

Weekly Reflection – The Mission and the Motive – part 2

The Motive

Motive is defined as something that causes a person to act in a certain way or do a certain thing. I believe that our ability to accomplish our goals or objectives or mission is only as good as our motive. That the reason someone does not accomplish the goal or objective is due to a weak or faulty motive; or a stronger motive comes along. The greater the objective or goal the greater the motive needs to be.

We have been given a great mission, the Great Commission; to go and make disciples of all nations. This is a heaven and hell mission. A life and death mission. It requires us to live by faith. It requires us to give our lives for the sake of others. It requires us to forgive and love others, even our enemies. It requires humility and selflessness. This is a great objective, a great mission. This will take a great motive. Is there a motive great enough that would enable a person to give their lives completely for this mission?

Matthew 22:36-40

- We see in Matthew 22:36-40, that our motive is the great commandment. The mission is the Great Commission, and the motivation is a Great Commandment.
- First, consider the sheer fact that Jesus said all of this. The lawyer didn't ask about a second commandment. Jesus went beyond what he asked. He seems to want to push the importance and centrality of these commandments as much as He can.
- We have the greatest commandment in all the revelation of God to humanity (Love God); and we have the second greatest, which is like the greatest (Love your neighbor as yourself).
- "Like it" means similar or resembling, similar in appearance or character. That's enough to raise the stakes here almost as high as they can be raised.
- These two commandments are so intertwined that there's a sense where they can't be separated.
- But Jesus doesn't stop there. He wants us to be stunned at how important these two commandments are. He wants us to stop and wonder. So, he adds, "***On these two commandments depend (Or hang) all the Law and the Prophets.***" They are the two commandments on which everything else in the Bible depends; including the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations.
- Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:14, Colossians 3:14,

Where does this love for God and others come from? Do we need to manufacture it on our own?

"We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother." 1 John 4:19-21 ESV

- This verse tells us when He loved us. He loved us before we loved Him. He loved us when we were still sinners: "Every man that ever was saved had to come to God not as a lover of God, but as a sinner, and then believe in God's love to him as a sinner." (Spurgeon)
- This verse tells us where our love for Jesus comes from. It comes from Him. Our love for God is always in response to His love for us; He initiates, and we respond.
- This verse tells us why we love Jesus, and how we can love Him more. We love Him BECAUSE He first loved us. "Yet we must not try to make ourselves love our Lord, but look to Christ's love first, for his love to us will beget in us love to him. I know that some of you are greatly distressed because you cannot love Christ as much as you would like to do, and you keep on fretting because it is so. Now, just forget your own love to him, and think of his great love to you; and then, immediately, your love will come to something more like that which you would desire it to be." (Spurgeon)

- This verse also teaches that if we are born again, we have the ability to love. Being born of God and abiding with Him gives us the ability to love. Because of this, the excuse “I just can’t love that person” (or other such excuses) is invalid. If we are born of Him and are abiding in Him then the resources for love are there. It is up to us to respond to His command with our will and whole being.
- God’s love for us is the fuel, the initiator for our true love for God and love for people.
- Love is the only motive great enough to equip us for this great mission.

The Apostle Paul

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and listen to how Paul describes some of what he has went to as a disciple of Jesus. What is Paul’s motive? What motive did he have that was so great that he continued to give his life to making disciples of all nations?

- ***“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV***

Paul is motivated - even pushed on by - the love of Christ, that is, Jesus’ love towards him. Paul had to do what he did in ministry, because he received so much love from Jesus that it compelled him to serve others. When we really receive the love of Christ, it touches us and makes us want to serve others. Paul felt compelled by the love of Christ. If someone asked, “Why are you doing it all? Why all the pain and all the trials?” Paul would answer, “I have to. I have received the love of Christ. I have the love of Christ in my heart, I love Jesus. I also have the love of Christ in my heart for all the people Jesus loves. I am compelled by the love of Christ! ”

To say, “the love of Christ constrains us,” is to say that the love of Christ has power. It has a force that can bind us and influence us. Paul understood the love of God and as he meditated upon God’s love for him, it led him, it compelled him to share that love with others.

How do we allow the love of Christ to control us? ***“We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19*** “Now remember, we never make ourselves love Christ more by flogging ourselves for not loving him more. We come to love those better whom we love by knowing them better... If you want to love Christ more, think more of him, think more of what you have received from him.” (Spurgeon)

And let's be sure not to miss what Paul says in verse 15, ***“Those who live (born again believers) might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”*** If Jesus died for us, it is only fitting that we live for Him. Jesus gave us new life, not to live for ourselves but to live for Him. The question is simple: Are you living for yourself, or are you living for Jesus? He died for us that we might die to ourselves. God created us for the purpose of living for Him, not for ourselves.

What kept Jesus on the cross?

- The nails had nothing to do with Him remaining on that cross.
- The hands of Jesus Christ have never been bound by anything – except His own promises.
- He raised people from dead, healed the sick, stopped the storm and calmed the sea, walked on water, turned water to wine. Certainly, the nails weren’t what kept the Lord upon that cross..
- Neither can we say that Jesus’ weakness or helplessness kept Him up there. There never has been a man any stronger. Read John 10:17-18.
- And the soldiers weren’t holding him to the cross either. Christ had already proven His sovereign supremacy over those armed men in the Garden of Gethsemane. Read John 18:4-8. It’s important to understand that no one took Him. It was Jesus’ voluntary choice to go with the troops.

It was love.

- Before Jesus was handed over to be crucified, knowing he only had a few hours left, he fervently prayed, ***“And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” Matthew 26:39 ESV*** Jesus went and stayed on the cross because God the Son, loved God the Father. Jesus submitted to not His own will, but to the will of the Father and obeyed Him to the point of death on a cross. In John 10:18, Jesus talks about His impending death, saying, “This charge I have received from my Father.” So, Jesus was commanded by the Father to die on behalf of humanity. And the reason for Christ’s obedience was His love. Later, while Jesus is speaking again on His imminent death, He says, ***“but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.” John 14:31 ESV***
- Perhaps it’s expected that the Son loves the Father, but amazingly, Christ’s love for you and I was also part of His motive to stay on the cross. ***“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8 ESV*** Incredible! God loves sinners! Which tells you that God’s love is not something we earn or could ever deserve. The good news is that His love has nothing to do with anything we have done, but it has everything to do with who God is. God is love.
- This is ultimately what kept Jesus from saving Himself: His love for the Father, and His love for sinners.
- ***“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:12-13 ESV***
- ***“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” 1 John 3:16 ESV***

The mission for each of us is clear, make disciples, and our motivation is love for God and love for people; all of which is fueled by God’s love for us.

The Mission – “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

The Motive – “Love for God and love for others because God loves you.”