

**Perseverance in Ministry**  
2 Corinthians 4: 13-15

Paul has affirmed that Christ must be the focus of our lives and ministries, central to all we do. Knowing the difficulties he and other believers faced, he sought to help them establish and maintain a proper perspective in trials and suffering. He was committed to being a positive witness and revealing Christ through his life, regardless of the circumstances.

These topics are easy enough to discuss, but often they are difficult to put into practice. We all have a desire to please the Lord, but often the flesh gets in the way. We each deal with adversity in life, and it is difficult to maintain a proper perspective. It is difficult to consistently seek positive aspects in our situations, while striving to maintain a Christian example for others to see. Life is hard, and in the midst of difficulty, the enemy likes to present the possibility of abandoning the work. He would like for us to assume our Christian journey is no longer worth the effort.

Paul dealt with these issues as well, but he was determined to keep his eyes on the prize and finish well for the Lord. He refused to allow difficult circumstances hinder or prevent his work. Our text today deals with the factors that kept Paul engaged in ministry. Let's take a moment to examine these three [factors](#) in the text as we consider: [Perseverance in Ministry](#).

**I. Motivation through Faith** (13) – [We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.](#) Notice the factors involved in Paul's motivation:

**A. Our Unity** (13a) – [We having the same spirit of faith...](#)Paul easily identified with the church, and in particular, the believers in Corinth. They shared a common faith. They served the same Lord. They were engaged in sharing the Gospel and reaching others for Christ. His faith and ministry was not isolated or individual. He identified with the church and was motivated to face whatever struggles necessary in order to guide and strengthen their faith.

- That alone should motivate every believer to continue for the Lord. We are not alone. We are not the only ones who face adversity. The church is made up of individuals who share a common faith and pursue a common goal. We cannot abandon the work without consequence. When one abandons their place of ministry, the whole body suffers. We must share each other's burdens and embrace the vision for the good of the entire body.

**B. Our Priority** (13b) – [I believed, and therefore have I spoken](#). Paul reveals the impact faith had on his life and how it motivates his actions. He could not keep the Gospel message to himself. He had received grace in abundance; grace that changed his life and has the power to change others. Even if he wanted to suppress the Gospel, he couldn't. He was compelled to share truth with everyone he could. His priority in life was telling others of the grace of our Lord.

- That should be the believer's priority. Now I know we can't speak of the Gospel in every conversation we have, but we must make Jesus the priority. Rather than an occasional mention of the Lord and His saving grace, we ought to share it frequently, at every opportunity. We have received the same salvation and share the same obligation.

**C. Our Conformity** (13c) – [we also believe, and therefore speak](#). Paul now reveals the natural motivation and response of a believer to the grace they have received. Their faith in the Lord motivates their consistent testimony. This becomes easier and more natural as we grow in the faith and conform to the image of Christ. For Paul, sharing the Gospel was as natural as breathing. He was seeing that same motivation in other believers as well.

- When we consider what Paul is saying here, it is convicting. Speaking of the Lord and sharing our faith ought to come natural to the believer. I know we all don't have the gift of evangelism, but our conformity to Christ will motivate us to speak of Him. You don't have to be around someone very long to discover what they are passionate about. If you listen, they will tell you – grandkids, sports, politics, etc...I pray our faith will motivate us to speak of our loving, gracious Savior. We have heard the phrase lately, "Share the Gospel, and if necessary, use words." I understand the principle behind that, but it is not good doctrine. Humanity needs to hear of the saving grace of Christ. Granted they need to see it modeled, but they also need to hear! It's like saying, "Feed the hungry, and if necessary, use food."

**II. Anticipation by Faith** (14) – [Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you](#). Another factor that helped Paul persevere in ministry was his anticipation in the Lord by faith. Consider:

**A. The Acceptance** (14a) – [Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus](#). He speaks of the resurrection of Christ from the dead by the power of God. He knew that the wages of sin is death. Being born in sin, we all were separated and condemned of God. Because of our condemned state, we were destined for eternal death and separation from God. Through Christ we escape the penalty of death and have the assurance of acceptance by God through our faith in Christ. Not only are we forgiven of sin, we are reconciled to God and promised

eternal life in Christ! We are accepted of God, placed within His family, through our relationship with the Son. Because of Christ, we have the privilege of eternal life in the presence of the Lord.

- Being accepted of God, added to the beloved, ought to serve as motivation to persevere for Him. Christ gave Himself the atoning sacrifice for sin. He resurrected victorious over death and the grave. We have the promise of eternal life in Him. We will spend far longer with the Lord in eternity than we will in these bodies of flesh. Our time is limited to serve the Lord here on earth. Our acceptance by Him should motivate us to a life of committed service.

**B. The Appearance (14b)** – [Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.](#) The promise of eternal life, resurrected in Christ is real for every believer. Paul assured those in Corinth, who had believed in Christ, that they would be presented with Paul as they stood before the Lord. Just as he would be accepted of the Lord, so would they. This promise was not reserved for a select few, but promised to all the saved. They would be gathered together to meet the Lord in the air, and so would they ever be with the Lord.

- Having the promise of eternal life is enough to motivate our service, but the promise of eternal life for others should genuinely motivate us. Christ came to save whosoever. None are beyond the reach of grace. All the saved will spend eternity with the Lord. We have the awesome privilege of telling others how they too can experience salvation and receive eternal life! We will join those saints who have gone before us. There will be a grand reunion of the redeemed in heaven! I want to press on for the glory of God and the good of others.

**III. Gratification in Faith (15)** – [For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.](#) Life and ministry were difficult for Paul, but he never lost his joy. He maintained faith in the Lord and was continually thankful for the opportunities he enjoyed. Notice:

**A. The Consideration (15a)** – [For all things are for your sakes.](#) Regardless of the severity or length of a trial, Paul remained focused on the big picture. He knew he was not alone in the journey, and there was much more at stake than his personal comfort. Paul in essence declares, if enduring trials will benefit the church, he was more than happy to face them. If their faith increased due to his perseverance, then it was all worthwhile. If his suffering helped advance the Gospel to those who had not heard, he was happy to suffer.

- Such consideration is lacking in the modern church. Most have the attitude: all things are for my benefit and pleasure. They are unwilling to agree to anything that is considered outside

their comfort zone, even if it benefits the church. Most are willing to engage in ministry efforts as long as it's convenient. Few are willing to make much of a sacrifice for the benefit of others. We need to share the passion and consideration Paul had for others!

**B. The Contribution** (15b) – *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.* Paul realized glorifying the Lord was of utmost importance. If he suffered patiently, influencing others, their lives would also be lived with thanksgiving for the Lord, while offering praise to Him. He wanted to contribute to the lives of others while also bringing honor to the Lord.

- The word redound is an interesting word. It literally means “to exceed a fixed number of measure, to be left over and above a certain number; to overflow.” It was used to describe a flower that went from a bud to full bloom. It was the same word that was used to describe the leftovers of the little boy's lunch after Jesus fed the multitudes.<sup>i</sup> Our lives have great potential to influence others in the faith and bring glory to Christ our Lord. The longer we serve Him, the greater our witness and worship should become. Don't you want to make a lasting contribution to the work of the Lord? Don't you want to have a positive influence on others that brings glory to the Lord? We must endure faithfully if we are to achieve that goal.

**Conclusion:** Paul was motivated to continue for the Lord. His motivation was encouraged by the great anticipation he had for the Lord's return and the blessed assurance of eternal life. Through all he had faced, he continued to serve the Lord faithfully. He longed to reach others while living pleasing to the Lord.

Do we share his motivation to serve the Lord? Is Jesus really our priority? Are we living in light of His soon return? Are our decisions based on the big picture or personal wants and desires? Jesus deserves our best. We must strive to give our best. Are there needs in your life? Do you have the assurance of salvation? If not I recommend you respond to the Lord's call today.

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<sup>i</sup> Mattoon's Treasures - Mattoon's Treasures – Treasures from 2 Corinthians.