

THE TERROR OF THE LORD

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10 – 15



~ In our previous report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, we began examining three motivating factors for serving God. God instructs us in His Word that we will be rewarded in Heaven in light of the way we serve Him down here on earth. We'll all be required to turn in a report to the Lord one day; you can just write that down. Some won't have a report prepared. Others will be full of unintelligible misspellings and misunderstandings. Jesus said, "*behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his works shall be.*" Well, Jesus is talking to those who are His own in this report – believers – and no one else....

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

¹¹ Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

¹² For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

~ See, we need to be ambitious to mind our own business; and we need to study to be quiet. That truth will make this leg of our safari rather brief. We should labor in the Lord's work in a way that makes us acceptable to Him. If you have an ambition to be a great somebody, like a great preacher, or a great teacher – or a great leader – then, my friends, you have already failed Christ Jesus. He isn't using that nonsense. We are only accepted in the Lord Jesus Christ our Beloved; but — there is a big difference between being accepted "IN" the Lord and being accepted "OF" the Lord. Being accepted

“*IN*” Christ refers to our standing before God. In Christ, we have all we need: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In Christ, God sees us as perfected; and complete. One cannot add to His completeness, either; one hundred percent is all there is. As such, we are accepted in the Beloved; even though we still must be changed to be like Him.

To be accepted “*OF*” Christ refers to our state of being right now down here as I type, and you read. What is your ambition today? Do you desire to be accepted “*OF*” Christ – or merely “*IN*” Christ? We’re not talking about crawling over others or stepping on fingers on the ladder of spiritual success in order to get to the top of God’s work. No, we have too many people in Christian work who only desire to make a name for themselves. This so-called safari isn’t interested in that. Preachers and teachers of the Word of God are not celebrities or outstanding men of renown; we’re servants. Anyone set aside for the service of the Lord Jesus Christ is going to have to decide if they want to be a great somebody or a servant. God only chooses the weak things of this earth for His service. Most men and women today are simply too strong to be used by the Lord. I see them come and go all the time.

Most people think their calling is to go do something great and profound for God; but God says, “*just be My servant.*” When we can allow the Lord to take us, break us, and do whatever He will with us – *THEN* we can do mighty things – but not until then. Jeremiah said, “*.... and seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.*” That’s Jeremiah chapter forty-five verse five, by the way. If that’s not clearly plain enough then I don’t know what would be? We have a lot of ambitious men and laymen in the ministry – revealing nothing in the world but the love of money and selfish ambition. Quite frankly, I’m just a little worried about this, personally. All I am and all I want to be is His servant. Are *YOU* doing something in this day in which we live that will enable God to say to you when you come into His presence, “*well done, thou good and faithful SERVANT!*”

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

~ Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men. Terror means “*fear*” — and there is a whole to be said about the fear of the Lord in the Word of God. We’re told the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom. Liberalism ALWAYS says, “... *we don’t need to be afraid of God.*” The writer to the Hebrews says, “... *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the True and Living God.*” That’s Hebrews chapter ten verse thirty-one. God is not an indulgent old grandpa sitting in senility in a rocking chair on the front porch of Heaven winking at your sins; make no mistake about that. God is Holy and Righteous; and there is only *ONE* way you’re going to be saved – *HIS* way. You’ll come His way, or you won’t come to Him at all, you may be absolutely sure.

We have too many pulpits today that have no sermons on hell, and never speak of punishment or judgment. That’s simply a lost note in Protestantism today. Jesus said, “*I have come to seek and to save that which is lost.*” I just don’t think most Christians today recognize they’re going to be held accountable for what they do or don’t do. Even so, we can declare the full counsel of God in a loving manner; we don’t have to always bring down thunder and lightning. Elijah loved the earthquake, and he loved the whirlwind – but God wasn’t in those things – God is in that still, small voice. We can state very clearly but simply that men are lost without commending ourselves. Humbling ourselves that way isn’t going to make us very popular, either. We have too much hard-lining or, the other extreme, the soft, soapy psychology that tells people how to become some well-adjusted human being. Well, either of those approaches are not Biblical; and anyone teaching those things doesn’t know the Lord Jesus Christ or understand the Bible – impossible.

Declaring the whole counsel of God should be motivation enough for anyone. We have too many missionaries pleading about the need in some

far away place; but they totally ignore those people in their own neighborhood. Well, we're rubbing shoulders every single day with people who are on their way straight to hell. I know some people think I am plum loco – but I am writing this Spiritual Safari for God Himself – and at His Personal commission, too, I might add. That all adds up to being for *YOUR* sake, friends. It is the love of Christ that constrains me. "*Constrain*" is a deeply misunderstood word; meaning motivation. That love for the Lord Jesus Christ is what constrained the apostle Paul to go out to the ends of the earth declaring Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

Well, verse fourteen means that all mankind is under a death sentence. In Adam, all died because of his deliberate disobedience to God; Adam took the entire human race down with him with one bite from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Gospel *MUST* be given out in the power of the Holy Spirit; and associated doctrine must include the total depravity of mankind. It simply cannot be otherwise. We live in a world comprised of nothing but lost men. Verse fifteen contains *ALL* of the facts of the Gospel as we know it. When we preach the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon all men who hear it to be reconciled to God. Today, God is telling you and me to be reconciled to Him this way. Are you?

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