

**“What Motivated Jesus?”  
John 4:34**

**Big Idea – Since Jesus is our example, the same things that motivated Him to share good news should motivate us.**

1 Peter 2:21 “For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.”

The words good news comprise the meaning of the Gospel, the evangel, from which we get our word evangelism.

85% of professing Christians say they don't feel comfortable sharing their faith. Why is that?

Whenever evangelism does not occur, lack of motivation (or in some cases, improper motivation) is always at the root of the problem!

What Is "motivation?"

Denis Waitley in his book, "The Joy of Working" said,

"Motivation is an inner drive, an idea captured in the imagination."

"Motivation can be harnessed to an intense drive toward a goal."

Put another way, motivation is like the fuel that powers an engine. With fuel, the engine runs and does good work. Without fuel, the engine is silent.

Unfortunately, many people, despite all of the spiritual education they have received on the subject of evangelism, are silent - the reason? Lack of proper motivation!

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR MOTIVATION IN EVANGELISM? Well, what motivated Jesus?

## 1. COMPASSION FOR LOST SOULS

Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the mass of lost souls

Matthew 9:35 Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when He saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 14:14 “Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”

This compassion motivated Him to do two things.

1. He asked His disciples to pray that God might "send out laborers into His harvest" (Mt 9:37-38).
2. Do something about it Himself - to select and send out His apostles (Mt 10:1,5-7).

Do we ever find ourselves filled with compassion for the lost? And doing something about it? If we can only have this same compassion for lost souls, we will not rest till we are doing something to save their souls!

How can we develop this compassion for lost souls? 2 Ways:

1. ASK GOD TO TEACH US TO LOVE as He did with the Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 4:9 “But we don’t need to write to you about the importance of loving each other, for God himself has taught you to love one another.”

He does this through the example of Christ

1 John 3:16 “We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person?”

So the more we meditate upon God's love for us as manifested in His Son's sacrifice, the more we will come to love others!

## 2. BE AROUND PEOPLE

To love people, you have to get to know them. When we do, we can begin to appreciate the saying attributed to Will Rogers, "I never met a man I did not like." So beware of becoming "wrapped up in your own little world." Remember that Jesus was one to become involved with "the multitudes."

Have we allowed the love of God to fill our hearts with compassion for the multitude of lost and dying souls? Are we making an effort to be around people and getting to know them?

## 2. A SENSE OF PURPOSE

John 3:16; 5:30, 36; 6:38; 17:4; 19:28-30)

Jesus' purpose is clearly stated in Scripture  
To "seek and save the lost" (Lk 19:10).

Jn 4:27 Jesus explained: "My food (fuel or motivation) is to do the will of Him who sent Me...to accomplish His work" (Jn 4:34).

Do we have this same "sense of purpose" in our lives? To put first the Father's will? Jesus taught that we should (Mt 6:10,33).

People often have "DIFFERENT PURPOSES" for living:

The "workaholics" make their jobs their purpose in life. Others make their families, friends or hobbies the reason for living.

RIGHT PURPOSE" comes from studying God's Word.

Philippians 1:21 "For me living is Christ and dying is gain."

As read God's Word and understand God's will for us, we learn that our purpose for being His special people centers around proclaiming the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His light (1 Peter 2:9). One way we do this, of course, is through evangelism.

Have we let the Word of God develop within us the "right sense of purpose"? If not, our motivation will be inadequate!

Another thing that moved our Lord was...

### **3. THE LOVE OF THE FATHER**

Jesus had experienced "the love of the Father", which prompted Him to love others

John 15:9 "I loved you as the Father loved me. Now remain in my love.  
10 I have obeyed my Father's commands, and I remain in his love. In the same way, if you obey my commands, you will remain in my love."

He loved so much He wanted to share it with others

(Jn 17:26), even if it was necessary for Him to go the cross to make it possible!

Have we experienced "the love of the Father" in our lives? If so, how can we not be moved (motivated) to want to share it with others? Is it not worth sharing? Of course it is!

But if the Father's love is not as strong as we would like, how can we develop a greater sense of God's love for us?

The way to experience the Father's love is

#### **1. KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS Jn 14:21,23**

A most important commandment in this regard is the one to love one another as Christ loved us (Jn 15:12). This is because loving one another is crucial to

experiencing the love of the Father in our lives. John wrote: "If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us" (1 Jn 4:12).

Another way to increase our experience of the Father's love is to

## 2. MAKE OUR LOVE FOR JESUS STRONGER

the Father's love for us is directly related to our love for Jesus (John 16:27). How can one increase their love for Jesus? The best way is to spend time learning more about Him from the Word of God.

Have we experienced the Father's love by loving Jesus and keeping His commandments (esp. loving one another)? If not, we will not have much worth sharing, nor be motivated to share it!

Another thing that motivated Jesus was:

## 4. THE TERROR OF THE LORD

Jesus was very much aware of God's "righteous indignation".

He taught that we should "fear" God (Mt 10:28).

He warned of the judgment to come (Mk 9:43-48). Knowing the "terror of the Lord", Jesus was willing to go to the cross that man might be saved. He even prayed for those crucifying Him (Luke 23:34).

Are we willing to make the effort to save others, like Jesus? We may not have to die for them... But are we even willing to speak to them?

Or could it be that we don't take the "terror of the Lord" as serious as Jesus' early disciples did (cf. 2 Co 5:11)?

How can we develop a healthy appreciation for "the terror of the Lord"?

MEDITATING UPON THE WORD OF GOD in 2 areas

1. God's judgments in the past - 2 Pe 2:4-9

2. Warnings of the Judgment Day to come (2 Th 1:7-10; Re 20:12-15; 21:8).

Have we, like many, become complacent to the fact that there will be a day of judgment and condemnation? Could it be we have not let the Word of God have its true effect on our lives? A lack of concern and involvement in trying to reach the lost for Christ would certainly imply this to be the case!

Finally, we see that the Lord was moved by...

## **5. THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM**

(Hebrews 12:2,3; Revelation 7:13-17; 21:1-7; 1 Thess. 2:19-20; ),

Hebrews 12:2 "We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up."

Jesus was motivated by the joyful prospect of being with His Father, at His Right Hand. Notice that this enabled Him to "endure the cross" and "despise the shame".

Does not the prospect of spending eternity with God move us to do what we can to save souls? It must, if we also are to be willing to "endure the cross" or "despise the shame" that might be involved in evangelism!

**MEDITATE ON WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR US" as described in Rev 7:13-17; 21:1-7**

Think about what it will mean to you when you stand before the Lord:

1 Thessalonians 2:19 After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you!

20 Yes, you are our pride and joy.

The ability to press on...to persevere, to not quit or give up – all of this is the VALUE of proper motivation. Remember our earlier definition of motivation?

"Men and women who are motivated push themselves forward, plow through the inevitable setbacks, heading ever onward to their dreams."

This was the case with the Lord Jesus Christ - He fulfilled His goals, being motivated by:

- Compassion for lost souls
- A strong sense of purpose
- The love of the Father
- The terror of the Lord
- The joy set before Him

Since Jesus is the "AUTHOR" and "FINISHER" of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), we should be "looking unto Jesus" for the motivation we need to do His will. We should "consider Him" (He 12:3), lest we become weary and discouraged in doing God's will. The early church looked to Jesus, and found the motivation necessary to grow as they did. I know that we can do the same today!