

Maintaining Strength through Stressful Times

Paul's *Motivation* for Ministry in times of Stress and Hardship

A. Paul's Life of Affliction and Stress

Are they **Hebrews**? So am I. Are they **Israelites**? So am I.
Are they descendants of **Abraham**? So am I.

Are they **servants of Messiah**? (I speak as if insane) I more so;
In far more **labors**, in far more **imprisonments**, **beaten** times without number,
often in danger of **death**. Five times I received of the Jews **thirty-nine lashes**.
Three times I was beaten with **rods**, once I was **stoned**,
three times I was **shipwrecked**, a day and a night I have spent in the **deep**.

I have been on frequent **journeys**, in dangers from **rivers**, dangers from **robbers**,
dangers from my **countrymen**, dangers from the **Gentiles**, dangers in the **city**,
dangers in the **wilderness**, dangers on the **sea**, dangers among **false brethren**;
I have been in **labor** and **hardship**, through many **sleepless nights**,
in **hunger** and **thirst**, often without **food**, in **cold** and **exposure**.

Apart from *such* external things,
there is the daily **pressure** upon me of **concern** for *all* the **churches**.
Who is **weak** without my **being weak**?
Who is led into **sin** without my **intense concern**?
(II Corinthians 11:22-29)

B. Paul's Life and *Motivation* for Ministry

1. Paul was *Motivated* because of an Eternal Calling

a. A *Calling* from Birth

But when **God**, who had **set me apart** *even* from my mother's womb
and called me through **His grace**, was pleased to
reveal His Son in me that I might **preach Him** among the **Gentiles**,
I did **not** immediately consult with **flesh** and **blood**,...
but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.
(Galatians 1:15-17)

b. A *Calling* according to God's Grace

For I (**Paul**) am the **least** of the **apostles**, and **not fit** to be called an
apostle, because I **persecuted** the **church of God**.

But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and His grace toward me did **not prove vain**;

but I labored even *more* than all of them,
yet not I, but the grace of God with me.
(I Corinthians 15:9-10)

c. A **Calling** that would be characterized by Suffering

But the Lord said to him (Ananias),
“Go, for he (Paul) is a chosen instrument of Mine,
to *bear My name* before the Gentiles and kings
and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much
he must suffer for My name’s sake.”
(Acts 9:15-16)

For to you it has been granted for Messiah’s sake,
not only to *believe in Him*, but also to suffer for His sake,..
(Philippians 1:29)

2. Paul was *Motivated* knowing that his was Essential Ministry

a. A **Ministry** with the Message of Salvation and Righteousness

For I am *not ashamed* of the gospel, for it is
the power of God for salvation to everyone who *believes*,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it *the righteousness of God* is revealed from *faith to faith*;
as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”
(Romans 1:16-17)

b. A **Ministry** that Reconciles Men with God

Now all *these* things are from God,
who reconciled us to Himself *through Messiah*
and gave *us* the ministry of reconciliation, namely,
that God was in Messiah reconciling the world to Himself,
not counting their *trespasses against them*,
and He has committed to *us* the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, *we* are *ambassadors* for Messiah,
as though God were making an appeal *through us*;
we beg you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to God.
(II Corinthians 5:18-20)

c. A **Ministry** of Revelation

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel
which was preached by me is not according to man.

For I *neither* received it from man, nor was I taught it,
but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus the Messiah.
(Galatians 1:11-12)

Let a man regard us in this manner, as **servants of Messiah**
and **stewards** of the **mysteries of God**.
(I Corinthians 4:1)

3. Paul was *Motivated* by an **Earnest Love**

a. A **Love** for the **Lord** who **died for Him**

For the **love of Messiah controls us**,..
so that they who **live** might **no longer live** for themselves,
but **for Him** who **died** and **rose again** on **their behalf**.
(II Corinthians 5:14-15)

I have been **crucified** with **Messiah**; and it is **no longer I** who live,
but **Messiah lives in me**; and the **life** which I **now live** in the **flesh**
I live by **faith** in the **Son of God**,
who **loved me** and **gave Himself up** for me. (Galatians 2:20)

b. A **Love** that was **exemplified** in the **Person of the Messiah**

Therefore be **imitators of God**, as beloved **children**; and **walk in love**,
just as Messiah also **loved you** and **gave Himself up** for us, an **offering**
and a **sacrifice to God** as a fragrant aroma. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

c. A **Love** that **characterized** his ministry to **others**

Be **devoted** to one another in **brotherly love**;..

Owe nothing to anyone except to **love one another**;
for he who **loves his neighbor** has fulfilled **the law**.
(Romans 12:10a, 13:8)

4. Paul was *Motivated* and *Strengthened* through God's **Empowering Presence**

I (**Paul**) was with you in **weakness** and in **fear** and in **much trembling**,
and my **message** and my **preaching** were not in **persuasive words**
of **wisdom**, but in **demonstration** of the **Spirit** and of **power**,
so that **your faith** would **not rest** on the **wisdom of men**,
but on the **power of God**.
(I Corinthians 2:3-5)

For this reason I bow my knees before **the Father**,..

that **He** would **grant you**, according to the **riches of His glory**,
to be **strengthened with power** through **His Spirit** in the **inner man**,..
(Ephesians 3: 14-16)

5. **Paul** was *Motivated* by an **Eventual Accountability**

For **we** must **all** appear before the **judgment seat of Messiah**, so that **each one** may be **recompensed** for his **deeds in the body**, according to what he has **done**, whether **good or bad**.

Therefore, **knowing** the **fear of the Lord**, **we persuade men**, but we are made **manifest to God**; and I hope that we are made **manifest** also in **your consciences**.
(II Corinthians 5:10-11)

6. **Paul** was *Motivated* by an **Enduring Hope**

a. The ***Hope*** of eternal **Salvation**

For it is for this we **labor** and **strive**, because we have **fixed our hope** on the **living God**, who is the **Savior** of **all men**, especially of **believers**. (I Timothy 4:10)

b. The ***Hope*** of eternal **Life**

Paul, a **bond-servant of God** and an **apostle of Jesus the Messiah**, for the **faith** of those **chosen of God** and the knowledge of the **truth** which is according to **godliness**, in the **hope** of **eternal life**, which **God**, who **cannot lie**, **promised** long ages ago,..(Titus 1:1-2)

c. The ***Hope*** of eternal **Glory**

Therefore we do not **lose heart**, but though our **outer man** is **decaying**, yet our **inner man** is being **renewed** day by day.

For **momentary**, **light affliction** is producing for us an **eternal weight of glory** far **beyond** all comparison, while we **look not** at the things which are **seen**, but at the things which are **not seen**; for the things which **are seen** are **temporal**, but the things which are **not seen** are **eternal**.
(II Corinthians 4:16-18)

d. The ***Hope*** of the **coming** of the eternal **Savior**

For the **grace of God** has **appeared**, bringing **salvation** to **all men**, **instructing us** to...live **sensibly**, **righteously** and **godly** in the present age, looking for the **blessed hope** and the **appearing** of the **glory** of our **great God** and **Savior**, **Messiah Jesus**,..(Titus 2:11-13)

Personal Application