

Section Two: The Kingdom of God on Earth (Present)

Category C: Bema – Kingdom Intelligence Report #2

Topic: The Motivation

All of us need motivation. It is amazing how much can be accomplished when we are motivated. It is just as alarming how little gets done when we are not. Motivation is an especially crucial factor in our Christian lives. Why? There is a “heavenly” aspect to everything we do here on earth. For example, no one possessed a stronger eternal perspective on his earthly life and ministry than the Apostle Paul. Perhaps this is why he wrote 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 in such close proximity to 2 Corinthians 5:9-11. First, we see how his “forever” frame of mind enabled him to fight off any discouragement caused by the many negative circumstances of his earthly life, recorded in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 –

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

This eternal perspective kept the apostle’s motivation at a consistently high level. Why? He knew the trade-off would be worth it. Did this make him some sort of evangelical mercenary? Not at all. It gave him genuine incentive! He knew that the sacrifices made and the negative consequences suffered for the cause of His Savior in this life, would be well worth it in the next life. The implication of 2 Corinthians 4:17 is that it would be more than worth it, in that the eternal reward received would be far greater than the temporal efforts or sacrifices made.

Then, in 2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Paul follows up this magnificent description of the temporal, in light of the eternal, by comparing his earthly life to a tent and his eternal life in heaven to a house. Unless you happen to be obsessively in love with camping, I think we would all agree that it is far better to live in a house than in a tent. This is the extent to which Paul’s outlook governed and motivated his earthly life for Christ. It created within the apostle a sense of accountability, due to the prospect of being evaluated by his Savior, that awaits all of us as Christians, described in 2 Corinthians 5:9-11 –

“Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 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. 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.”

The “fear of the Lord” mentioned in v11, speaks of the reverence and respect which Paul had for his Savior. This, coupled with the thought of being evaluated by the One who knew him better than he knew himself, inspired Paul to be and do everything he possibly could, for Christ.