

THE MOTIVATION THAT FUELS THE PASSION TO PERSUADE

INTRODUCTION

As was said in a previous Session, 2 Cor. 5:11 speaks of *the terror of the Lord* because we all must appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ (v. 10). That *terror* of facing the Judgement Seat of Christ fuels a passion for evangelism.

However the word *evangelism* is not used. Instead the word *persuade* is used and, in the Greek, this word has an interesting background in Greek mythology. *Peitho* was *the goddess of persuasion* and the patron goddess of *the art of persuasion*. Paul was motivated to be passionately committed to *persuade*, or *convince*, people about Christ. To persuade others requires skills with words, debate and arguments (without rancour), so that the listener is convinced, without a shadow of doubt, that your point of view is the correct one. The word *persuade* needs to be more frequently used in our conversations about evangelism. We are content with sharing the Gospel message and testimonies without a passionate desire that the listener should be convinced. Hence our presentation are inadequate in prayerful preparation or our own hearts, the content we are going to share and our skills and abilities in communication. We are not committed to developing ourselves in evangelistic skills.

The context of the passage is about the Gospel which is centred around Christ. Paul has made the point about his honesty and clean conscience before God and that he is not trying to make an impression of himself. Paul then states the reality of the *Judgement of Believers*. That reality causes a sense of terror which motivates Paul to want to persuade people about Christ. He himself does not want to become a hindrance or an obstacle for people to trust in Christ.

Scholars differ on whether the Judgement Paul feels terror about is the Bema Seat Judgement of Believers or The Great White Throne Judgement of the unregenerate? In either case the terror of impending Judgement motivates Paul's desire to persuade men to believe in Christ.

My personal view is that this *the terror of the Lord* Paul is experiencing is about his own judgement at the *Bema Seat of Christ*. Verse 10 is clearly about the *Bema Seat Judgement*. I am open to being corrected. However, both Judgements motivate evangelistic zeal.

The Great White Throne Judgment Also Motivates us To Evangelize.

While *The Bema Seat Judgement of Believers* motivates us to be passionate about sharing the Gospel with others, the delay in Christ's Return and the impending Judgement of the unbelievers also gives the same impetus.

2 Pet. 3:3-13

³knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴They will say, "*Where is the promise of his coming?*" For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But *by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.* ⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹*The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* ¹⁰But *the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.* ¹¹Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, *what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,* ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

God's main purpose in delaying the Return of His Son and *the Day of Judgement* is because He longs for the salvation of the lost (v. 9). The passage makes a strong pointed conclusion for believers in v. 11b. Knowing the facts of destruction on the Day of Judgement when the fierce wrath of God will be finally unleashed on the unrepentant of the earth we need to live our lives in holiness and godliness anticipating that Day. That circumspect lifestyle is to reflect God's concern for the salvation of those still lost. If God's patience for the repentance of sinners makes Him delay Christ's Return we too, as those who belong to Him, must take full advantage of the time of waiting to tell others about Jesus. The message of Christ's Death and Resurrection is the only hope for sinners to be saved from condemnation on the Day of Judgement.

There are related facts that add to our zeal to persuade men and women towards faith in Christ.

- **The Lostness of Sinners Without Christ**

Man is really lost for all eternity without Christ. The Bible specifies some pertinent truths about all those without Christ. These truths are unpalatable to the proud, self-confident human minds of men who react in fierce anger and hatred of God, His Word and any who would dare to hold these views.

Eph. 2:11-12

¹¹Therefore *remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—* ¹²*remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

All those who are outside Christ are without the revelation of God and His promises given to Israel and therefore need to be given information and taught these things. The logical and obvious conclusion is that all religions derived from outside of the Old and New Testament teaching are not only inadequate but *false*. The text goes so far as to state that such people have *no hope* and *are without God* in the world. That sounds awfully divisive, but it is true. Therefore, we who are privileged recipients of the grace of God, must be even more motivated than usual to share these truths with those ignorant of them.

Scripture speaks of the *depravity* and *ignorance* or *darkness* of the human mind as part of the *depravity* and sinfulness of all mankind. Only Christ can give deliverance from such bondage to sin.

Eph. 4:17-19

¹⁷Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that *you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.* ¹⁸*They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.* ¹⁹*They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

- **The Only Provision for Salvation is Christ**

The Bible teaches a logically connected truth. If it is a fact that those outside of Christ are so hopelessly lost then the only provision for their deliverance must be Christ. This is not a harsh truth when we understand the *magnanimity* of Almighty God in sending His Son to save us. He took on human flesh, experienced human frailties for 33 years – being tempted in all points just as we are and remaining sinless in His humanity. All this He did to be the perfect, sinless, sacrifice and offer Himself as our Substitute to pay the penalty of our guilt and be the propitiation for our sins, to remove the wrath of God against us. Therefore He alone is the door and gateway to salvation from sins and eternal life and hope.

Jn. 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through me.*"

Acts 4:12

And **there is salvation in no one else**, for there is **no other name under heaven** given among men by which we must be saved.

2 Tim. 2:5-6

⁵For **there is one God**, and **there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**, ⁶**who gave himself as a ransom for all**, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

Only the Lord Jesus Christ died and rose again specifically for the salvation and deliverance of sinners from their slavery to sin. No other person has ever made such a claim. The Timothy passage quoted above points this out – Jesus is the only One Who gave Himself as a ransom for sinners to be saved. Therefore He is the only Mediator between the one true God and sinful man. This too must motivate us to persuade men towards Christ.

- **The Reality of Eternal Hell**

The Bible emphatically teaches that there is only one life which normally ends in physical death. After death there is a *Day of Judgement* when only one thing is decided – whether one is sent to eternal heaven or eternal hell. The Bible mentions and describes hell frequently and the reality of an eternal hell that separates anyone from God forever and ever must cause us to be sacred to death that anyone would end up there.

Is. 66:24

And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For **their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched**, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.

Dan. 12:2

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and **some to shame and everlasting contempt**.

Mt. 18:8-9

⁸And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the **eternal fire**. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into **the hell of fire**.

Mk. 9:43-48

⁴³And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go **to hell**, to the **unquenchable fire**. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into **hell**. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into **hell**, ⁴⁸**'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'**

2 Thess. 1:7-9

⁷and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸**in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. ⁹**They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,**

Jude 1:6-7; 12-13

⁶And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness **until the judgment of the great day**—⁷just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing **a punishment of eternal fire**. ...

¹²These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, **for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever**.

Rev. 14:9-11

⁹And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he also will **drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger; and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹**And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night**, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

Rev. 20:10; 14-15

¹⁰**and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

¹⁴Then Death and Hades were thrown into **the lake of fire**. This is the second death, **the lake of fire**. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into **the lake of fire**.

The dread and dreadfulness of this eternal separation from a loving God must persuade us to want to persuade those whom we love to turn to Christ before it is too late.

CONCLUSION

There is much encouragement in the Scriptures for us who have tasted the Lord and His grace in so great and precious salvation, to be deeply and genuinely concerned to help people understand the Gospel. We who know all that Scripture teaches, both of the wonderful things that those who trust Christ receive as well as the terrible destruction of those who reject Christ must want, like Paul, to persuade men to believe. I love the following Bible story:

2 Kgs. 7:3-9

³Now there were *four men who were lepers* at the entrance to the gate. And they said to one another, “*Why are we sitting here until we die?*” ⁴If we say, ‘Let us enter the city,’ *the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. So now come, let us go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they spare our lives we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die.*” ⁵So they arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians. But when they came to the edge of the camp of the Syrians, behold, there was no one there. ⁶For the Lord had made the army of the Syrians hear the sound of chariots and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, “Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to come against us.” ⁷So they fled away in the twilight and abandoned their tents, their horses, and their donkeys, leaving the camp as it was, and fled for their lives. ⁸And *when these lepers came to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent and ate and drank, and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and went and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent and carried off things from it and went and hid them.* ⁹*Then they said to one another, “We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news. If we are silent and wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come; let us go and tell the king's household.”*