

Ever since I saw Jack Lemmon play the scene in It Happened to Jane where he defended Doris Day at a town council meeting, I have wanted to be able to make that kind of impassioned plea for a cause. I am sure that all of us have been touched by this sort of thing, something on the same line as the "Win one for the Gipper" speech. We talk about a "motivational" or "inspirational" speaker as though these two words mean the same thing. But I feel that there is a distinct difference between them.

We are **motivated** by greed, fear, love, and things of that sort. The picture of the carrot in front of the horse and cart comes to mind. We can be motivated to give everything that we've got, or 100%. In this mode we may run to win a race or help us lose a few pounds.

Inspiration, however, resides at a higher level. We are **inspired** by something greater than ourselves, by a power that enables us to go beyond our normal capacity. It is being able to give 110% or more. At this level we might run to save someone's life in an emergency (especially our own).

Perhaps you remember Aesop's fable of the hare and the hound:

One day a hound, out hunting by itself, flushed a hare from a thicket and gave chase. The frightened hare gave the dog a long run and escaped. As the disappointed hound turned back home, a passing goatherd jeered, "You are a fine hunter! Aren't you ashamed to let a little hare one-tenth your size give you the best of it?" "You forget," replied the hound, "that I was only running for my supper, but the hare was running for his life!"

The hound is motivated, but the hare is inspired. The point here is not that we should respond as though we were running for our spiritual lives, or were in fear of punishment, but that we should be acting at a level beyond the basic phases of motivation. God's love should inspire us into this higher level. This, I think is one way that the Spirit works mightily within us. Remember that Elijah ran on the strength that he received from the Lord for forty days (1 Kings 19:8). He could not have done that on his own.

There is something about being inspired that makes us temporarily forget the pain and the limitations that we normally feel. The Bible talks about how that after the child is delivered the memory of the pain is somehow erased (John 16:21). In a similar way God gives us special strength to deal with the pain; this may be something like the peace that passes all understanding. It is as though we are running as hard as we can, and then we are able to have a burst of extra speed.

In drawing this lesson into our spiritual life, we might say that:

The law motivates you, but grace inspires you.

As we mature in our faith we should operate more from inspiration, from the spirit living inside us. I don't mean this in the sort of flaky way that we hear about sometimes. I am talking about something that makes our soul tingle with God's love and goodness. Whether we are motivated or inspired will be very evident in our lives.

I mentioned at the beginning my desire to give that special inspirational speech. The reality I discovered is that every time I teach a class or talk about Christ it happens. And the thrilling feeling of being inspired in the way that I described earlier is something that I want to have forever. And I truly believe that that heaven will be just like that!