The real issue is, what is the means of our desire to want to please God? There has to be something inside of us that incites us to action that helps us purify our motives. So that means that you can see sometimes as the Puritans taught us, you get credit for the right act even if you have the wrong attitude. It is as if you didn't even do it. We're told about Abraham—he sacrificed Isaac...did he? No, he didn't but he got credit for it because he did it with the right motive. He never sacrificed his son. The scripture says he sacrificed Isaac, but he didn't; he got credit for it because he had the right motive. Brothers, you and I need to make sure that we have the right motive in the things that we do in the ministry of reconciliation.

So Paul is now going to explain a little bit more about two aspects of our motivation.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *You are saying nullified for us but I think of that verse where Paul says "for some are preaching out of jealousy [UNCLEAR] you know, so God is glorified. So God would be glorified....."*

Well, God will always be glorified when truth is proclaimed. That is how God is glorified, whenever truth is proclaimed. What will happen is that you and I do not get the credit for it. We don't get credit for anything really. Our reward is what I mean. We don't get the reward for that because our motive was wrong. God will use any amount of truth that He needs to because He is sovereign, He is omnipotent, He is omnipresent and His sovereignty over-rules everything in us. All I'm saying is when you and I think that we have nailed something and we have the wrong motive that is not going to show up as a reward for us. It is nullified. God will receive the glory anytime truth is proclaimed.

Yes, Bob:

BOB: *Just a comment here; we hear people say, "There are always a motivational speakers that are going to incite us from within to be motivated to do something?"*

How long does that last? {LAUGHTER}

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: [UNCLEAR] Sig [UNCLEAR] {LAUGHTER}...

Well, he has; he's been around awhile...he's lasted but I don't know about the motivation. {LAUGHTER}. See, often times as we go to the latest thing because we are looking for what? We're looking to be motivated. We are looking for someone to incite me to do something. Paul is going to give us two major reasons for us to be motivated to be involved in ministry. So let's open up our Scripture again and look at these.

You see, guilt has its place; sometimes you are guilty because you are. {LAUGHTER} Sometimes you're guilty because of choice but God never uses guilt as a motivation for ministry. We need to understand that. God will never use guilt as a motivation for ministry. We are going to see that when guilt is removed as a ministry in the future weeks, but I want you to see today that there are two basic motivations underlying our ministry that Paul is going to describe for us.

First of all, in verses 10-12, it is the fear of God. Paul is saying our motivation or desire is to please Him and order to please Him, you have to have the right view of God, you have to have a fear of God. Verses 10-12. The fear of God conditions our thinking; in other words, it teaches you how to think. The second is the love of Christ, verse 14; and that controls your actions. Paul says there are two things that motivate us. It is the fear of God that conditions your thinking and the love of Christ controls your actions. We will look just at the fear of God today and next week we'll look at the love of Christ. Those are the two things that Paul says will motivate us internally to please God. If you do not have the right view of God, you are never going to please Him. If you do not have the right view of God, you are never going to act accordingly...you will never please Him because you do not have the right condition thinking.

Here are the two motivations that Paul gives us. The fear of God conditions our thinking and the love of Christ controls our actions. Fear is a conviction of judgment to come and love is a sense of gratitude kindled by conviction of the great grace that God has given us in the personal work of Christ. There is a wonderful balance between the fear of God and the love of Christ.

Our motivations are inspired by our accountability to Christ. As a righteous judge and gratitude to Christ as a gracious Savior. As a righteous judge and a gracious Savior. Biblical motivation conditions are thinking and controls our actions.

Let's take a look first of all at the fear of God, which conditions our thinking. Because our language is imperfect, sometimes the way that we use one word is not always the way somebody else would use the same word. We don't always mean the same thing by using the same word. Let's take a look at the word "jogging." Now jogging to some of you might be just a nice slow pace. Jogging to somebody else might be more of a medium pace. And somebody else might say jogging is a sprint. You see it is the same word, but it is imperfect in our understanding because it has different meanings. Fear has a wide range of meanings and its effects on us are equally varied. We need to understand that various words that we describe when we say the word fear. Some people are fearful as rabbits and jump at every bark of a dog, while others are as bold as lions and can face danger without trembling. Some fear more than they should, others fear before they should. Others fear when they shouldn't fear at all. The non-believer fears man but not God. The mature believer fears God and not man. The immature believer fears man too much and God too little.

The Bible talks about three kinds of fear in mankind. First of all, there is what we would call "natural fear." This is the trouble of mind from the apprehensions of approaching evil or impending danger. In other words, it is natural fear of impending danger and you can read about that in Genesis 3:8 in the life of Adam. That is a good example of natural fear. After he had violated God's standard, after he had violated God's arrangement, Adam feared the execution of the curse and that is natural fear. First of all, he ate the fruit, secondly he fled. Why did he flee? Natural fear because he understood the consequence of his actions and it produced within him a natural fear of suffering the consequences of his choices. That is what we would say is natural fear.

There is a second kind of fear. The Scripture talks about what we call sinful fear. The cause is unbelief or an unworthy distrust of God by trusting in people, possessions, or power instead of trusting God Who produces life within us and that will produce pressure, stress, anxiety and torment in our lives. In other words, we are trusting people, possessions or power rather than God and that produces torment in us. The result of that is unbelief. We just don't trust Him enough. That is what the Scripture would call sinful fear. That is highly offensive to God. To trust in anything as if it had the power of God to do something is really what we would call idolatry. Idolatry is trusting someone or something to give us only what God can give us. Trusting someone or some thing to give us something that only God can give us.

How many times have you heard somebody who is single say, "If I just had a mate." And we put pressure on our young people all the time. For me and when I was single, people always asked, "Bruce, when are you going to become complete?" "You mean a woman is going to complete me?" If that is the case, I'm in bad shape. You are complete in Christ. But notice how subtle we use that? We talk about being complete. You are complete in Christ according to Colossians 2:10. When you and I trust someone or something to give us only what God can give us, that is what is known as idolatry; the basis for that is unbelief or a lack of trust in the power of the sovereignty of God. This fear is brought about by idolatry. Sinful fear is brought about by idolatry.

There is a third fear. Not only is there a natural fear and sinful fear, but there is also what we would call a holy fear. A holy fear is the gracious habit planted by God in the soul whereby a person has a holy and reverential awe for God and is thus inclined to please Him and avoid whatever He forbids and displeases Him. Notice: the

gracious habit planted by God in the soul of a person whereby that person has a holy and reverential awe, respect, dignity and honor for God and Who He is in His person.

To fear man is natural but to fear God is supernatural. We should never forget the supernatural of the gospel of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation. Fearing God is not normal. Fearing God is supernatural. Fearing man is natural; fearing God is supernatural.

Look at Isaiah 32:40...**not correct**. Literally the passage says this, "I will put my fear in their inward parts." I will put my fear in their inward parts; do a study on what God gives. God gives many things; He gives salvation, He gives repentance, and He gives fear. Fear of Himself, this reverential awe. That is something that God implants in us at the moment of our regeneration. When you are re-born, you have a new desire in your life to please God and that is because God has now incited in you a flicker of a desire to get to see Him in all of His glory. That is what we call a holy fear; it is reverential awe, respect and dignity for the person of who God is.

Now this is the fear that Paul is talking about. He is talking about a reverential awe and respect for the Person of God. With this deep sense of awe comes a wholesome dread of displeasing God. If you say, "I want to please God." What do you have to do? Recondition your thinking, you have to think correctly if you are going to act correctly. Remember, the fear of God conditions our thinking, the love of Christ controls our actions. If you are having a tough time pleasing God, what should you do? Logically, what should you do? Go study the personhood of God through the personal work of Christ. Remember, the gospel as we have defined it is the glory of God in the face of Christ. Go study the Scriptures. Study the 28 Attributes of God. You have to change the way you think. Study the 28 Attributes of God. We did that series several years ago. We have it on our web page, go back and look at that. When you have a tough time and when you do not have this desire to really please God, go back and study Who He is. Look at His attributes because it is this fear that is going to be incited within us. This reverential awe, the sense of respect, the sense of dignity that is going to change the way you think about Him and, therefore, it is going to alter the desire that you have to want to please Him, to honor Him and not to do the things that He avoids.

Yes, Don?

DON: *Bruce, in verse II, my translation it says, "Knowing therefore the **terror** of the Lord." Is there a difference? Is fear a better translation?*

Not really. Terror is a word of impending judgment. That is why I said in my introduction that there are two things: there is the grace of God and our gratitude for Him and the love of Christ; but in the fear of God there is a terror also of impending judgment. In other words, I realized what happens because of the judgment of Christ. I view Him as a righteous judge and a gracious Savior. There is a tremendous balance. The word terror is OK. We need to fear God. There has to be this natural fear of impending consequences of doom but that is replaced now with a balance of a reverential awe and respect so that the terror becomes a sense of reverence and respect. So it is going to depend on which side of the parade you are on. If you are on this side of the parade, you are going to be terrorized of God.

We flippantly say, "hell is the absence of God." That's wrong, that is absolutely wrong. Hell is the presence of God. God is in hell and what makes it terrible is the fact that God is present. The non-believer who says, "I

don't want to have anything to do with God." You tell him that hell is the absence of God and he says, "Great deal...that's the way I'm living my life right now. That is no change for me." Hell is owned by God. What makes it terrible is His presence. Hell is the terror of God in one sense and the pleasure of another one...it is heaven to another one because of God's presence. God's presence in hell is the terror of one side but God's presence in hell is the heaven for the other person who is **in** Christ.

Hell is not the absence of God. Hell is the presence of God and you are right in front of Him. That is what it means that you have the terror of the Lord. So it depends on what side of the parade you are on. From this side of the parade, you have no saving faith; your fear is going to be a terror of the presence of God. If you are on this side of the parade and you do have saving faith, your fear is going to be reverential awe, respect, dignity, and honor. It all depends what side of the parade you are on, as Paul taught us in the previous verses.

As we take a look at this reverential awe, that is what Paul is talking about. This reverential awe, respect and dignity is what causes us to want to please God because of the great value that we place upon our relationship to Him. You see, the old way of God, the old way of defining the fear of God, was that we used to be afraid that God would hurt us. Now, because of the gospel, fear is that after all He has done for us, that we should hurt Him. You see, my desire has changed.

Yes, Jay?

JAY: *I just...what you just mentioned about God being present in hell, I believe that is something that is really...I have some verses where that is true...so in that just... saying that is something that we do not hear and so in not hearing that or even being taught that, being able to share that with others and being able to have a dialogue to let people know that God's presence is in hell that is one of those things where...as you said that I started to get a little bit excited but I'm sure that a lot of people in this room have never heard that. I may be wrong...but even to be able to share with people the truth of that in the right way...but there is Scripture that says that...*

Well, I would not have said it unless there was Scripture that says it. You are right. What makes hell? Hell is the presence of God. Hell is not the absence of God, it is the presence of God. Hell to one person is God's presence and heaven to another. That is not a message that you hear in the gospel because what are we trying to get people to make a decision. We want to make sure that we put them in a position to make a decision. We are after conversion rather than reconciliation. There is a huge difference, as we will see.

Yes, Bill?

BILL: *I think that the [UNCLEAR] piece creates [UNCLEAR] and they can't make a decision....*

Of course it is...they can't make a decision. A dead person cannot make a choice at all. Yet what do we do? We try to present the gospel by saying you need to make a decision. How can that happen? You cannot do that. A dead person who is dead in their trespasses cannot decide anything. You see, they can only act out according to their nature and their nature is unbelief and they cannot choose anything other than that until God regenerates them through work of the Holy Spirit.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I'm a little confused about this notion that God is in hell because all through my Christian upbringing I have been taught that God can act but not co-exist with anything other than perfection by virtue of Him being holy, He cannot co-exist with sin, with anything that is not holy and, therefore, how can He be present in hell?*

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Jesus Christ was sent to hell....[UNCLEAR]....*

The Cross makes the difference. He descended into hell and won the victory.

Yes, go ahead Ted.

TED: *God's presence in hell is perfect justice so that is where the perfection comes in.*

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *So it is a faulty claim that God cannot co-exist with evil?*

No, that is a true statement. But...

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *[UNCLEAR] people in hell? What am I missing?*

You are missing the character of God. You are missing the character of God. Don't look at the environment, look at His character. There is a holy righteousness, there is a holy justice. His presence in hell is holy justice and holy righteousness. He is not impacted by that at all. He is demonstrating His character in the midst of that. Now, is there co-existence? I don't know what you mean by that but His holy justice and holy mercy and holy righteousness is never violated by that.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *[UNCLEAR] 11 and there are others: Psalm 139:8 says that "I am even present in Sheol" but Proverbs 15:11 says, "God is even Lord of Sheol" so even in that His Lordship, He is Lord over that. So I think that is very important also...Him being Lord over all.*

When you look at it logically, is there sin in the world? Does God co-exist? Absolutely He does. God is sovereign, God is omnipotent, God is omnipresent. Is He co-existing with the evil right now? Yes.

In this world. Can He do that in hell? Yes because His holy justice is on display, His holy righteousness is on display. He has never violated because God cannot change.

Bill?

BILL: *I think we have a misconception that hell has a continuation of the sinfulness [UNCLEAR] it doesn't continue...it is a presence of God's holy judgment and being [UNCLEAR] at that time. But you are not continuing in your sinful ways while you are in hell, you are just continuing [UNCLEAR] held accountable...of the consequences of [UNCLEAR]...*

It is the consequences of a holy, just, righteous Heavenly Father. That is what it is. But how often have we... see that is why I said...

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I'm sorry...so heaven and hell are the same place?*

No, they are different places. God is omnipresent. He is here, He is there. How can He do that? That is His character, His nature. Don't try to think of it in terms of humanity. You have to think in terms of this. Look, the fear of the Lord...we are trying to help you understand the reverence of God, the all of God. There needs to be a sense of awe. We cannot explain this and we shouldn't be able to because if we do we would no longer hold Him in awe and reverence. We would have figured it all out. We are not here to figure it all out.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *My understanding of what we are discussing...yes, God is Spirit, He is everywhere, but we are physical beings and even in heaven...[UNCLEAR] so therefore....God did not create hell for us but for Satan and his demons, but if [UNCLEAR] to say no to God...I have another place to put you because you cannot be in my glory so, therefore, you have to go to hell with Satan and his demons...Satan is a physical being...so those people who have not received Christ...so God is everywhere so therefore they are possibly going to be reminded of their following short....*

Now we need to be careful not to define this to the point of our understanding. We need to be in awe of this. Let the unknown be the unknown. You are not going to figure this all out. All I'm trying to say is this: you have to understand the fear of the Lord is holding Him in reverence and awe because that is what conditions your thinking. It is the love of Christ that is going to motivate our actions.

Ted, did you want to say something?

TED: *Brother, you were saying that those people are in hell because they choose. They are in hell because of their nature, not because they chose to be, the choosing comes as a result of who they naturally are. Every child born in this world naturally is destined to hell unless God and His gracious action elects those and pulls them out...*

That's right. Absolutely. Look at it this way: everybody has an eternal life. The question is this: which one do you have? Everyone has an eternal life, which one do you have?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I agree with what Ted is saying because I'm on this side of heaven and I understand spiritually [UNCLEAR] doesn't.....[UNCLEAR]so from the human side they are making a decision whether...they don't realize it is a God thing...that they are choosing to live their life...and will be held fully accountable for the life they have chosen...*

They can only choose and make a decision within the context of their nature.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *So if you have the spiritual [UNCLEAR] if you find yourself in the reverence of God, [UNCLEAR] really strong evidence that you are born again.*

Absolutely, it is supernatural. What did Isaiah say? “I will put my fear in their inward parts.” That is supernatural, guys, this is not something you conjure up yourself. You don’t decide one day to say, “Oh, I’m going to fear the Lord.” That is a consequence of regeneration of reconciliation to God through the personal work of Christ. When the Holy Spirit puts the fear in you, the fear of God, this reverential awe and respect and dignity in your inner-parts and that changes the way you think. That is supernatural. Don’t try to define it in terms of humanity, it is a supernatural event.

Yes, Bill?

BILL: *Go to Ezekiel 35 and 37...the great [UNCLEAR] of God...God is basically taking in 37 the dry bones [UNCLEAR]it is all Him that is doing all those things [UNCLEAR] for what purpose and the purpose is that the nation could see and understand the glory of God.*

Absolutely, in Ezekiel between 35 and 37, “I will cleanse you from all of your sin and put my heart within you and cause you to be the means by which the people will see that I’m holy.” That is supernatural, guys, that is not something that you just decide to do and you cannot tell somebody, “Would you decide to do that?” You cannot make them decide to do that. They cannot change anything within their nature, something has to happen and that is called regeneration. It is called the re-birth, it is supernatural. Our understanding of this fear of God is a supernatural act. It is something that the Holy Spirit does and He puts it within us. That is what changes our desire. The desire comes from Him because it is supernatural.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Bruce, while we’re on this topic, verse 10 really...we’re talking about motivation...we all, as believers, think since we are saved, therefore, we are not going to be judged for our sins, which we are not, but we are still going to stand before the judgment in Christ...He’s going to say, “What did you do on the earth?” You know, whether good deeds or bad deeds according to what he has done, whether good or bad, so what motivates me is when I stand before the Lord, I’m going to say, “Hey Lord, I did everything I could to be that ambassador to represent you to others and to the world.....”*

And He will say, “But this one...you don’t get credit because you did not have the right motive on that particular event.” That is how it will go. Remember, the right action with the wrong motive is nullified. When we stand before [UNCLEAR], when we stand before the judgment seat of God. Our judgment is sealed during our earthly life, our destiny is sealed in our earthly life. It is our rewards that we will stand before and that is different than the great white throne judgment of revelation. They are two different things.

Let me go on to this understanding about our conditioning of our thinking. The fearing of God is a treasure, it is not a torment when you are **in** Christ because this reverential awe, this respect for God, conditions our thinking and that is what dictates our actions. Listen to a couple of statements by some of our Puritan brothers teaching on this very aspect of the fear of God.

Joseph Alleine says, “He who knows what it is to enjoy God will dread His loss. He who has seen His face will fear to see His back. When you have seen the face of God, you will fear seeing His back. If the fear of God is held high enough in our hearts, it will motivate us to obey Him and that might require self-denial.” Go to Genesis 22:12. This is the offering of Isaac by Abraham. “He said, “do not stretch out your hand against the

lad and do nothing to him...;” This is God speaking. “For I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” He got credit when he did not do it. That is because his motivation was fear of God. It was this reverential awe and respect to please God and do what God told him to do, even sacrificing his son. This is God’s response to that because, you see, Abraham had the right motive behind that action of the willingness to do it. He got credit for the deed even though he did not do it because his motive was right. That is what we need to understand. You get credit for the action, even when you don’t do it, when your motive is right.

We see that in the life of Abraham. It took a reconditioned mind for Abraham to do what he did; he was motivated by this awesome, reverential respect for God. A reconditioned mind produces a pleasing response.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Bruce, one thing that you always say is, “Who do you worship? The God of the Bible or the God of human imagination? I think the challenge for all of us here is, do we truly know the God of Biblical revelation because if we did that fear of God would be in us. I liked what Ian said...I was always taught this...and my last however many years in the church...so much of this stuff was new and it was just getting in the Word that is really starting to give me that fear of the Lord because when you are involved in the churches, you do not hear what God truly is...people are taking communion without knowing the consequences that can come when taking communion...some have gotten sick and fallen asleep...you don’t realize that God does not change from the old testament to the new; he is still a God of judgment and Jesus [UNCLEAR] we really need to renew our minds to what God truly is so that we can have that reverence....*

That is all based upon the Holy Spirit implanting within us the Spirit of God. That is not something that you get on you own. It is the result of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit when He implants the fear of God in you, and the evidence of that is how do you think about God? The evidence is, am I thinking about God correctly? That is the real issue.

Let me give you a couple of insights here as we work through this passage. Notice the three results of this healthy, holy fear that Paul is talking about as a motivation, as a desire for us to please God.

First of all, Number 1. We will develop an eternal perspective of what is valuable and what is worthless. Notice verse 10, 11. We will develop an eternal perspective of what is valuable and what is worthless. Back to 2nd Corinthians 5:11. “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that you are made manifest also in your consciences.” Notice, he is saying, “as a result of my having an understanding between that which is valuable and that is worthless, I want to give that which is valuable away to somebody and I do it with a clear conscience. But notice verse 10. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” The very first thing that is going to happen as a result of our having a right view of God in His reverence and awe is that we are going to understand and develop an eternal perspective of what is valuable and what is worthless. It will be the first consequence and as a result of the things of this world will no longer have their hold on us and we will be set free from the system of this world because you understand where true value really is and what is really worthless.

Secondly, verse 11. We will have a clear conscience before God and before man. Notice verse 11 when he says we will be made manifest to God...he is talking about his conscience. It is going to be revealed. My motives are going to be revealed to God and my motives are going to be revealed to you; and the second thing of when you have a clear view of who God is, a reverence for Him and an awe and respect for Him, is that you are going to have a clear conscience before God and a clear conscience before man because you are going to be motivated differently. You are going to be motivated to do the things that are valuable and not the things that are worthless. Therefore, you can have a clear conscience.

Thirdly...well let me dwell on this a moment more. As a person is in his conscience, so he is before God. It is going to help us understand, do I have a clear conscience because of my reverence and fear of God? Reputation is what you think you are; character is what God knows you are.

Thirdly, true credentials for ministry are not what we do externally but what God does to us internally. True credentials...true qualifications for ministry...are not what we do externally but what God does internally. Look at verse 12. "We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance..." External, versus not in the heart, internal. What is your qualification for ministry? It is not what you do externally, but it is what God has done to you internally. One of those things is this: He has implanted in you the fear of God. It is not our outward demonstration but our inward condition that causes us to be ambassadors and qualifies us as to be representatives to the world. How do we develop a holy fear and awesome reverential respect for God?

Let's go to Malachi 3:16-17. "Then those who feared the Lord..." That word can be translated "revered." "...those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who esteem His name. They will be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." Now I want you to notice a couple of things about this. How is it that we develop, work on and maintain and augment this fear that God has implanted in us? Notice first of all, a scroll of remembrance...we worshipped Him with reverence. These righteous men did three things: (1) they worshipped with reverence; (2) their worship consisted of talking about Him and (3) they thought about Him.

That is how you and I can develop and maintain and augment this fear that God has implanted in us. First of all, do you worship with reverence? I think you have to begin right there. The very first thing is what is my service of worship? Is it activity or is it adoration? Which is it? Often times you go to churches and you see wonderful activity but little adoration. Is it really reverence or revelry? Sometimes you'll see more revelry than reverence. The very first thing they did here, because they feared the Lord, was they worshiped him with reverence. I think you have to start right there in the church and ask what kind of service do we offer and worship? Are they reverential, are they respectful, are they revering the Lord in glory and all of His name; or are they calling attention to us to get a response? You have to start with that. That is they worshipped with reverence.

Secondly, notice...thinking about Him. What about reflecting upon His character, His attributes and His nature and not necessarily what He had done for them. As a result they had something to talk about; they talked about God and all of His glory. They gave back to other people what He had given them and that was a view of Himself. So when you talk about developing a fear of the Lord, there are three things we can see in Malachi: they worshipped with reverence; they thought about Him...what do you think about when there is nothing else

to think about? Where does your mind go? When you have nothing to think about, where does your mind go? If you want to increase this fear of God that He has implanted in you, then you need to think about Him. Think about Him and then you know what you have to do? You need to talk about Him. That is what they did: their worship was reverence, they thought about Him, and they talked about Him. And in the talking about Him, that was when their ministry occurred because they gave away to somebody else what God had given them and that was the right view of Himself.

The gospel is this: it is the glory of God in the face of Christ. It is the glory of God in the face of Christ. If you do not understand the glory of God, you will never be able to talk about the personal work of Christ because Christ is the view of God the Father in all of His holiness and all of His majesty. Brothers, we need to realize that our motivation to please Him starts first of all with this: a reconditioned mind that has the right view of God and all of His reverence, His glory, His attributes and His dignity. Worship Him with reverence, think about Him with reverence, and talk about Him with reverence.

And may God be pleased to develop within us a desire to be pleasing to Him. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the clarity of Your Scripture. We thank You that You never require of us something that you do not equip us to do before hand. You positioned us to be the ministers of reconciliation,, to have the Word of reconciliation; but first of all we need to understand that we have been reconciled because of the personal work of Christ. You bought us with a price, You redeemed us because of the Blood of the Lamb and, Father, help us to understand You and all of Your glory and Your majesty and Your honor. Father, may we go back to our churches and help our churches have reverential awe-filled worship; and Father in those moments when we are not thinking about anything, let us think about You and all of Your glory. Help us remember the 28 Attributes of God so that we reflect upon You; then when the opportunity comes, Lord, we will be able to speak the word of reconciliation because we will be giving away what You have given to us and that is Yourself. You give us Yourself so that we can give that away for Jesus' sake and that is our desire and motivation for ministry, that we will be pleasing to Him. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, Amen.