

Romans 12:1 - Motivated By Grace – 9 September 2012

This morning I am going to speak to you on the subject 'The Christian Motivation' because everybody needs a little motivation in life.

A story is told of a young dental assistant who called up the patients for the day. And there was one who was notorious for always being late. So she called him and said, 'Sir, would you be on time for your appointment today?' The man says, 'Well, I think I will be late again. I will be thirty minutes late. Will that be ok? It shouldn't have any problems, right?' The dental assistant very gently and kindly replied, 'Sure, there wouldn't be any problem except that we might have no time to give you the painkiller.' And, guess what? The man turned up way before time!

You see, all of us need a little motivation even as a child of God. God does want to reveal to us the motivation for Christian living. I was with Yu Fei, our youth leader, and he was sharing with me that for young people today, they like to ask a question. And the question they always like to ask is the question 'Why'. They want to know the reason why. Why do I need to come to church? Why do I need to read the bible? Why do I need to study hard? Why do I need to pray? Why do I need to give my life to Jesus? Why? Motivation. That's what people are looking for.

1:38

I was speaking to one of the naval officers just before the service today and he was telling me that motivation is now a key thing, a serious business in the SAF. People have got to know why. Maybe today you come and you have a question in your heart ~ Why? Or maybe you have not asked that question but in your life you are struggling because you have lost that passion, that zeal, that fire within your soul. You know what you are supposed to do but you can't find the emotional energy to do it. Maybe today, your Christian life can be best described as merely going through the motions. You lost that fire wherein we can find that motivation.

And, to add to that difficulty, the demand of the bible is pretty high, aren't they? In Romans 12:1, this is what God desires, this is what God demands: that we will present our bodies a living sacrifice. Now that is a big deal because God is not just asking for 10% of your earnings. God is not asking for some hours of your time. God is not just asking for your Sunday mornings. God is asking you for your entire life that you will present your bodies a living sacrifice. You do it. You willingly do it. A young person today may say 'why?' Why do I need to give my life to God? Wherein is the secret to motivation, to propulsion, to living for Jesus Christ?

3:17

Everybody needs a little motivation. A young man was getting depressed in life because he has been trying very hard for a long time to lose weight. He is 120 kg and he has gone to all kinds of slimming centres but it has not worked. He weighs in at a hefty 120 kg. He was about to be suicidal so, as a last resort, he speaks with his pastor. His pastor listens to him and says, 'Son, don't you worry. I have an absolutely workable plan for you. It will cure you of your obesity. All you need to do is every morning henceforth, dress up in your sports attire and turn up at your door at 7 am. The plan will be revealed to you.'

So the very next morning, the young man was all decked up in his sports attire and running shoes and waiting anxiously at the door. The doorbell rang. He opened the door and saw a young, beautiful, gorgeous lady dressed also in sports attire. And the lady said to him, "The pastor sent me. He said that if you could catch me, I will be yours.' And so the young man took flight. But because he was so overweight and so unfit, he could never catch up with her.

But days went by and months went by. And three months later, this young man who was 120 kg is now a 60 kg fit young man. And he knew, he knew the very next day he will be able to finally catch her. 'And she will be mine,' he says. And so he was very excited all dressed up in his sports attire. He even went to bed with his shoes on. And at 7 am, he waited anxiously at the door. The doorbell rang. He opened the door and, instead of the young beautiful girl, he saw a big-sized 120 kg girl standing there. And the girl said to him, 'I am sent by the pastor. He told me that if I can catch you, you are mine.'

5:28

Everybody needs a little motivation. Now what is the motivation for us to give of ourselves. You know that guy just needs to have some motivation to give up some fat. Today, God is saying, 'I need you to give up yourself.' What will motivate you and I to give our lives to God and to His son, Jesus Christ. The answer, I think, is also found in Romans 12, verse 1. But you can't read this verse in isolation. You've got to read the context, the background, the setting. Remember the last sermon on Romans 11. We reflected in Romans 11:33-36, where it is as if Paul, after writing 11 chapters of Romans, paused and give in a sigh of exclamation. He was looking back at all that God has said, all that God has done, and all that God is. In chapters 1-11, he is looking at the wonders, the awesomeness, the greatness and the grace of God and so he

exclaims, 'How great are you, God? You are worthy of all the glory and praise.' He is seeing God in a new light. And in that circumstance, and in that context, he goes on to say, 'I beseech you therefore.'

Why would any man give his life to God? It is when he sees God for who He is. He is enraptured by the greatness, the grandeur and the grace of God in his life. I believe it is the vision of God. Nothing less than that. It is the encounter with God. It is the knowledge of God that motivates us to live the life for Jesus Christ. Nothing less than that. It was Paul who saw the vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus when he said to God, 'Lord, what will you have me do? Why would Paul, the persecutor of Jesus and His church, be someone who will say, 'Lord, what will you have me do?'. He saw the vision of God. Why is it that Isaiah could say, 'Here am I, send me.' Because Isaiah caught a vision of God. You see, it's the vision of God that motivates a man to give of himself. Nothing less than that.

08:08

In our last sermon, we came up with this statement: "Worship leads to Consecration". Worship is the 'wow' of knowing God and when we know God in our hearts, it leads to consecration of our lives. The worship, the 'wow' of knowing God leads to the consecration of our lives (Romans 12:1). You know, Gospeliters are very creative people. After I said this statement, someone walked up to me and told me the second half of this statement. He said, 'Worship leads to Consecration, Anything else leads to Constipation!' I think he is pretty right. Can you picture a man constipated or just remind yourself of the time you were constipated. Look at yourself sitting on the toilet bowl. Can you picture that right now? Paint yourself in the most agonising of hours in the toilet. You sit on the toilet bowl and you squeeze and you squeeze. Your face turns red but nothing comes out. You squeeze till blood comes out. Now this is getting gross. You squeeze until a little bit drops out but it is so painful and it is so fruitless that at the end of the day you develop piles. I think that's a humorous look at the church today.

You know, pastors, leaders love to squeeze God's people. They sit on people and they say, 'You must do this. You must do that. If not, you are not a good boy. You are not a good Christian.' And so we squeeze God's people but nothing comes out. Every week we tell them to serve, to give, to evangelize but nothing comes out. And people get hurt. And bleeding takes place. Complications arise. You know why we get constipated? Because the people of God have not been led to the vision of God.

10:13

Christian duty is absolutely impossible if we do not know how great God is. If God's people are not led to see God for who He is, His wonders, His goodness then everything we do in life becomes a chore, a pain. That's why some young people do not like to come to church because to them, it is a pain. Their parents force them. They have been told since young that this is the thing to do. But they don't understand why. They have not been led to the vision of God. And that is the problem.

You see, Paul tells us that it is in worship and knowing of our God that leads us to giving our lives over to Him. But more specifically, I think Paul is telling us that there is something specific about God that particularly motivates us. He says in Romans 12:1, I beseech you therefore. And the 'therefore' here is important. And he tells us 'by the mercies of God'. What is it that motivates a Christian's life? It's the mercies of God, the goodness of God, the grace of God, the love of God. Paul is reminding himself and reminding the Roman leaders ~ Look at the goodness of God.

Review Romans chapters 1 to 11 how you were dead, you were buried, you were hopeless in your sin and God, out of His free grace, gave you His son. And how in Jesus you are justified, you are forgiven, you are reconciled. You are now no more an enemy but you are now adopted as His child. The Holy Spirit lives in you. You will never be condemned. Never be separated from the love of God. And how amazing it is that God chose you, not because you were good but because He is good. Look at the grace of God. And that grace, that loves, should motivate us to presenting ourselves a living sacrifice.

12:28

I like JB Phillips translation. It's a little bit different from the original, of course, but he said this:

"With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice."

But the key is in the first phrase, isn't it? 'With your eyes wide open to the mercies of God.' I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God. Why would you give your bodies? Why? Because God gave you His son. Why would I love God? Because the bible says 'He first loved me'.

A story is told in the bible of a Jewish religious leader who invited Jesus to his house for a meal. In those days when you invite someone, who is a distinguished guest, to your house for a meal, what you will do is to wash his feet and greet him with a kiss. That is a mark of respect. Now today if you come to my house, please don't expect me to wash your feet. But in those days, that is done. They walk on dusty streets and when they get to the house this is the kind of gracious act that is done. But when Jesus went to this Jewish leader's house, he did nothing like this.

But then, in the same house, was a lady. A lady who is known as a sinner. A lady who is known as a notorious person. She somehow crept up behind Jesus, bowed down at His feet and began to cry. Not tears of sadness but tears of joy, tears of gratitude, tears of appreciation. She had no water but she used her tears to wash the feet of Jesus. And then she would use her hair. The hair in the bible speaks of the glory of a woman. She uses her glory to wipe the feet of Jesus and then she brings out a box, an alabaster box, a marbled kind of expensive box. And within is the most precious of perfume or ointments with which she anointed the feet of Jesus.

14:47

I think the people around must be wondering, 'Why is she wasting those glorious ointment. Why is she doing such a lavish thing? It is so unnecessary. And doesn't Jesus know that she is a sinner? Why would Jesus let her touch Him?' What did Jesus say? He said, in Luke 7:47, "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." Why did she love much? Why would she lavish all this on Jesus? Because she knew her sins are many and the glorious thing about this is that her sins are forgiven. She knew that it is the mercies of God that inspired her to live and to give to Jesus Christ.

You see, the bible in 2 Cor 5:14,15 tells us that this is the most powerful motivation in your life 'For the love of Christ constrains us that is, compels us, propels us... 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.'

Why would you live for Jesus? It's because He lived and died for you. You see, it's the love of Christ. Not our love for Christ. Our motivation begins with God and, in particular, His mercies, His grace, His love. And now we serve Christ not because we have to, but because we want to. We get to. It's a privilege to die for Jesus. It's a privilege to live for Jesus.

16:39

Sadly, the world today doesn't quite understand motivation by grace. If you work in the army, and I am not trying to disparage the military organisation at all. But in the army, what is the prime motivation for a lot of NSF's? Those who are conscripted into the army by force, you are there. And why would you listen to your commanders? Because they motivate you by....fear. If you don't fall in by this time, I will give you, not gifts, but 'extras' ~ extra duties. I will punish you by having you stay back in the camp. I will punish you by giving you more work. It's the in the army and same in the schools. If you don't finish your work, you stay back. It's the same as well in companies. The bosses threaten to fire you.

May I say this is also seen in families. Most of us come from Asian backgrounds. Generally, we rule the family by fear and authority. And we want our children to be fearful of us. I think there is a proper reverence in the home that must be maintained. But if that is your primary motivation for your children, you will have a big problem when they grow up. You tell your child, 'do as you are told'. Now when they are young, by all means do that. They need to understand basic obedience. But when they grow up and all you tell them, when they are 25, 35, 'you just do as you are told', something is wrong with it. They can't sense your love. They can't sense your grace. They sense that you will love them only when they do right and not when they don't do right. How is it in our families when a child comes back and he scores 140 for his PSLE. You say, 'I don't love this kid anymore. You are lousy. You are useless.' You know, those words absolutely kills the spirit of the child. On the other hand, when he comes back with a PSLE score of 280 or if he scores 10 A1s in his O levels, you say, 'O, I love you so much.' You are teaching your child that the motivation for his life is performance, not your unconditional love.

19:02

And I say that kind of mentality has also crept into the church. The pastor teaches that the pulpit goes off like this "if you do your daily devotions, you are a good person and God loves you. But if you don't read your bible, you don't do daily devotions, God hates you. He is angry with you. He doesn't love you anymore". And what happens is that the church is brought up with a performance-trapped mindset, always thinking 'I have to earn God's favour otherwise He doesn't love me'. And what happens is that we have a kind of legalism. We have a kind of external obedience that does not come from an internal spring. And that's a danger. And such kinds of fear, guilt, emotional blackmail motivations, if you think about it, are actually very self-centred. It's about me. But when it is grace, it is love that motivates us. Then it is not about me. It is about Him. And this motivation is from the inside. It is sustained. And the

grace-conscious people will be a motivated people. But the guilt-ridden people, a fear-driven people, an external performance-led people will be a hypocritical people because it's always about obedience on the outside but not having a willing heart on the inside.

Now if your children come to church with this motivation, let me tell you when they reach 21 or when they are old enough to say 'I do not want to follow what you say', they will totally abandon what they have been told in the past. They give it all up. They become bitter all these years. Why? Because they have not known the love of Christ that propels them on the inside. Instead of driving people to do what they are supposed to do, the priority is to show them the love of God and pray that people will rise up to the challenge and respond to that love appropriately.

And then they will say, 'I read the bible, I pray, I serve God, I give my life to Jesus not because I have to only but because I want to. And I get to. I come to church not because I am dragged out of my bed but because I want to. I want to know God and His word. I want to worship Him.

21:32

Motivation is serious business in the SAF. Motivation is serious business in the church of Jesus Christ. And Paul tells us the secret to motivation is the love of God, the grace of Jesus. There were times in my life when I feel dry. Just...dry. I know what I am supposed to do as a Christian. I know I am supposed to read the bible. I know I am supposed to come to church. But there is no joy within. It's as dry as bone. I don't have the motivation. I don't have the passion that I am supposed to have. And what happens is that I almost gave up on my Christian life. I almost said, 'That's it. There's nothing that will frivol me again. There's nothing that will re-ignite that passion that flame.

One day, however, it was Easter. It was Good Friday. I didn't expect much from that day, of course. It's just Easter and it's going to be the same old message in my mind. The gospel, the cross. I've heard pastor preach that many times. And I could almost tell you what he is going to say next. It was in our church building that day -- our 360 Dunearn Road. I was not even in the main congregation downstairs. I was upstairs in the main balcony looking through the glass barrier.

22:57

But that night, as I hear the gospel preached, as I hear the cross of Jesus preached, as I hear the sufferings and the love of my saviour, something melted within my heart. It was not clever theology. It was not something that I didn't quite know. But it is the love of God known afresh and anew that melted my heart and snapped something within.

You see, my dear friends, it is the love of God that motivates us. I want to apply this to your homes. It is the love of the husband that motivates the wife. The wives should cheer right now because that is exactly what you want. You know what a marriage is? I think a marriage is not just the coming together of two persons. I think a marriage is the dying of two persons. I know it's not a nice thing to say for marriages. But let me tell you this: I think a marriage is a process where two people die. You see, the bible tells us that the husband is to love his wife. How is he to love his wife? He is to love his wife like Christ loved the church and gave Himself for the church. How did Jesus give Himself for the church? He died. So, how are you to love your wife? You love your wife by dying. You say, that sounds morbid. How am I going to do that? Let me tell you: it's about dying to the daily choices of life that you say, "It is not about my wants, but what she needs. And I am willing to die to my own desires to fulfil my wife's". Do this daily in your life, giving yourself to her.

24:42

As you die to self, sacrifice yourself the same way Jesus did. That's how your wife is motivated to submit to you. Submission can be forced, in a sense. But submission from the heart can truly be brought forth only by the love. Love that she can see in her husband. As she sees her dear hubby willing to give up so many things in his life for her, she willingly now dies to herself, dies to her own desires and submit to her leader.

I believe marriage is a process of dying because that is the way Jesus loved us, died for us that we today will die to ourselves and live for Him. And, by the way, as husbands, please do tell your wife you love her. Please do. Because she needs to be reassured of your love for her. There are many husbands who say, 'I've already said I love her'. When? 'On our wedding day I said I love her'. And if there is any change, I will tell her. But no, you are to tell your wife over and over and over again you love her. You know why? Because that's the way God shows His love to us. He tells us over and over and over again in the bible. And He demonstrated that love, that supreme demonstration of love on the cross. And each time you read the bible, each time you reflect on the cross of Calvary, we are warmed in our hearts of the love of Christ. And

as we are warmed in our hearts for the love of Christ, we die to self and live for Jesus. That is the motivation.

26:26

Parents, I now have two kids. Parenting becomes more and more of an issue for me. More and more of an important matter for me and I say to myself, 'I've got to love my son to obedience.' Sure, when he's young I need to discipline him. I need to teach him, I need to tell him that he's just got to obey. No questions asked. But as he grows older, he's got to know why. He's got to know that 'Daddy loves me, gives himself to me and therefore I give myself unreservedly to Daddy and obey him'. That's the way our Father treats us.

So sad when parents today, condition their love only upon the child's performance. You are a scholar, I love you. You are not a scholar, I don't love you. You shame my name, you shame me, and I will kick you out of the house. You are no more my son. My friends, that's not the way God deals with His children. He loves you unconditionally. Never to be changed. And it is in the light of such a strong love that I will then give myself because I have full acceptance. I have full security to give myself to someone who really, really loves me. Please don't raise up your kids to be bitter children who are only told this is the way life is. Just obey. They have never tasted your love; have never known a daddy's love that motivates them on the inside out.

Some time ago, I shared with you this story. It's from a movie. A movie that has gone into Sundance Festival. It is a movie set in Vietnam in the 70s. It's about two persons. One, his name is Hai. Hai is a rickshaw puller who lives a poor, impoverished life because he is a rickshaw puller - can't do anything else. The second person is Lan. She is a beautiful lady but sad to say she works as a prostitute. And both of them have unfulfilled desires. Hai loves Lan but he could never afford her. Lan would want to get out of this dirty, filthy life and she wants to do that by sleeping her way out. She longs to be someone who would be like those clean, beautiful people staying in those elegant, gorgeous hotels in which she would go to service her clients. But she will never be able to stay in those hotels overnight because after she is done her service, she will have to leave. And so that is her dream. So wants to leave that filthy life to live a clean and good life. She envies others who have.

29:29

One day, Hai entered into a rickshaw-pulling competition and he came in first. He got the grand prize but he spent all his winnings on one thing. He rented a room in

one of the gorgeous hotels and paid the rent necessary for Lan. And everybody is expecting a steamy love scene at this time. But he did not want that. Lan expected that, but she was surprised. when Hai said to her, 'I do not want to sleep with you. All I want is an opportunity, a chance, to fulfil your dreams. If you will allow me, I just want to see you sleep peacefully in this room for this night. I just want you to have your dreams fulfilled.'

The very next morning, Hai is gone satisfied only with the chance to fulfil Lan's desires. But something snapped in Lan. She could not go back to her old life. She could not go back to prostitution because, for the very first time in her life, she tasted the transforming grace of redeeming love. She tasted, for the very first time, someone who used his power not to abuse her, but to serve her. And she now has a new identity. She is no more the same person she used to be. She has been touched by the transforming grace of selfless love.

Now Jesus had all the power and riches of the world but He saw us enslaved in our sins and He used all that He had and gave Himself utterly and totally to you. And if Lan could be touched by Hai's selfless love, shouldn't we, as His children, give ourselves absolutely and utterly to Him who has first given Himself to us?

31:44

The love of Christ constrains us and that's why we need to be a gospel-conscious people. We need to be a gospel-centred people. We need to regularly preach the gospel to ourselves. The gospel is the good news of God's love for us in giving us His son Jesus Christ. And we need to regularly look to the cross and preach the gospel. When we come for services, as we open the bible, look at the gospel. Look at the cross each time you have your daily devotions. Look at the gospel each time we sing and have our Lord's Supper in all these things. Go back, go to, the cross.

You know, the gospel today is not for the unsaved. I hear of people who say, well, it's a gospel service so I won't come. It's about the same gospel which I already knew. But, my friend, you can't be more wrong than that. The gospel is a message of salvation to the unsaved but it is a message of motivation to the believers. We've got to preach the gospel to ourselves. And if you advance in theology, if you grow in the knowledge of the bible, the understanding that is growing does not lead you away from the gospel. It leads you deeper into the gospel. Growth in theology leads us deeper into the gospel because the gospel is Jesus Christ.

33:23

All the bible knowledge you have, if it is divorced from Jesus, is pointless theology. It leads us deeper into Jesus. Folks, that's why you have to understand why Paul takes labour and pains to give us Romans 1-11 before he gives us the demands in Romans 12 because Romans 12:1 is a totally unreasonable and impossible task if we do not know the grace of God in Romans 1 to 11. You've got to marinate yourself, if I may say, in Romans 1-11. Sit there, soak there. Allow it to come within your soul, the love of God in Jesus Christ.

This week I was with my son. And we were in one of our favourite parks. We go to this park all the time. And somehow I missed these things. You know, you go to the park, you see different things at different times. It is something like reading the bible; you see different things at different times. And when I went to this park, I suddenly realize there is this interesting-looking structure. Can you see it (on video)? You can see a metallic structure where there is a kind of wire-mesh on top. And if you look carefully, you can see a kind of ladder structure right at the side. I was wondering what this is for? I mean, this thing doesn't offer any shade. It is all thin wire. What is it for? Does it look nice? Not very. So what is the purpose of this ladder? For monkeys to climb? There are no coconuts, no bananas. So I wonder why.

35:14

And then I took a closer look and I realize why. Can you see a little shoot there? If you can't see it, I will magnify it for you. It is a kind of a sapling, a kind of a shoot. And I start to realize 'Hey, maybe there is a good reason behind it. Otherwise why spend taxpayers' money on this?' And I looked to my side and I saw a similar structure, with creepers now in full bloom looking like this (picture). The creepers have crept up that metallic structure and gone up to fill the whole canopy with luscious leaves offering a beautiful shade for my son. And I wonder why.

And so my son looks at the lattices, looks at the wire structure, delighted at it of course and wondering about all these curvy, swirly vine. And I thought to myself 'isn't this the way we live?' So often we take these structures for granted. We thought the creepers grew by themselves but not realizing that these creepers will never get to where they are supposed to without the structure, without the support that is necessary for it. You know, the Christian life is not possible if you have not the structure, the foundation of the mercies of God. The Christian life is built upon the love of God, the mercies of God, the grace of God. Then you grow up as a luscious structure for the blessing of others.

37:04

And as you read on, Romans 12-16, you look at all the things that we are supposed to do and all those things that we are supposed to do actually are built on the mercies of God. So today, will you be like my son, just gaze and stare and contemplate and marinate in the gospel, the grace, and the mercies of Jesus Christ.

Are you feeling dry? Wondering why? You feel like throwing in the towel and giving up on your Christian life. You are looking for that motivation, the reason why. Let me say this: don't work first on saying what you will do for God. Don't. Because that's not how Paul began. Work first on knowing what God has already done for you. Work not first at surrendering but work first at knowing.

You see, so much of Christianity today is about pragmatism. I think we live in a generation that doesn't quite want to grapple with theology, that doesn't quite want to know God, that doesn't quite want to know the reasons why. We just want to do. Do whatever is necessary. Do whatever it takes. I am living for doing. No, my friends, the true foundation for doing begins with knowing. Now, there's a danger that if we go into knowing, we can slip into pure academics. Now that is bad. If our theology leads us to passivity, that's not proper theology. You have learnt something amiss. But it is in our knowing of Jesus that we will then live our lives for Jesus.

38:53

Eras gone by tell us that people have focused a lot on knowing but they have not been doing. The generation we live in today is focused a lot on doing but have, by and large, neglected the knowing. The biblical balance is both knowing that leads to doing. You can't have the structures without the foundations. You can't serve Jesus without knowing His mercies, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I want to challenge you today. I want to challenge you to do something. I want to challenge you to go back home and read your bible. I want to challenge you to read a new version, a translation you have never read and look at Romans 1 to 11 in one shot. Read it. Look at it. Stare at it. And look at it with a fresh perspective looking at it saying 'Lord show me your grace'. Beginning in chapter 1, how Paul begins: 'I am going to declare to you the gospel, the good news of Jesus. And from then on trace this red thread, scarlet thread that goes through the entire book. See Jesus. Put on a new pair of glasses, new perspectives to see Jesus. And as you read it, pray this. Pray Ephesians chapter 3. Pray like Paul who says 'God strengthen me on the inside

that I may comprehend the height, the depth, the length and the breadth of your love for me.

40:33

I want to challenge you to do that this week. For those who can, read it many times, three times, five times. For those who struggle, read it just once. Read it with those perspectives and ask God to show you His love and see if something snaps within you. Because it is only as we marinate in what God has done in the gospel that we will then live for Jesus Christ. Then the words of great men of times past will not be so strange to us. David Livingstone, the missionary to Africa said:

'People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa

I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His father's throne on high to give Himself for us.'

What about John Calvin, the theologian. Ya, he is just a dry academician. But look at what he says:

'We will never worship with a sincere heart or serve God with unbridled zeal until we properly understand how much we are indebted to God's mercy.'

Or maybe I will sing with Isaac Watts 'Love so amazing, so divine; demands my soul, my life, my all.'

42:08

Let's be a gospel-conscious, gospel-centred people. Can you imagine what it would be like if you and I today marinate in the gospel and we live out that gospel. That will be the day when we would serve God, obey God. Not because we have to, but because we want to. We will kick away those habits of our lives that hinder our spiritual communion with him because we want to and we get to. We would say in those words 'Lord, I agree with you. I want to because you told me 'be ye holy for I am holy'. I love you. I want to be holy not so that I will earn your favour but because you love me and I love you. And I want to be holy because you are holy.

If you are struggling with sins today, you don't start by saying I will get rid of this sin by myself. You start by marinating in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Can you imagine a church that steps up to serve because of grace? When we ask for people serving,

'Would someone be able to serve these people? No one would say 'I won't' because everyone will say I am loved by Jesus. I want to give my life to Jesus.

What about giving? You know churches that want people to give. They may preach grace but they don't practice grace because what they do is they dangle carrots in front of people. Hey, if you give more money, I will pray that God gives you cars and condominiums, houses and holidays. You know what? That's not grace. That's performance. That's legalism. That's 'works'. We do not need to use such things, which are actually scams to get rich, when our motivation is the grace of God in Jesus Christ. That's why in GLCC we don't preach about tithing. We preach about being a cheerful giver. Because you give not because you are told to, or forced to, but because you want to.

44:20

Can you imagine what it would be like in your home? You are not going to argue with your wife, fight with your wife, and insist on your rights because it is all about love. It's about dying for your wife. It's about your wife dying for you. It's about grace. Can you imagine what it would be like for your children? Some of you have children who are bitter. Some of you have children who are unwilling to do the things they are told to do. What they need is love.

The church today needs the love of God in Jesus Christ. I would encourage all of us today to be a gospel-centred people motivated by the greatest engine of it all ~ the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Let us bow for a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you today for your word. Because in your word, we see your heart. You are not someone who wants to be indebted to us, to reward us only when we do things right. To love us only when we perform. That doesn't make you glorious. What makes you glorious is that while we were yet sinners, your mercy and your grace sent forth your son, Jesus, for us. You gave Him freely for us. And I pray today that your Spirit will take these words, will take the revelation of your heart to touch our hearts that we will be melted in our love towards you.

45:56

I pray for a church that regularly preaches to ourselves the gospel, the cross of Calvary. I pray for a church that is not built up on guilt and fears and performance traps or even approvals of man but we will be a people that is built upon the foundation of your mercies. I pray for a total change in the church landscape. Not a

constipated church but a consecrated church because we have a vision of God and your goodness. I pray for a church where families are filled with love. Offices filled with love. Schools filled with love. I pray for this world to be filled with the grace of Jesus. We thank you today. You are God. There is none like you. We worship you, dear God. We praise your name. We ask and pray all this now in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless.