***Mixed Motives in the Lord's Service  
  
No. 2 - PH19-02  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:15-18***

We continue looking this morning at Philippians 1:15-18. Part of the great blindness which Satan has been able to impose successfully on Christian people is blindness relative to the nature of a church service. The vast majority of church services that are being conducted today are being conducted on a basis of purely human traditions. This includes things which are not in Scripture; things that no one knows where they originated; and, procedures and techniques and concepts which are followed zealously and religiously with the idea that somehow this is the way God wants it to be. There is a great disorientation concerning what a church service is all about, and Satan is responsible for this. Therefore, most Christians will attend church services all over this nation, and that is absolutely not worth the time that they've invested in it. They will attend church services and somehow feel that God is pleased by what they do. God would be far more pleased if they didn't attend most of those services, and if they had nothing to do with them.

**Pastors**

Yet, in spite of this disorientation, it is interesting to note that the most uninformed person (the most uninformed man on the street) has some very definitive opinions concerning what church is all about, and what church services are all about. He is quite ready to share great insights with you concerning this matter. The most uninformed person has a great deal to say about the pastor itself. You can ask the average church member, and he will be very quick to tell you what a pastor should be. He has some definite ideas of a pastor's personality. They usually say that he should certainly be friendly. Whoever heard of an unfriendly pastor? He should certainly be non-offensive. He should be positive. He should be a promoter. He should be a go-getter. Above all, he should be smiling. All of this constitutes what God wants a pastor to be. I know that you have many things which, if I invited your contributions, you could also supply, because you know what a pastor should be. These are not true at all.

People know what his speech should be. It should be pontifical. It should be religious, and maybe oratorical. However, above all else, it should be sweet. They have an idea of how he should be dressed. They usually think that he should wear a clerical collar. Some think we should wear robes. There are definite opinions concerning how you should dress. And concerning his duties, they can wax eloquent on what the duties of a pastor are. Certainly he should visit. Seminary teaches you that you should go by and visit your members; sit down with them; open the Bible; read the Bible to them; and, pray with them. I often used to think, "Now isn't that something? Just think how much time that involves. If you have any number of members at all, just think how much time you'd be spending during the day driving around to somebody's house to read the Bible, unless they're all a bunch of illiterates and can't read for themselves." This is called pastoral theology, and this is what you are taught as part of what the pastor should be doing. You can imagine the darkness that Satan has imposed upon people concerning what a pastor should be doing.

He should find new members; he should raise money; and, on and on. How should his preaching be? Well, his preaching should be challenging. It should center on the gospel. It should be non-condemning. This is one of the favorite phrases. By "non-condemning," it means "non-meddling." There is a phrase that says, "You've stopped preaching and started meddling," when the raw nerves of the old sin nature have been touched upon.

People have very definite opinions about a pastor's social life. He should attend everybody's thing. He certainly should attend the early morning breakfast with the other professional pastors. As a matter of fact, you pick up a lot of bad habits from other pastors at such meetings. It's good to avoid them. They have definite ideas about his authority. He is certainly to be subject to the church boards. He is to be everybody's patsy. When the doormats wear out at the church entrances, he can always substitute for that. They have definite ideas on his being subject to the opinions like the ladies' auxiliary, enthusiastic, undermining aid society of the local church. They have opinions about how much he should have; how he should spend; and, you can go on and on with this. There's no end. You can see the opinions people have concerning the pastor and what he should do, and most of it is wrong. Most of it is exactly what the devil wants you to believe. Most of it, sadly enough, is what pastors tolerate and do. Consequently, the people of God are robbed of their spiritual heritage. The most magnificent thing that God has given us is His revelation (His Word), and it's all deluded and confused and distorted and put under the cover by the fact that the pastor doesn't know who or what he is, and how to function in his local church.

**The Local Church**

People certainly have their opinions concerning the church program. This includes social services. We must have breakfasts and dinners. We should have handcraft classes and welfare services. One of the favorite opinions concerning what churches do is if that you're supposed to have a counseling service. We should wrap bandages. We should send baskets out at Thanksgiving. That's the church program. One of the most obnoxious opinions (and one of the most disoriented) is that the pastor should find himself five or six key people in the church, and spend all of his time training them. I heard a famous evangelist (that all of you would know) who at one time remarked that if he were a pastor (God forbid), he would find six or seven men in his church who were key men; he would spend all of his time teaching them; and, the world would be turned upside down for God.

I'm here to tell you that in a church program, there are no key people. There are only dumb sheep who need a pastor to guide them, and everybody is equal in his gifts; in his capacities; and, in what God can do with them. There are no key people or celebrities in the local church. Yet, the average Christian cannot help but walk in the church and look around and say, "Who are the people who are the stars around here?" Of course, the Christian who is a reversionist wants to look for the stars. He walks into a church and the first thing he does is he looks around for who he wants to spot. Who are the people that are the stars--the "in" people here? Those are the people the reversionist gets into--not the least of which, of course, is the pastor. You'll have a reversionist who goes from one church to another church, and the first thing he'll do is start getting that new pastor over for dinner and for meals, and start working up the ladder of the power structure of that new place.

**Church Services**

Certainly people have opinions on what a worship service should be. Most of those are wrong. They have opinions about the order of service and certain rituals. They have definite opinions on what the sermon should be about--the gospel message only. Concerning the techniques, he should shout, he should cry; he should plead; and he should sweet-talk us. We should have greeters at the door. We should have an invitation. They have a very definite idea of the method of the invitation. This is one of the great gimmick devices that people look for when they come into a church. They say, "What kind of an invitation do you have?" Sometimes people say, "Well, you don't give an invitation at your church." Oh, yes we do. We give an invitation in the biblical way, without public moves and public displays. We give you an invitation to be positive to the Word of God: to the gospel if you're an unbeliever; and, to doctrine if you're a believer.

They have opinions concerning membership; money drives; and, music. They have very definite opinions about music in the local church. That's tough. The lyrics of the hymns that we sing, at best, pose a problem. Dr. Chafer used to tell us he had to keep changing the words of songs to try to straighten out the doctrine. It would be nice if somebody who had the ability of writing lyrics could sometime sit down and just take hymns; rewrite the words; and, straighten out the doctrine. That would be a great contribution. I've toyed around with the idea myself. I wish somebody would do it. In the meantime, we kind of sing along and correct the doctrine. Many times we're singing a hymn, and it's an exercise in finding out what's wrong and correcting it as you go along. So you sing, and it's an exercise in learning in a negative way.

**Spirituality**

Certainly everybody has an idea of what is spiritual. Christians should seek the victorious life, including self-crucifixion and great emotional exuberance. They say, "Oh boy, if everybody's jumping and happy and exuberant, how spiritual we all are. Can't you just feel the spirit here folks?" We should have God talk. We should say, "Hallelujah." We should say, "Praise the Lord." We should be nice to everyone. We should love everyone. This just goes on down the line.

Well, the vast majority of church members have no biblical concepts concerning a local church service whatsoever. They have no concepts concerning the pastor. They have no concepts of what a church ministry should be all about. Most Christians are having to tear out of their minds misconceptions that they picked up if they've ever been associated with churches. It is great if you're an unbeliever, and you come into a place that understands God's order of things so you can start off right. However, since the majority of people are operating under human viewpoint traditions and the church is not functioning on biblical principles, you can see how oddball it makes a group who does operate on God's principle appear to be. You're the minority. It is scary to people. We have had people in our congregation who just could not stand staying here because it scared them to be so different from the other churches. It scared them right to the end of what brain cells they had because they were so different from other churches that they felt that this could not be right. It had to be right out there where the majority was. That's where it was at.

So, the majority encourage and reassure each other in their disorientation because they far outnumber the expository Bible doctrine teaching churches. So, we're going to deliver to you, hopefully, in this session part of God's marvelous realities of His thinking which He has prepared for you. This is enlightenment for you, and I hope you will understand that that's what it is. My point here is that the worst thing in the world for a Christian to be is an ingrate. That is a low and rotten position to sink to. The first chapter of Romans tells you how low, rotten, and perverted you can get when you are an ingrate. The person who is not grateful for divine viewpoint enlightenment is a person who has taken the first step toward going down the backsliding road into a reversionistic state.

It is important that you understand that when you come into a church service, you know what we are doing here. We are giving you God's enlightenment. If you think that's exaggerated, pompous, pontifical, or pretentious, you are mistaken. That is the most humble remark you have ever heard. We are here on God's basis according to God's principles with the gift of instruction which He has provided for you to get spiritual enlightenment. If you are not grateful for it, you will sit there and discount it; ignore it; be neutral; or, reject it outright. Therefore, when you do not esteem instruction in doctrine above all things in life and avail yourselves of it, you are retrogressing into spiritual reversionism. Bible doctrine is your life, and without it, we become a bunch of fakers which is what most Christians are. Most Christians, sadly enough, can't be anything else.

So, here the apostle Paul is talking in Rome about two kinds of Christians. He was commenting on two groups who are actively engaged in serving the Lord. Both of these groups of Christians believe that they are pleasing the Lord. Both are certain that they are acting as spiritual Christians under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both believe that they understand doctrine and that they're totally responsive to it. Both believe that God is blessing them in their service.

However, one group is totally deceived and is operating from false motivation. They are not pleasing the Lord. They are not led by the Holy Spirit. They are negative to doctrine. Their blessing is self-created, and there are no rewards for them in the future. The problem was that these people had come from a place where they had a spiritual maturity structure where everything was coming up roses, and the world was all aglow with the sunshine of God's enlightenment. Along came the bomb of negative volition at some point in their experience. It was headed right toward that beautiful spiritual maturity structure, and they started the road of backsliding. This structure began breaking down. This is what was the true condition of these people in Rome who were zealously witnessing for the Lord Jesus Christ, but out of a false motivation. The one group is totally deceived because of this false motivation. Whatever their progress was before, they are at the bottom of the scale now.

So revisionism (backsliding or retrogression in the spiritual life--whatever you want to call it) is a great reality and it is a threat to each of us every day of our lives. You may not have gone to the point where you are completely mature in all the facets of spiritual maturity. You may have gone where things have been erected halfway up, and at that point, you can start backsliding and tear the whole thing back down again. It doesn't matter at what point you have progressed in your spiritual maturity. At any point, you can start going back down the road. You may reverse direction spiritually from a partial maturity structure or a completely mature one that's operating in a super grace level. This virtual reversal is accompanied always by hardness upon the soul and calluses upon the mind and the feelings (the emotions). It has a soul which is controlled by the emotions. Therefore, the person is very subjective. He is not objective. The Christian life is an objective life based upon the truth of the Word of God.

So, along with the reversionistic Christian's condition, there goes calluses upon the soul; emotional domination of the soul; and, a great indulgence of the desires of his old sin nature--the lust pattern. For this Christian, doctrine has been neglected or rejected, or he took doctrine in and he did not appreciate it. So feelings have become the criterion for his life. His experiences have been the basis of his Christian life. If you do not deal objectively with doctrine (with what God says), then you fall into experience and how you feel about things. Thus you will go off into the charismatic movement or into some other apostate condition.

**An Unstable Soul**

The Word of God describes people in various ways who are in a condition of reversion. For example, 2 Peter 2:14 describes these people as having unstable souls: "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls." He is describing the practice of false teachers. These false teachers (immoral people) in their heart have practiced covetous practices. These people are able to beguile unstable souls. They are the people who can come along and take a reversionistic Christian out of a good church that is teaching the Word of God; that church is bringing enlightenment to the souls of people; and, that Christian can be taken out of that church and put someplace else, because he is an unstable soul. He is in this condition. I'll guarantee you that a Christian who is standing in this condition with a fully erected and fully operational spiritual maturity structure is not going to be torn away from a church that is sounding forth the Word of God. Never. Anytime anybody is torn away, it is because he has gradually deteriorated spiritually, and we shall see some of the steps toward that a little later, until he is in this condition. When he is in this condition, he is unstable and he is a patsy because he is now spiritually insane. Therefore, he has lost his frame of reference and the sense of values.

Also, 2 Peter 2:7-8 give another description of the Christian in reversion. This is using Lot (a believer) as an illustration: "And delivered just Lot, vexed." There is the word, and the Greek word means "tortured." A reversionistic Christian is a tortured soul. "Vexed with a filthy manner of life of the wicked, for that righteous man dwelling among them and seeing and hearing, vexed (tortured) his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." A reversionistic Christian is a tortured soul. That's why the Christian who is in this condition is seeking your approval. That's why he keeps trying to make social contacts with you. That's why he wants your reassurance for what bothers him in his soul (the tortured condition in his soul): "Did I leave the real thing? Have I walked out on my right church and on my right pastor-teacher line of influence and spiritual authority? Have I walked out on my right associates in the congregation? Have I walked out of the place where my spiritual gift has been placed for functioning?" He has no sense of values.

In the delusion of what constitutes a local church, there are some Christians who will say, "You know, it is so wonderful at this church over here. Do you know why it's so wonderful at this church? Because every Wednesday night we have a supper together." You have to really be spiritually crazy to say to somebody, "It is so wonderful here at this church because we eat together. We have a great wonderful fellowship of happiness to fill our stomachs on Wednesday nights before whatever else we're going to do." Learn the signals. When somebody comes up to you and says, "Oh, it is so wonderful because we get to eat over here at this church," you just look at him and say, "I know who you are mister. I know who you are, missy. You're a bombed out believer." They have a fantastic basis of evaluation that is just unbelievable. However, when you get in this condition, don't ever wonder why people do things. When people are spiritually demented, you don't wonder about what they do anymore than when they are demented in the physical sense.

Well, most Christians, I regret to say, fall into this category. Sadder yet, the fact is they do not fall into this reversion category by choice--by their own neglect. They fall into it by default because there is no shepherd to lead them; no shepherd to hit them; no shepherd to gouge them; no shepherd to pull them back from the precipice; and, no shepherd to stand there and shout a warning. I know what it is to stand and shout warnings to believers who are on their way out into reversionism; who refuse to give heed; and, they dash themselves to their spiritual deaths. It is a sad experience. Most Christians are in this status.

A pastor teacher is the communicator Bible doctrine, and as the originator of the local church policy, naturally becomes the object of this rebellion on the part of reversionistic Christians. He becomes the object of their attack. So, Paul became the object of the attack of these reversionists who were serving the Lord so zealously in Rome. The reversionist must either be joined or cooled. I hope you have understood that now. Some of you may be hesitant to accept that fact. Some of you may be reticent to cut off people who have departed the area of your spiritual loyalties. These are people who have rejected and become traitors to your areas of spiritual loyalties. But I'm giving you fair warning that either you cool them, or you will become like them. There is no alternative. Reversionism is contagious. So, they will seek boldly in their rebellion your fellowship while they're rejecting the true objects of loyalty which you hold in esteem.

**Fallen from Grace**

In other words, a reversionist (Galatians 5:4 says) is fallen from grace: "Christ has become of no effect unto you, whosoever you are, justified by the law, you are fallen from grace." The word "Christ" here refers, of course, to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Christ has become of no effect." Actually the Greek says, "From Christ." This is the basis of the grace way of life which is represented by the spiritual maturity structure. This is the grace way of life. This is the grace from which these legalistic Galatians had fallen in their reversion. John 1:17 tells us that Christ is the source of the grace way of life. These Galatian Christians had gone from spiritual maturity to their broken down reversionism.

So, it says, "Become of no effect." The Greek word for the phrase "no effect" is "katargeo." "Katargeo" means "inoperative" or "useless." It's aorist which means at the point that they first went negative to the truth of God's word. It is passive. They suffer automatically the results of reversion when they go negative. The bomb cannot be stopped. It is indicative. It is a statement of the reality of their backsliding condition. Therefore, these Galatian Christians who once knew grace under the teachings of Paul, and who once were mature spiritually, had been listening to a bunch of undermining false teachers; professional preachers; and, legalists. Now they had been trying to become saved through the Law of Moses and to become spiritual through the Law of Moses, which was exactly the thing that the apostle Paul told them they should not do. Consequently, Jesus Christ, the source of the grace way of life, has become neutralized in their experience.

"For Christ has become of no effect unto, whosoever of you (the Galatians in revisionism) are justified." This word "justified" means to be declared righteous. The idea is to be vindicated. These people were seeking to declare themselves in favor with God. How? By keeping the 613 rules of Moses. Paul says, "You people are in a status spiritually which is reflected by your attempts to gain spirituality through keeping the rules of the law. You are in a state of fallen spirituality. You are reverted, and "Christ has become of no effect unto, whosoever you are, justified by means of the law, you are fallen," and the word is "ekpipto." The word "ekpipto" is used in the Greek language of navigators who fall off of a true course. These are navigators who move off from their proper heading. You have this in Acts 27:17-29. The navigators are being blown off their course.

Revisionists have drifted off the course. What is the course? The course that God has for us is moving up toward the super grace life of the spiritual maturity structure in a mature level. That is His course for us. To have drifted off into a system of human ability and human feelings, which is the law system, is reversionism. These Christians are still saved. They're just off course. They may continue drifting.

That's the problem when you're flying. You're going from A to B, and you set up a course of navigation. If you're flying by dead reckoning or you're flying by instruments, you set up the course from A to B. The course that you have set up is to move on a 90-degree course. Gradually, if you're not paying attention, and you become careless about your navigation and about keeping track of your frame of reference and your points of reference on the ground, you gradually drift off. This is because the wind is blowing from a certain direction (the winds of adverse opinion and of false doctrine), and gradually you move off until you're flying, not toward B, but at an angle to it, and if you continue, you will come 180 degrees, and you're flying at 270 degrees, and you're going in exactly the opposite direction--180 degrees off course.

That's what happens to a reversionist. A reversionist usually doesn't just turn around and go partway off course so he misses his destiny a little bit. He hangs in there. He will turn 180 degrees, and he's flying then in a completely deluded way with all that is in front of him in the point of loyalty, esteem, and devotion that is wrong--completely out of line with the Word of God. So, this reversionist has drifted off course from grace--the super grace status of life. That's what these people in Rome are. Here they are witnessing, zealously on the ball for the Lord. Yet, they are completely out of line--180 degrees off course from the mind of God.

**Philippians 1:15**

Now let's back to the book of Philippians. There was a second group, and this group was the group that pleased the apostle Paul. This was the group that was really on course. In the latter part of Philippians 1:15, we read, "And some also of goodwill." "And" is the word "de," meaning "on the other hand." We've had on the one hand, this group; and, on the other hand, this other group. "Some" is the Greek word "tos" with no accent which means "certain ones," and they are left indefinite. This is an indefinite pronoun. It means that he's not going to name them. Just as he didn't name the Christians who were in reversion, he's not going to name these who are on course because they don't need to be commended for the fact that they are on course. This is what they should be doing now. These grace oriented believers are positive toward the apostle Paul; toward his teaching; and, toward his techniques and methods.

"Also" here means "indeed." "And some indeed are of goodwill." The word "goodwill" is "eudokia." The word means "of a good mind." These people are acting out of a good mentality and out of a good frame of mind. What makes a good frame? It is a mind that is receptive toward sound doctrine. It is a mind that is oriented to doctrine. Therefore you have straight thinking. That's what this word means. These people on the other hand are thinking straight. This group is also publicly proclaiming Christ. They are just as zealous and just as much on the job as those who are operating in a reversion condition of witnessing. However, these Christians do not have mental ill will toward Paul. They are not suffering from spiritual disorientation--a disorientation that the reversionists are not even aware of. Their souls are enlightened by doctrine. They are loyal to the things that they ought to be loyal to; they esteem the things that they should esteem, those things which God approves; and, the zeal that they show in their service is produced by the Spirit of God, not by the old sin nature's lust for competition. They are operating in just the opposite direction with the apostle Paul.

Therefore, there are two principles involved here: what you do in the Lord's service; and, why you do it. Many a Christian is doing perhaps what he should be doing in the Lord's service. However, the reason he is doing it is wrong. Many a Christian will remember when he was in a status of spiritual maturity. He will remember how he functioned with his spiritual gifts. He will remember how he used those things so that God used it for blessing. Then he will degenerate spiritually; he will move over to another church; he will remember how he used to operate back here; and, he will go through the same motions, performing the same functions with the same effectiveness because he brings a lot of knowhow; a lot of experience; and, a lot of wisdom over from the other place, and seemingly he is serving the Lord in accomplishing something. But he is not, because internally the motivation is wrong.

Again I remind you that the Lord, in His sovereignty and in His grace will use that which this Christian may do. However, the believer himself will not be rewarded. I don't mean that I am suggesting to you that you should have some morbid occupation with yourself. In other words, I don't want you to spend the rest of the day in saying, "What is my motivation? Am I really serving the Lord for His glory?" This is because the next thing you will do is begin to decide you can't trust yourself, and you will cut out of all service. If you are receptive to the Word of God; if you avail yourself of these church services when instruction is given; and, if you are positive toward the truth, you won't have too much to worry about. The Lord will keep you on course, and He will keep you straightened out. It is when you find yourself being a resister that you better be worried about what your motivation is. If you maintain your fellowship with the Lord, He will keep you on course.

**Philippians 1:16-17**

Of course, this raises the question as to why these people are acting from these motivations, so verse 16-17 give us the explanation. The King James Version has reversed the order of verses 16-17 from the Greek text. In other words, in the Greek bible, verse 17 comes first, and then verse 16 comes. However, we'll take it up in the order that we have it here in the English Bible because the information will be the same.

So verse 16 says, "The one preach Christ" (those who are preaching from false motivation, in opposition to Paul). The word "preach" is "kataggello." "Kataggello" means "to proclaim." It is declaring that they are making a declaration of the message, and they are doing it in an open public way. This is their pattern of witnessing. It is active voice. They are doing it. "Ek" is the Greek word meaning "out of." So they are doing it, however, "out of contention." The word "contention" is "eritheia." "Eritheia" means "self-seeking" or "rivalry." They are doing it out of rivalry. This word, "eritheia," was used by the Greeks to describe a politician who was seeking office by unfair means. This is a politician who would use dirty tricks to seek and to gain office. He was operating under "eritheia." It implies that the contentions of these people against Paul was because of personal ambition. The first group was witnessing so as to be contending with Paul. They were witnessing out of rivalry against him for some benefits.

Mind you, they don't think so, because they think they're acting out of true motivation. What are they doing? It says, "The one preach Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely." The Greek word for "sincerely" means "with pure motives." It has the negative: "without pure motives." They are not acting in pure motives. They are supposing instead to do something else: "to add affliction to my bonds." "Supposing" means "to imagine." This is describing their state of thinking. They are "presuming" (is the idea) to put burdens upon the apostle Paul. That was the thought they had. They said, we don't like Paul. We don't like his grace teaching. We oppose his freedom. We oppose the idea of the privacy of the priesthood.

By the way, that's one of the most hated doctrines, dear friends. If there is anything that people despise, it's the business of minding their own business. They hate the doctrine of the primacy of the priesthood of the believer. I've had more repercussions, to my surprise, on this issue alone than anything else. I have seen people in this church who are powerful, strong, right-arm, muscle people, when we began stressing, "Mind your own business, as your own priest unto God, and leave other people's lives unto the Lord," that they began to get itchy; squirmy; nervous; and, finally couldn't stand it because the whole construction of their minds was that they had a right to put screws on other Christians and violate the privacy of the priesthood.

These people thought that they could put pressure upon the apostle Paul. They were eager to make life miserable for him. The mistake they made was that Paul was a spiritually mature Christian and he wasn't going to be affected by any idiot who was operating out of wrong motives. They were so blinded; they were in a collapsed spiritual condition; they didn't know it; and, they actually thought they could stand up and face a man like the apostle Paul and give him misery. That's how disoriented they were. We're told that their constant goal was supposing to have given him trouble.

Remember that they always smiled, and they believed that they were doing the Lord's will. Therefore, it says, "The one preach Christ out of competition, not in pure motives, supposing to add affliction." "To add" is the word "egeiro" which means "to stir up." They were actively stirring up crushing pressure on Paul. The word is "thlipsis." "Thlipsis" means "pressure." They were going to put pressures upon the apostle Paul by what they were doing. What they were going to do was to demonstrate that they were just as good. They didn't believe in his grace orientation ideas, and they were going to show that they were just as fine Christians; just as serving the Lord; and, just as successful as he was while they were keeping their legalistic procedures. They were seeking to add this, he says, "to my bonds." This is "desmos" which means chains, his imprisonment. These rejecters of Paul were desirous of making things harder for him in addition to his imprisonment.

Remember that he's in a bad way, in one respect, because he's in prison. If there's anything that's rough on a preacher, it's being put in a prison cell. That makes the area of your preaching very limited. The apostle Paul knew that things were threatening in the Roman Empire, and he was itching to get out of that prison cell. As a matter of fact, historically, we must conclude from the pieces of the story as we put it together, that when he was released from his imprisonment, he only had one more year, and that was it. Then he was a dead man. So he had one year left, but he had been in prison for four years. Instead of going to Spain and to the place that he finally headed for in that year, he went off to Jerusalem to keep that legalistic Jewish rule.

So, here he is under enough pressure, and these characters (these simpleton Christians) with their smiley faces and their sweet Christian camaraderie, but motivated by what they themselves perhaps didn't even realize they were motivated by, were out there trying to be so successful, to add further pressure and misery to Paul. All the while, they were rushing to serve the Lord. If you had told them that this was true about themselves, they would have looked at you and said, "Oh no, you're wrong. You're wrong. I don't have any ill will against Paul. I am not trying to compete with him. Oh, I wouldn't add any misery to him. I have great respect for him." Some would even believe that that was true about themselves. However, their wrong motivation was true. All rewards at the "bema" were lost. It was impossible for them to be happy now. Their lives were filled with a certain grief; a dullness and aimless searching for purpose; and, a joy in life that they could never have. When you compete with other Christians, you become cheap, miserable, and unhappy. You can never be happy when you are loyal to false objects. You can never be happy when you're in your wrong place and you're listening to the wrong person.

These are the kind of people who cause trouble in the church; then leave it; and, then, blame somebody else for it. So, don't be taken in by the reassurances of innocence and of good motivation. These people in Rome would have been the first to stress to you, "We are not against Paul." As a matter of fact, they would have said, "There it is. That's just what we're saying. Do you see what Paul is? Here he is, accusing us of false motivation, and it's not true. That's why we sometimes have our opposition to Paul." They were ready to describe Paul in various ways. Paul was so right and he was so on course. You remember what Felix said to him, "You're crazy. You're absolutely crazy. The reason that you're crazy is because much learning has made you mad. That's your trouble. You've been studying too much. Don't spend so much time in your study." Most preachers are very careful about not going crazy. I notice that they avoid the study like the plague.

In verse 17, we see the other side: "And the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel." Who are the other ones? Those who are positive to Paul as teacher; in teaching; and, in technique. They have true motivation. They are not running to compete or undermine him. They want to help him. These Christians are moving in the direction of super grace status or they've arrived there. They're acting out of love, the "agape" mental goodwill. Why? "Knowing" is the knowledge that they have. They are knowing that he has been set for a purpose in the ministry, and they intend to back him in that purpose. He describes this by the words, "I am set for the defense of the ministry," and the word is "keimai." That means "appointed." He is appointed to a certain divine commission in the ministry, and they recognize that they had an apostle that they were dealing with who exercised the pastor-teacher gift. He was called for the "apologia," the vocal defense of the gospel, the good news of salvation.

Therefore, they had two groups. One group said, "We recognize that the man we are dealing with has God's gift upon him." Mind you, the group that supported Paul was not always enthusiastic with his personality. They were not always enthusiastic with the way he said things. They were not always enthusiastic about the kind of toga he wore. Nor were they enthusiastic about how he spent his money or the social life he had or any number of other things. But they said this is a communicator of God. He has been sent to us. He has the authority from God in respect to spiritual things to be delivered to us, and we listen to him, and we help him, and anything that needs to be straightened out about him, we leave it to the Lord. He is God's man just as I, as a believer, am God's child. When I need straightening out, God will straighten me out. When the communicator needs straightening out, God handles that too. However, the thing these people said was, "What we are going to do is help him to get the word out. We are not going to compete with him and undermine him."

The other group said, "We are out to serve the Lord. We are not sympathetic with this communicator. We are rejecting him," and he happened to be their right source of divine information. Therefore, now the question is, "How did Paul feel about all this?" We're going to take that up next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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