

## What Motivates Me – 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6 – October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

- I have to confess that the text before us today is one that is very searching and convicting first as a pastor and then a Christian.
- This because, the Apostle Paul is reminding the Thessalonian Christians that the motive of his heart is pure before the Lord.
- In other words, everything he did was as unto the Lord, and not for what he could gain for himself, nor was it to please people.

- Whether were those in the pulpit or in the pew, I think we would do well to ask ourselves some serious questions in this regard.
- Namely, that of why I do what I do in the sense of the motive of my heart when it comes to both my Christian life and ministry.
- What follows are two such questions, both of which the Apostle Paul answers concerning his motivation in his life and ministry.

### **Question #1: Am I motivated by what's in it for me? (Verses 1-3)**

1 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you.

- Paul defends himself because of those who were trying to discredit his character and ministry and hinder the gospel message.
- It's important to understand that Paul is not concerned about himself; rather, his only concern is for the gospel and this church.
- So much so that Paul stresses how he wouldn't be suffering in the ministry if he were in it for himself and what he could gain.

### **Question #2: Am I motivated by pleasing people? (Verses 4-6)**

4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.

- Here, the Apostle Paul makes it very clear, in no uncertain terms, that he is not looking to please people or the praise of people.
- That's not to say that Paul didn't care for people, as he will talk very candidly about his love for them in the verses that follow.
- Simply put, Paul's primary motivation was to please God, which is why he endured so much hardship and terrible opposition.

- One of the things the Lord has been ministering to me, as of late is that He uses a plumb line as a measure of my Christianity.
- A plumb line is a weight suspended from a string that's used as a vertical reference line to ensure that a structure is centered.
- We see this plumb line of God in scripture being used as the measurement of righteousness related to every aspect of our life.

Isaiah 28:17 - I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place.

Amos 7:7-8 -- 7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. 8 And the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," I replied. Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

Stanley Voke in his book, "Personal Revival" of this plumb line wrote, "We see God standing on the wall of our life looking upon every part of it. As He holds the plumb line against us, it becomes obvious where things are not quite straight. ...Every part of life is touched – for instance, ...when the plumb line goes deeper into our motives. It tests whether we ...do everything for the glory of the Lord or to please men. ...So God searches us with His plumb line not to drive us into judgment or despair, but to draw us sweetly to repentance that in His arms we might find forgiveness and the fullness of His love. He wants us not to hide from Him but in Him."