

HOW THE WORD OF GOD MOTIVATES

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **2Corinthians 4:16-18**. From Roy H. Enoch (12/26/1993).
- B. What motivates men to act?
 - 1. What motivates children to obey their parents?
 - 2. What motivates some people to obey the speed limit and others to speed?
 - 3. What motivates athletes to train for years for a sporting event.
 - 4. What Motivates some to do the opposite to others?
- C. The Bible teaches us that the things that motivate us depends on the heart. Prov. 23:6-7
 - 1. The miser is selfish, greedy and does not want to share.
 - 2. The words we speak come from the heart and by our words we are justified or condemned (Mt. 12:34,36,37).
 - 3. Sin comes from an impure heart. Mt. 15:19-20
 - 4. A godly heart produces love, respect, and submission.
- D. The same instructions from God will produce faith and obedience in a loving, submissive heart, but rebellion in a selfish, stubborn heart.
 - 1. The same miracles and commands from God produced hardening and rebellion in Pharaoh but faith and obedience in Israelites.
 - 2. God's word still motivates us according to the attitude of condition of our hearts.
- E. Today, we want to study some distinct avenues of cause for motivation:
 - 1. Faith or trust that He knows best motivates us.
 - 2. Love and the desire to please motivates.
 - 3. The rewards and punishments He offers motivate us.

I. **WE ARE MOTIVATED TO OBEY GOD BY OUR FAITH IN HIM TO TELL US WHAT IS BEST FOR US.**

- A. That faith is based on what He has already done for us.
 - 1. The physical universe testify of His power and wisdom. Rom. 1:20
 - 2. The OT describes how God has been merciful w/man's sins and willing to forgive.
 - 3. It describes the blessings He brings upon those who serve Him.
 - 4. The NT describes how He sent His X.
 - a. He went about doing good, casting out demons, and healing the sick and preaching to the poor.
 - b. He showed love and compassion for the down trodden and underprivileged.
 - c. He suffered innocently for our sins that we might have God's grace in forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. (This is God's greatest "power story")
 - 5. If we are not motivated by this, our hearts are hardened.
- B. Our faith is also based on our own inability to provide for our greatest needs.
 - 1. We don't know what is best for us (Jer. 10:23).
 - 2. We don't know what will really make us happy.
 - a. We focus on ourselves and what we want.
 - b. True happiness is focusing on what others need, and try to serve them.
 - c. Man wants to exalt himself, but there is greater joy in exalting others.
- C. Faith is trusting w/out having to know why.
 - 1. Having to understand why indicates that one is following his own judgment rather than trusting.
 - 2. Hebrews 11 describes "saving faith" as obeying whatever they were told to do.

II. **THE BIBLE OFTEN USES THE MOTIVATION OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.**

- A. God used both blessings and curses to teach Israel to obey (Deut. 7:11-16; 8:19,20; 11:26-28).
 - 1. In Deut. 27 and 28 the blessings and curses are listed and in Josh. 8:30-35 we are told that they

did read the list of blessings and curses in the land as God instructed.

- B. God still offers blessings to those who trust Him enough to do what he says and promises punishment if we reject His word (Mt. 25:31-34,41,46).

III. **THE GREATEST MOTIVATION IS A HEART FULL OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE.**

- A. When we are thankful, we want to show appreciation by pleasing.
 - 1. He loved us first (1Jn. 4:19; Rom. 5:7-9).
 - 2. To know God and to love Him is to obey Him (1Jn. 5:3; 2:3-5).
 - 3. Love serves with joy rather than bitterness and complaint:
 - a. This time of year thousands will crowd into a stadium and sit on frozen benches for hours to watch football in a blizzard.
 - b. Do you think they do it because they are afraid of the consequences of missing a game, or because they love football?
 - c. A few years ago someone at Sullivan asked me if I liked to fish. I said that I did. He asked how often I went. I told him that I tried to go every year, but that I was a couple of years behind. He didn't believe that I really loved fishing.
 - d. I have heard some say that they loved the Lord, but never assembled with the saints to worship and never studied God's word.
- B. Those who love, find the greatest joy in serving and sharing.
 - 1. Getting for ourselves and having things done for us can not begin to give the pleasure of giving in love.
 - 2. Those who have never really loved someone else more than themselves cannot understand that.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Motivation is a function of the heart.
- B. If our heart is softened loving and trusting, we are motivated by love and service.
- C. If we are selfish and hardened, we will be rebellious at commands.
- D. See 2Cor. 5:14.
- E. Let our hearts be softened by the love of God that we may desire know His will and want to do it.