

# Motivation of Spiritual Ministry

by Stephen Kaung

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*The motivation of spiritual ministry is rooted in the terror of the Lord and the love of Christ.*

**Duration:** 51:07

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 5:9-12, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Ephesians 6:5-8

**Topics:** "Ministry"

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## Description

The sermon transcript emphasizes the importance of serving God's will from the heart and with good will. It highlights the idea that our service will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ, where our works and actions will be examined. The sermon encourages believers to serve with fear and trembling, motivated by love for Christ. It also references the story in John chapter 21 where Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him before entrusting him with the ministry of caring for His flock.

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## Transcript

We will please turn to Second Corinthians, Chapter 5. Second Corinthians, Chapter 5. We'll begin with verse 9. Second Corinthians, Chapter 5, verse 9. Therefore also we are zealous, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to Him. For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of the Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade man.

But having manifested to God, and I hope also that we have been manifested in your consciences. For we do not again command ourselves to you, but we are giving to your occasion a boast in our behalf, that ye may have such with those boasting in the countenance and not in heart. For whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God, or are sober, it is for you.

For the love of the Christ constrains us, having judged this, that one died for all, and all have died, and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and so has been raised. Maybe we'll just read this much. May we look to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we do praise and thank Thee that we may come together to read Thy word. Now we just ask that Thou wilt breathe upon Thy word, and make Thy word living and operative in our lives. We do desire that Thy word shall have its full result in our lives, that Thou mayst have all the praise and glory.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, Amen. We have been fellowshiping together on this matter of spiritual ministry. We mentioned that the nature of spiritual ministry is to write the letter of Christ.

In other words, true ministry is to impart Christ to others. And then we also mentioned about this matter of the secret of spiritual ministry, and the secret is in brokenness. We have this treasure in the earthen vessel, and as this treasure is being broken, then the radiancy of the treasure within is manifested.

And it is for this reason that you'll find Paul says, always bearing in the body the dying of Jesus. That the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies, and also in other people. In this process of being broken, the outward man is continually consumed, but the inward man is renewed day by day.

Here you'll find the Apostle Paul touches upon this matter of suffering. You know, suffering is a mystery. But here you'll find Paul says, if we suffer for Christ's sake, if we suffer for the sake of the ministry, it is very productive.

This suffering that we must suffer for the sake of Christ, and for the sake of his ministry, is momentary and light, in comparison with the eternal weight of glory that shall be manifested. If we see the unseen, then we are able to appreciate suffering. You know, if we only see what is visible, we will never appreciate suffering, because all we can see is the consuming of the outward man.

But if we are able to see the unseen, that is, we are able to see our inward man is being renewed day by day, then we know that suffering actually works for us, not against us. The light and momentary affliction works for us, the eternal weight of glory. But of course, as we suffer, we groan in this body.

We long that one day we may be enclosed of this earthly tabernacle, and be closed with that eternal house out of heaven. That is to say, when we are still in this body, we groan under sufferings. We long that we may be delivered out of this mortal body, and be closed with that immortal body, resurrection body.

As long as we are in this body, physically, we are absent from the Lord. But if we are absent from this body, then we will be present with the Lord. And that's the reason why you'll find, on the one hand, there is always that longing that we may be closed with the eternal house out of heaven.

And we will be with Him forever. And yet, on the other hand, it is in this body that we are able to be trained. We are able to be trained to minister and to serve.

It is in this body that we are prepared for our eternal ministry in eternity to come. Now, if we are careless about our time in this body, and learn to minister and to serve, then we miss the opportunity of preparation. So, brothers and sisters, let us remember that.

Even though in this body we groan and we long to be delivered, and yet, it is in this body that we learn to minister and to serve as a preparation for eternity. In eternity, we shall all minister unto God. We shall all serve, but the preparation is made today.

So, let us not miss our opportunity. Now, this morning we would like to continue on with spiritual ministry. The motivation of spiritual ministry.

What motivates us to minister? To minister to God? To minister to the body of Christ? And in this chapter you will find Paul mentions two things. Number one, the terror of the Lord. And number two, the love of Christ.

True ministry is motivated by these two things. The terror of the Lord and the love of Christ. Paul says, Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, but have been manifested to God.

In other words, as we minister, we minister as unto the Lord. It is not just an outward appearance. It is something that is real, as before God himself.

Why? Because we know that one day we shall all appear at the judgment seat of Christ. Now, probably for some, we may have to say a little bit more. You know, we who have believed in the Lord Jesus, whose names are written in the book of life, we who have been saved, we who have received forgiveness and eternal life, we will not appear before the great white throne to be judged as to whether we shall live or we shall die eternally.

In other words, we who have believed in the Lord Jesus, we will not be before the great white throne that one day will set up to judge all the dead. Why? Because we who believe in the Lord Jesus have passed out of judgment, out of death into life. Christ has been judged for us, and we shall not be judged at that judicial judgment of the great white throne of God.

But that does not mean that we who have believed in the Lord Jesus, we who are God's children, we who are in the family of God, that we shall not be judged at all. Now, I hope, brothers and sisters, you can see this. On the one hand, we who believe in the Lord Jesus, judgment has passed over us.

Christ is our Passover. We will not be judged. At the great white throne, to decide whether we will live or die eternally, that is already taken care of by the cross of our Lord Jesus.

But we who are now in the family of God, we who are now God's children, as well as God's servants, there will still be judgment for us. But this is not the judicial judgment of the great white throne. It is the family judgment of the judgment seat of Christ.

You know, there is a great difference here. The throne is judicial in nature. It decides eternal death or eternal life.

But judgment seat, in Greek, it is Bhima. Seat is Bhima. Now, what is a seat of Bhima? In the Orient, they have large families, like a clan.

And you know, the family ties are very, very close. All the members of the family are responsible for the name of that family. Therefore, from time to time, the head of the family will gather all the members of the family in a great room, for a family meeting.

And in that great room, there will be a lifted floor on one side. And that lifted floor is called Bhima, seat. And this is the seat where the head of the family will sit.

And all the members of the family will be called before him. None but the members of the family can attend. If you are not a member of the family, you are not able to attend that family conference.

Only those members of the family will attend that conference. And at that time, if any member of the family has done something that brings glory to the family, he will be rewarded. And if any member of the family has done something to disgrace the name of the family, he will be reprimanded and even punished, disciplined.

But remember, it is just a family judgment. It is not a judgment of life or death. It is a judgment of reward or loss.

Therefore, you'll find, brothers and sisters, not only our lives after we become children of God must be judged, our works, our service, our ministries must also be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. One day, all of us shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And there we will be judged according to the way we live and according to the way we serve.

If we build with gold, silver and precious stones, we shall be rewarded. If we build with wood, stubble and hay, it shall be burned. We shall suffer loss, but barely saved.

Both our lives, how do we live? Both our end, our works, how do we serve? They shall all be examined, scrutinized, judged by our Lord Jesus at the judgment seat of Christ. That each may receive the things done in the body according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil. Now, because of this, brothers and sisters, in view of the judgment seat of Christ, there is the terror of the Lord within us.

It moves us to fear and trembling. That our service may be pleasing to him. That it may not be just an eye service, trying to please man.

But we may serve with fear and trembling and with simplicity as unto the Lord. In other words, as we minister with whatever God has given to us, to one another, we are not doing it as just an eye service. We are not doing it with ulterior motives.

We are doing it as unto the Lord and for him to see and to please. And this is the meaning of the terror of the Lord. The terror of the Lord here is not the fear of a slave under bondage.

That is under the old covenant. You know, under the old covenant, people are in constant fear. Why? Because if they do not keep the commandments, then they are cursed.

Therefore, they fear and tremble all their lives under bondage. But brothers and sisters, there is the terror of the Lord, which belongs to the new covenant and not the old covenant. In other words, we are in fear and trembling, but not as slaves under compulsory service.

We are in fear and trembling because we love Him, we want to please Him. We are in fear and trembling lest in any way we may displease Him. So our service is a service of love.

It is just like in Deuteronomy chapter 15, you will find if a man is poor, a Hebrew man is poor, a woman, and he sold himself to another Hebrew, he shall serve him for six years. And during that six years, he was under compulsory service, because he was bought with a price. But if during the six years, a relationship began to build up between the master and the slave, and at the end of six years that he could go out free.

And not only go out free, but his master has to give him things. But he came to the master and said, I love the master. I love your family.

I do not want to go out free. I want to serve you for life. And this man will be taken, or woman, will be taken to the door post, and will have the ear pierced.

And after his ear is pierced, he becomes a slave of love for life. And the service from here on is different. It is no longer as a slave in bondage, but it is a slave in love.

It is no longer compulsory service, it is love service. So brothers and sisters, we who are children of God, we are also God's born slaves. But not as under bondage, but as under love.

And how we need to serve, willingly, voluntarily, with simplicity, in fear and trembling, consider only one thing, that we may not displease Him. On the contrary, we may please Him in all our service. That is the terror of the Lord.

Paul's exhortation to slaves is applicable to us, who are serving the Lord. You know, in Ephesians, chapter six, he said, Born men, obey masters according to flesh, with fear and trembling, in simplicity of your heart as to the Christ, not with eye service as man-pleasers, but as born men of Christ, doing the will of God from the soul, serving with good will as to the Lord, and not to man, knowing that whatever good each shall do, this he shall receive of the Lord, whether born or free. We are love slaves of Christ.

Therefore we shall serve Him with fear and trembling, in simplicity of heart, with singleness of heart. There is no ulterior motive. We just love Him, and therefore we want to serve Him.

And how do we serve? Not with eye service, as man-pleasers. Not for men to see, but to serve as from our heart. And what is our service? To do the will of God from the soul.

Do the will of God from the soul, that is to say, from our heart. We do the will of God willingly and heartily, serving with good will, cheerfully, to the Lord. And if we serve in this manner, we shall receive our reward.

And this is the terror of the Lord. So, brothers and sisters, as we minister to one another, as unto the Lord, we shall always have the light of the judgment seat of Christ in view. As if today, the light of that judgment seat is already shone upon us, to manifest whether it is pleasing to God, or whether it is not.

We shall always have that light before us. I remember George Whitefield said, when he preached the gospel, you know, George Whitefield was a great evangelist, and he said, every time he preached the gospel, he preached with eternity in view. In other words, he was not doing it just for that moment.

He was doing it with eternity in view. What will eternity judge? What will eternity tell? He is not just for immediate result, success. But he preached with eternity in mind.

What will eternity tell? Will these souls be in eternity? In like manner, as we minister Christ to one another, brothers and sisters, we shall always have the judgment seat of Christ in view. What if today, your ministry is examined by the light of the judgment seat of Christ? Will this be burned up, or will it be manifested and rewarded? So this should be one motivation of spiritual service. Whether you are ministering the word of God, whether you are sharing Christ with other people, whether you are praying for souls, whether you are helping people with their problems, or whether you are just doing some physical work, arranging chairs, tables, or whether you are cooking, or in the kitchen, or you are taking care of your children, or your family, or whether you are working in the office, brothers and sisters, when we are doing all these things, we are ministering unto the Lord, as unto the Lord.

And when we are doing these things, have the light of the judgment seat of Christ before you. Always with the judgment seat of Christ before you. And if you have that before you, the terror of the Lord is there.

Why? Because you are zealous. The word zealous there, in the original, means you are ambitious. You know, sometimes people say, can we Christian have ambition? People say, well, after a person becomes a Christian, then he is no good, because he does not have any ambition anymore.

You know, people in this world are ambitious, they want to get higher and higher, more and more. But we Christians, after we believe in the Lord Jesus, we are so satisfied with the Lord, that people say, well, you have no ambition anymore, you are finished. Oh, brothers and sisters, no.

Christians are the most ambitious people in the whole world. Why? Because our ambition is much higher than the ambition that anybody else can have in this world. What they are ambitious for? Maybe they want to be the President of the United States.

Or they maybe want to be the world ruler. They want the whole world. That is their ambition.

And you may not get it. But the ambition of a Christian is that we may please God. By life or by death, that we may please Him.

Brothers and sisters, is there a higher ambition than this one? Because if we are ambitious to please Him, you know, it is for eternity, not for time. And He will never pass away. Why? Because we are ambitious that we may please Him.

Therefore, the terror of the Lord is with us. Lest we displease Him. Lest we do something that is not up to His light.

So this is the first thing. And the second thing is, we are motivated in our spiritual ministry by the love of Christ. You know, the terror of the Lord and the love of Christ are not contradictory.

They are complementary. If you love a person so much, on the one hand, perfect love casts out fear. The fear there is fear to be punished.

But if you love a person so much, there is a holy fear in you. And the holy fear is, you are afraid lest you displease Him. So you find the terror of the Lord and the love of Christ are complementary.

They are not contradictory. In spiritual ministry, it is not motivated by duty alone. If we are only motivated by duty, we become professionals.

But in spiritual ministry, we must be motivated by love. By love. Don't be a professional.

Be amateur all your life. We must be motivated by love. The love of Christ constrains us.

Therefore, we do it. Love is the foundation of ministry. You remember, in John chapter 21, when our Lord Jesus was going to commit to Peter a ministry.

Why? The Lord was going to tell Peter that He was to take care of His flock. Feed His lamb. Shepherd His sheep.

And feed His sheep. In other words, the Lord was going to commit a ministry to Peter. That He might serve God's flock.

Whether they are lambs, little sheep need to be fed. Or they are grown up sheep to be shepherds. Or they may be sick sheep that need to be fed too.

But you find that the Lord was going to commit to Peter the care of His flock. And when the Lord was going to commit to Peter this ministry, all that the Lord asked Him was one thing. Do you love Me? The Lord did not ask how capable you are.

The Lord just asked, do you love Me? Do you love Me? Do you love Me more than these things? Do you love Me? Love is the motivation of ministry. If you love the Lord, you will love His flock. If you love the Lord, you will love His church.

If you love the Lord, you will serve the body of Christ. Now it is true, our love probably is just an emotion. Because our love is just an emotion, it changes.

It is easily exhausted. So when our Lord asked Peter, do you love Me? And the word that the Lord used is agape. Do you love Me with the love of God? With that pure, selfless, absolute love of God? Do you love Me with that kind of love? Peter had learned his lesson.

He knew how undependable was his own love. Which was just an emotion. It fluctuated.

It was exhausted. So he said, Lord, You know. You know.

You know I am attached to You. I cannot say I love You with that absolute love. But, oh, if only Your love would draw me.

I am attached to You. I am willing to follow You. And the Lord said, feed My lamb.

Do you love Me more than these things? The fire? The fish? The loaf? The companions? Do you love Me more than these things? And Peter dare not say that he loved the Lord with that absolute love. He said, Lord, You know. If Your love would draw me, I am attached to You.

I am willing to follow You. And the Lord said, shepherd. And the third time the Lord said, do you love Me? The Lord did not use that word agape.

The Lord used Peter's word, feel. Are you attached to Me? Really attached to Me? And Peter was grieved in his heart. Because he could not rise above himself.

He could only say, Lord, You know. You know. I am attached to You.

Brothers and sisters. We do not have that love. The love of God.

Our love is too emotional. Too soulish. Too changeable.

Too easily exhausted. Oh, if only we realize that we don't. But He has.

He will shed His love abroad in our heart. By His Spirit. The love of Christ.

He will use His love to draw us. And as His love constrains us. Then brothers and sisters.

We know that we cannot live for ourselves. We must live for Him. How many of us are still living for ourselves? If we are constrained by the love of Christ.

Knowing that He died for all. That all may die. And He lives.

That we may live for Him. And not for ourselves anymore. And this includes our ministry.

If we really live for Him. Then we live for His people. If we really love Him.

Then we love the body of Christ. So brothers and sisters. Our ministry has to be.

Motivated by the love of Christ. It is because of Christ's love in us. That we minister.

If we put it in a negative sense. Often times we fail to minister. We refuse to minister.

Why? Because there is the lack of love. If there is love. There will be ministry.

You remember on the last day. Before our Lord was betrayed. There He met with His disciples.

In that upper room. For the Passover feast. And there was no one to wash one another's feet.

Because this was such a lowly service. It was a service of a slave girl. And therefore you will find none of the disciples felt that they could do it.

It would be below their dignity to do it. And nobody would do it. And our Lord Jesus.

He loved His own. To the uttermost. And because He loved His own to the uttermost.

Even though He knew He was their Lord. And yet. He took off His clothes.

Gird Himself with a towel. Pour the water in the basin. And He washed His disciples dirty feet.

And the Lord said. As I have done to you, do to one another. Love one another.

As I have loved you. Brothers and sisters. Often times.

We refuse to minister to one another. It is because. There is no love there.

If there is love. We are willing to go. To the very end.

We are willing to minister. In the lowest fashion. Love is willing.

To take the lowest place. If. It will help our brothers and sisters.

To be refreshed. In the Lord. Love.

Is the motivation. Love is not only the motivation. But love is also the way.

To serve. If we want to minister to one another. We must minister in love.

You know 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Shows us that in the body of Christ. There are many members.

And to each member. Gift or gifts. Are being given.

That these members. May minister to one another. For the building up of the body of Christ.

Then in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. You will find the body in function. When the brethren.

Gather together. Some may have a song. Some may have an interpretation of tongues.

Some may have this and some may have that. In other words. As the body gathers together.

Then everyone will bring in what God has given to each. There will be that pouring forth. That functioning together.

Of all the gifts and grace that God has given to the body. This is body ministry. But.  
In order that this body ministry may be edifying. May really be building up. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13.  
You will find that chapter on love. There is that more excellent way. In other words.  
God has given each gift or gifts. God has given each grace. That is life.  
And. If you have life. If you have gift.  
There is a ministry. For you. To minister to the body of Christ.  
But. As you minister. Remember.  
The way to minister. Is love. If there is no love.  
When you minister. It is like clanging cymbals. Empty.  
It will not build up. The body of Christ. Now look at the Corinthian church.  
They have all these gifts. And they are so anxious to manifest their gifts. And the result was.  
It was just chaotic. Chaotic. Why they are building themselves.  
They are not building the body of Christ. There is no love there. But if there is love.  
If we minister in love. Brothers and sisters. There is reality there.  
Then you will find Christ is being imparted. And the body of Christ will be built up. Even when sometimes  
you have to.  
Give a word. Of warning. Or even you have to share a word.  
Of blame. Of reproach. If it is in love.  
There is power. Behind it. There is authority.  
Behind it. So brothers and sisters. As we think of the motivations.  
Of spiritual ministry. We have to remember. These two things.  
The terror. Of the Lord. And the love.  
Of Christ. If we always have the judgment seat of Christ before us. That will put a fear and trembling in us.  
Lest we serve. In our natural strength. Without human wisdom.  
Or for our own glory. Lest we just do it. As eye service.  
To please man. Brothers and sisters. If we have the terror of the Lord within us.  
It will keep us. From doing something. That is just superficial.  
That our ministry. May be real. As unto God.

And yet at the same time. It shall always be. Motivated by love.  
Never just by duty. By love. Love of Christ constrains us.  
Therefore we love the brethren. And we love. To serve them.  
Even to wash. One another's feet. But as we wash.  
Remember. Wash it with love. So I remember one sister once said.  
When you wash your brothers and sisters feet. Do not wash them in icy water. Or in boiling water.  
You know. If you do not love them. You give them icy water.  
Or boiling water. You do more damage. If you love them.  
You will wash them. In with such love. That they will be built up.  
In Christ. And these are the motivations. Of spiritual ministry.  
So may the Lord help us. Shall we pray. Our Heavenly Father.  
We do praise and thank Thee. Because. Thou has put us in the body of Christ.  
Not just as a member. But Thou has called us. To fulfill the body ministry.  
That we may. Build up one another. In love.  
That the body of Christ may be matured. And hasten. The return.  
Of the bridegroom. Oh our Father we do ask Thee. That we may be people.  
Who are not just passive. But we may have that ambition. To please Thee.  
We pray oh Lord. That as we. Learn to minister.  
To one another. That we may always be under the light. Of the judgment seat of Christ.  
And we may always be motivated. Constrained. By the love of Christ.  
Oh deliver us. From just. Eye service.  
Deliver us. From just. Out of duty.  
We want. Our whole life. And our whole ministry.  
Be acceptable. In Thy sight. In the name of our Lord Jesus.  
Amen.

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