

Living Connections Bible Study

Spiritually Motivated

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:11-17

Prayer

Icebreaker: The Apostle Paul said, *“For me to live is Christ...”* His supreme motivation in life was to please his Savior. What are other motivations people have for their lives? What might they use to fill in the blank, *“For me to live is _____.”*

1. What motivated Paul and his missionary companions to live exemplary lives and share the gospel with others according to 2 Corinthians 5:11?

2. Why is the fear of the Lord a healthy motivation to living a life that glorifies God and for sharing the gospel with those who are separated from God?

Proverbs 9:10 _____

Leviticus 19:2 _____

1 John 2:15-16 _____

James 4:4-5 _____

1 Peter 4:17-18 _____

Jude 1:23 _____

3. What kind of reputation did Paul and his missionary companions have because of their enthusiasm for serving Christ, and what were their critics saying about them? 2 Corinthians 5:11b-13

4. What great motivation for serving the Lord and reaching others do we find in 2 Corinthians 5:14, Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 3:1, and 4:9-10?

5. What spiritual motivation do we find in 1 Corinthians 6:20, and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15?

6. Why shouldn't we make judgments concerning those around us as to whether God would be willing and able to save and transform their lives? 2 Corinthians 5:16a-17, Romans 1:16, 2 Peter 3:9

7. What kind of reputation did many of the Corinthians have before they were saved, and what made the difference? 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

8. How do people make misjudgments about Jesus, and what does Paul mean in 2 Corinthians 5:16b *"Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer."*

Think about it this week:

Do I know the living Christ, and what is my motivation to live for Him and point others to my Savior? _____

Major Ian Thomas imagined what it must have been like for Paul before he was converted as he examined the life and ministry of Jesus. He wrote:

There was a time when, as Saul of Tarsus, I made my own reasonable estimate of this man called Jesus Christ, about whom I had heard so much. When I did so I wasn't unkind; I wasn't even prejudiced. I applied all the normal, reasonable methods of evaluation of my own day and I came to my own conclusions about Jesus Christ. This was what I found:

FAMILY BACKGROUND? A nobody! I had to agree with my theological colleagues that He was the illegitimate son of a faithless woman who was not only faithless but a liar.

FAMILY BREEDING? In common with all my comrades, I couldn't help coming to the conclusion that He was worth precisely nothing. He had absolutely no standing in His community.

PROFESSIONAL STANDING? I went into that pretty thoroughly. I discovered that He had no formal education; He was brought up in a peasant's home; He was an apprentice at a carpenter's bench; eventually He got through His apprenticeship and became a carpenter. In terms of professional status, I came to the reasonable, logical conclusion that He was worth absolutely nothing!

THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND? He professed to be a preacher, but I discovered that, by all reasonable human estimates, here again He amounted to nothing. He hadn't been to college; He hadn't been to seminary; He hadn't had any instruction whatever from the ecclesiastical dignitaries of our day; He had sat at nobody's feet. Professionally He was nothing. He was but a tub-thumping rabble-rouser and an incorrigible street preacher. In terms of the ecclesiastical situation of my day and generation He was simply a nobody.

MONEY? He was born in a borrowed stable; when He wanted to give an illustration He even had to borrow a coin; He rode around on a borrowed donkey; when He wanted to celebrate the Passover He sent on a messenger and managed to persuade somebody to make His home available; He always lived in other people's houses. He was, on all the reasonable human basis upon which we can justifiably come to a conclusion, an incorrigible scrounger. He even died on a borrowed cross and was buried in a borrowed tomb. In terms of property or wealth He was worth absolutely nothing.

But something happened to me, Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus. Breathing out threatening and slaughter, I was going to throw into jail and have put to death anyone who dared to perpetuate the myth that this incorrigible nothing was the Christ of God.

Then suddenly, there was a light brighter than the sun at noonday. I was blinded. I fell to my face. I was helpless. And I heard a voice, saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you Lord?" I said. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

*Then I learned that the one I had thought to be nothing, was **Nothing But God, Manifest in the flesh.** By my human evaluation He was nothing and as Saul of Tarsus I was everything. But on the road to Damascus I discovered that He became everything and I became nothing.*

Now I have such knowledge of Him that I no longer know Him from a human point of view which once I considered to be valid. Now, to me, to live is Christ.