**Motivations for Faithfulness**

*2 Corinthians 5:1-15*

**Introduction**

1. The journey to heaven is often one laden with adversity.
   1. ***“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22)***.
   2. The path to heaven is narrow and difficult (**cf. Matthew 7:13-14**).
2. We cannot allow unfortunate situations to weigh us down to the point of losing our faith, or growing negligent and slothful in or service to God.
3. We must find motivation in such times that we may continue on the path of righteousness.
   1. **God knows us and our needs.**
   2. **He has supplied ample motivation to sustain us in our life on earth**.
4. **2 Corinthians 11:23** – Paul in his reluctant boasting, comparing himself to the false apostles among the Corinthians – **Paul was an astounding servant of Christ who always found motivation to continue through hard times.**
5. If we need motivation, it is wise that we look to the life of Paul.
6. Paul’s Life of Faith and Trials
7. Pre-Conversion
   1. **Acts 26:9-11** (Pleading case before Agrippa) – He was a devout Jew, dead set on persecuting Christians.
      1. ***“I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4)***.
      2. ***“I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man” (1 Timothy 1:13***; calls himself chief of sinners **v. 15**).
   2. **Acts 9:26** – after he was converted, saints did not immediately receive him because they feared him, knowing what life he had lived.
8. Post-Conversion
   1. **Acts 9:13-16** – After Jesus told Ananias to go to Paul – once, he inflicted the suffering, now he would suffer himself for Christ’s sake.
   2. **V. 20-25** – Immediately began to preach upon his conversion, and as such experience life threatening situations.
      1. This was Paul’s new life.
      2. ***“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ…that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:7, 8).***
      3. He would continue to suffer for Christ just as Christ had told Ananias.
   3. **2 Corinthians 11:23-28** – Suffered by the hands of persecutors, and on the difficult journeys he took in his ministry.
   4. **2 Timothy 4:6-8** – Paul reached the end of his life knowing he had done what the Lord required, and as such, he had the hope of salvation.
      1. How did Paul maintain his faith throughout all the difficult situations?
      2. **Paul had motivations for continued faithfulness. What were they? 🡪**
9. Paul’s Motivations for Faithfulness (**cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1-15**)
10. Building from God (**v. 1-5**)
    1. **2 Corinthians 5:1-5** – The apostle knows firsthand the burdens that come with the physical body. However, he is motivated by the hope of a glorious spiritual body.
       1. (**v. 5)** – God has given us the assurance that this will occur.
       2. **4:16-18** – His life of faithfulness may lead to pain, and hardship, but while he remains faithful, he is working for something greater!
    2. **Ecclesiastes 12:1-8** – metaphors for the deterioration of the body. Growing older can lead to pain, discomfort, and heartache.
       1. **Our life of faith before God will bring with it certain hardships, but simply growing older, and living in an imperfect world has its difficulties.**
       2. We must ***“remember now [our] Creator.”***
       3. We look to Him, and have hope in His promise that He will supply us with a better, spiritual body 🡪
    3. **1 Corinthians 15:42-49** – We have much better things to look forward to when our earthly body and heavenly body are considered.
    4. **This should motivate us to faithfulness.**
11. Being with the Lord (**v. 6-9**)
    1. **2 Corinthians 5:6-9** – Paul realizes while he is in his physical body he is away from the Lord. He is motivated to be with Him once and for all.
    2. **Acts 7:51-59** – Stephen had this same motivation.
       1. Stephen wanted to be with the Lord, and he knew the kind of life it would take to get there.
       2. Why else would he stand so boldly before the Sanhedrin and say what he did (**cf. 7:51-53**)?
       3. **His hope was realized. He was going to be with the Lord.**
    3. **Philippians 1:21-24** – Paul had this same hope. He wanted to be with the Lord, although he knew it was needful at the time to remain in service on the earth.
    4. **2 Thessalonians 1:9** – Being away from the presence of the Lord in the end means ***“everlasting destruction.”***
    5. ***Which leads to the next point 🡪***
12. Judgment and Fear of God (**v. 9-11**)
    1. **2 Corinthians 5:9-11** – Paul keeps in his mind the coming judgment. He knows the terror of the Lord to those who are disobedient.
       1. **For this reason, Paul is motivated to live a faithful life.**
       2. For this reason, Paul persuades others to do the same.
    2. **Hebrews 10:26-31** – After considering forsaking the assembly, the Hebrew writer explains what awaits the unfaithful.
       1. **When we do not live faithfully, we trample the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant common.**
       2. We should fear falling into God’s hands.
    3. **Acts 17:30-31** – Paul used the coming judgment to motivate Athenians to repentance.
    4. **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** – Solomon suggested the all of man is motivated by the judgment.
    5. **When we are struggling in any way, we must remember the judgment, having a fear of God, to motivate us to faithfulness.**
13. The Love of Christ (**v. 14-15**)
    1. **2 Corinthians 5:14-15** – The main motivating factor in Paul’s life is the love of Christ.
       1. Christ died for all men because all were dead in sin (**v. 14**).
       2. Those who benefit from His sacrifice because of faith now live for Him in return **(v. 15**).
    2. **Romans 5:6-9** – Even while we were still sinners Christ died for us.
       1. As a result, we are saved from God’s wrath, for Christ took it upon Himself.
       2. **Romans 6:5-11** – Such requires us to be alive to God, but dead to sin.
       3. ***“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10)***.
    3. **Romans 12:1-2** – Christ laid down His life for us, and we must do the same. We must show Him our appreciation, and reciprocal love toward Him.

**Conclusion**

1. While we live on this earth in general, and specifically live for Christ, we can expect various troubles.
2. We must not lose heart, and we must not fail in our faith despite the adversity.
3. **God has supplied us with various motivations. If we look to these things we will gain the strength to persevere. Just as Paul did.**