

"The Day of Accountability"

Part 3

2 Corinthians 5:9-16

Introduction: We are currently in a study of 2 Corinthians and we are in chapter 5. It is in this letter that Paul is defending his integrity to the believers at the church at Corinth. The critics did their best to cause people to question the integrity of Paul. This was nothing short of a battle over the Word of God. Last week I reminded you that the New Testament church existed without the New Testament Bible because it was not yet complete. Therefore they relied upon the Apostle's doctrine.

Acts 2:41-42

⁴¹ *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

⁴² *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Paul was chosen to be an apostle and many of his letters were inspired and actually were the New Testament Bible. So when the critics attacked Paul's integrity it was really an attack against the Word of God. For if the churches questioned his letters they would be questioning the Word of God. Let us remember that Paul was used by God to write at least 13 letters of the New Testament so if the critics could somehow discredit his integrity they could then cast a great amount of doubt upon much of the New Testament. This is how high the stakes were for Paul as he faced the criticism of the Judaizers.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Part 3

In the back of Paul's mind was always the Day of Accountability. He knew there would be a day when he would stand before the Lord and give an account of how he had used what had been entrusted to him as a believer.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:9, 10

The word "BAD" at the end of verse 10 means "worthless". At the Judgment Seat of Christ Paul knew that all of his works would be tried with fire. If he had built with wood, hay or stubble it would all burn up and would have no eternal value.

1 Corinthians 3:10-14

¹⁰ *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

¹¹ *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

¹² *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

¹³ *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

¹⁴ *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

Paul then went on in 2 Corinthians to explain how much he desired people to know of his sincerity and integrity.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:11

Paul was so careful as to how he lived his life. With the Judgment Seat of Christ in the back of his mind he lived in a way that when that day came he did not want to hurt his Lord with how he had lived. The **TERROR OF THE LORD** is a reference to Paul's deep reverence for the Lord and his desire to please Him. He was not saying that he lived in fear as he anticipated that day. Therefore Paul lived to persuade men of his sincerity and integrity. God knew his heart and he trusted that the Corinthians also knew his heart.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:12

All of this information which Paul was pouring out to the Corinthians was not so they would exalt Paul but it was to give them ammunition to silence the critics. The critics were more concerned about man's outward appearance than with the heart of man. Paul was through this letter exposing his heart to the Corinthians and anyone else who would read this letter. They could therefore relate to the critics the sincerity of Paul's heart.

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:13

This is a very interesting verse. The critics had accused Paul of being **BESIDE HIMSELF**. The phrase "we be beside ourselves" is one word. Let me show you how Vines defines the word.

"to throw out of position, displace, to be out of one's mind, besides one's self, insane".

Let me put this in the context which the critics used it. They were convinced that Paul was completely insane. To the critics he was "so far out there" that they could not understand him. They had concluded that he was a man who was insane. Now this makes me ask why they would say this. Let me now answer that question with the words of John Phillips.

"It is not all that surprising that an unbeliever should call a man like Paul mad. After all, as Saul of Tarsus, he had a brilliant career ahead of him. As a Hebrew, a student of Gamaliel, the Sanhedrin's "man most likely to succeed," and its arch-persecutor of the church, he could have become Israel's high priest, for Israel's high priests in Paul's day were political appointees and puppets, often enough, of Rome. With his Hellenist education, he could have taught philosophy and rhetoric at Athens. With his Roman citizenship, he could have become governor of a province. Instead, he chose Christ and threw himself into spreading the Gospel as zealously as once he had devoted himself to stamping it out."

Paul was a man who was sold out for Jesus Christ and so to the unbelievers he was viewed as "radical" or "extreme" or as Paul stated in this verse, "a man who was beside himself" or "insane". Let me show you what Festus said about Paul.

Acts 26:21-24

²¹ *For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.*

²² *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:*

²³ *That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*

²⁴ *And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.*

Let us remember that he was a man who did not fear death.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:8

Paul was willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. The bottom line was he preferred death over life. So, when he faced death he was not afraid but instead he continued to become bolder in his preaching. This made no sense to his critics and so they labeled him as a man who was insane/beside himself. Let me take this thought a little further.

Paul was a man with a single purpose.

Philippians 3:13, 14

¹³ *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: **but this one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

¹⁴ *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

He had a single focus and it was on eternity. He was not double minded.

James 1:8

⁸ *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

Paul was not like others who had a divided allegiance. He was sold out to Jesus Christ. As someone who as considered to be "mad" or "insane" we can say he was in good company for the same thing was said about Jesus.

Mark 3:20, 21

²⁰ *And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.*

²¹ *And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: **for they said, He is beside himself.***

Jesus own family accused Him of being insane because He was so committed to doing the father's will. They did not understand what Godly devotion was like.

Let us get back now to 2 Corinthians.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:13 again.

Paul explained that in those times when he seemed to be 'insane" or "mad" it was because God had given him Truth which just had to be proclaimed. It was his responsibility and he was fully committed to following the will of God.

Then there were the times when Paul was "sober". This word means "to curb one's passions". There were times when Paul brought his passions down on another level so as to be able to minister to you.

Let me show you A. W. Tozer's thoughts on this verse:

"A W Tozer described genuine followers (disciples, believers) of Christ as somewhat "out of step" ("out of their minds") with the rest of the world writing that...

A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One Whom he has never seen. Talks every day to Someone he cannot see. He expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another, empties himself in order that he might be full, admits he is wrong to he can be declared right, and goes down in order to get up. He is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and is happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, and gives away so he can keep. He sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passes knowledge."

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:14

The first word of this verse is a connective. This verse gives the reason why Paul was so devoted to serving the Lord.

It was Christ's love for Paul that caused Paul to live the life of full devotion. The word "constrain" means "to control". The point was that Paul was CONTROLLED by the love which Jesus had for him and demonstrated on the cross when He died for Paul's sins.

Application:

The Bible presupposes that all who are believers will be controlled by the LOVE which Jesus had for us. Let me remind us of the depth of His love.

John 3:16

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 15:13

¹³ *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

Now John writes about how the love is to be our motivation.

1 John 3:16

¹⁶ *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:14 again.

Paul makes it clear that we were all spiritually dead in our sins. It was the LOVE of Jesus Christ for us that took Him to the cross where He died to pay our sin debt. Without His sacrificial LOVE we would be doomed.

Ephesians 2:1-9

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Conclusion:

Next week we will get back to this thought. For now I want to leave you with a question:

"You are motivated by **love** in all you do. Which **love** motivates you, the **love** of Jesus for you or your **love** of self?"

Many people are motivated by their love for self and so they live their lives to please the flesh. They make very few sacrifices to minister to the needs of others. But they will make many sacrifices for their own desires and pleasures.

Those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit are willing to sacrifice so that the needs of others are ministered to. They will set their own desires and dreams aside and give what they can to help others. This is the life of Christ being lived through them by the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 2:5-8

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

² *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

³ *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

⁴ *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷ *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*