

THE LOVE FOR SOULS SERIES

PAUL A MAN OF PASSION

This morning we want to look at the apostle Paul's life and see a man of passion. He did say, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." As far as Christianity is concerned, only people of passion have affected the world's history. Christians who have passion have changed the world for the sake of Christianity and for the good of Christianity. Not by Christians who have talents alone; not by Christians who have gifts alone; not by Christians who have ability, status. But the world has been changed and history has recorded the changes that had been brought about by individuals who have changed this planet earth and caused the gospel to go forth. And these individuals are people who have demonstrated one common trait. Some of them are not the most talented people in their generation neither are they the most brilliant; neither are they the most capable in training. But there is one thing that makes them stand apart from any others. They have a passion for souls. They love souls. And that's what we want to see this morning. That if you have only one ounce of talent but a thousand pounds of compassion your one ounce of talent can influence maybe a million souls. But if you have a thousand pounds of talent and you only have one ounce of passion I don't think you can even win a soul. How we must evaluate our lives as we yearn for the gifting of God and yearn to be used by God. We realize that before we can utilize God's power we must understand God's heart. When we have His heart then we can utilize His power. If you analyze the life of Jesus Christ it is always love comes before power. For God so loved the world, then He gave His Son and His Son came to destroy the works of the enemy.

Let's look at Romans 9. Paul here speaks from his heart. He is actually writing to the Romans. But as he wrote about the gospel and the basic doctrine of what he believes the gospel to be, a portion of heart suddenly flowed out. His love and passion for his fellowmen the Jews is revealed. Rom. 9:1-6 *I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great*

sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from my kinsmen by race. They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever Amen. Paul prayed and expressed his desire for the Jews. And he said how he has continual sorrow. He has great sorrow and continue grief in his heart for his fellowmen and that flowed from his love for them.

Depths of Suffering

There are three areas that we want to look at when we look at the passion for souls and what makes this kind of people stands out. The first is to see that to have passion for souls is to understand the depths of their suffering and sorrow and their grief. It is identification with their sufferings and their sorrows. When God says He loves us, He expresses it by sending His Son to taste our suffering and to die in our place. And none of us can argue with that kind of love. In a similar sense, the love that we say we have for souls must be something in such a manner that we could feel the sorrow and the grief in another life. How true those words are in the book of Psalms that those who sow in tears will reap in joy. Although we want to be balanced, in a normal Christian life, the normal emotion for Christians should be joy. While we are touching on this area of sorrow, we are not saying that Paul went around with a long face and there is no joy in his Christian life. But we are talking about the things that were in his heart, the burden that he carried for others and the sufferings that he bore. Some of us may never understand this emotion. It is possible to have the joy of Christ and yet have tears in our eyes for souls. It is possible to have the spiritual experience of joy and satisfaction in Christ while you have sorrow and heaviness in your soul because others are not saved yet. That's something that an unbeliever can never understand. There is a supernatural joy that can never be quenched. But yet, in the course of our life because of our love we feel that tremendous grief and sorrow for others. The people who have changed this planet earth for Christianity are those who have experienced great burdens and sorrows for those whom they have ministered to.

That is the problem with modern ministry and modern Christianity. We have

people with what we call lack of commitment. Every time a difficulty comes, they quit or get easily discouraged. Many graduates of bible schools and seminaries when they go out to ministry the first thing they do is get discouraged. It is because the schools may have prepared them theologically. The schools may have prepared them in biblical training. But the schools did not impart the passion for souls into their lives. And without that passion for souls, you definitely have no guarantee of success in the ministry. For it is the passion for souls that will make a person go to all ends to win that one lost sheep. And it is the passion that enables the person to endure all the most difficult circumstances in order to win a tribe or a nation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes that passion can last for years.

Think about people like David Brainerd who ministered to the North American Indians. God called him there and if you want to develop passion read the diary of David Brainerd. And it is the life of David Brainerd written by Jonathan Edwards. It is most like Kenneth Copeland writing the biography of Kenneth Hagin. Jonathan Edwards himself was powerful and famous. You could see David Brainerd must have influenced the Jonathan's life himself. He was just a simple missionary who went to North America and for many years, he had no results. But his diary touched me from the early life and everyday you see him crying for the souls. Everyday you see him crying onto God for those souls. Page after page in his diary his passion flowed out until after many years the breakthrough came. I wonder how many fresh new ministers can last that long. Why did he last that long? He had passion. He had no bible training or rather he was expelled from the seminary. He had only one thing in his life, passion, and a passion for the souls of this North American Indians who did not know Jesus Christ. Paul says I have continual sorrow.

Now lets look at II Corinthians 11 and see some of the passion this man had been through. Verse 23 *Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one – I am talking like a madman – with greater labors.* Why did he do all those things? Why did he labor more than do others? Is it because he could get a financial reward? Is it because he can get more recognition? It is because of his love for souls. I pray that every minister, every bible school student will be motivated by the pure desire for souls. That's the only thing that will be able to cause you to be immune to every onslaught of the enemy against your ministry. That passion is like propulsion in the rocket that thrust you into the outer space of God's presence and reward and of

souls. He says *far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times, I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times, I have been beaten with rods, once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, dangers from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.*

Sometimes, I don't understand new people or young people who move into the ministry and they don't have as much energy. I remember when I was in the seminary we worked right through the night sometimes for a camp. There is a zeal that drives us on, pushes us on. That's the kind of passion that will push a person to the extent that no matter what circumstances you are in. Some of us may have it easier and some of us may have it harder. But remember the circumstances do not determine your success. What is in your heart determines your future success. If you have never experience weariness and toils, you know nothing about passion. Anyone who has been in the ministry knows that the ministry is not measured from 8 to 5. If you enter the ministry and all you desire is only work from 8 to 5 pm, you have no passion. If Jesus said He would only work 8 to 5, He would have been a bad example for us. If the apostles worked 8 to 5 that would have been the end. My friends although we are balanced and we know when to rest and when to work, but there is such a thing as knowing that being in the ministry is like being a doctor - you are on call all the time. And you know that whether you are in your regular office work or out of it, it occupies your heart and it occupies your mind. That's the kind of passion in a minister that God wants to establish that would take this last generation for Jesus Christ.

Verse 28 look carefully this is where the sorrow comes. *And apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches.* Notice how many times it comes to him, daily. Kathryn Kuhlman in her book "A glimpse of Glory" that in her position if she has to listen to every thing that is said about her, she would be hurt and cut up all over. And she had to choose how to tolerate that. She has to learn how to die to self. It is a part of maturity to learn to handle criticism. That tells you how many are not matured. The difference between an adult and a child is the ability to handle criticism. Sometimes, you can be fifty years old and you are not able to handle it. You haven't grown although your physical body has

grown. Your soul is still at the childhood stage. I always like to push people a little bit especially when they are middle aged and older. I say, "Come on you don't want to be like that when you are ninety. You don't want to be remembered as a nasty old fellow." You see sometimes we don't realize that if we don't somehow find the mechanism within our lives to change, you may end up unchanged by the time you are ninety. But sometimes on the inside, there is a realization so deep and strong that you say, "Hey, I better change. If I don't change now, at eighty I'll still be the same." Think about it - if you reach the age of fifty-five, sixty, will you be the same in character? Will you be as snappy in criticism? Will you be as reactive? Are you going to change? Are you going to carry that to the grave? Some thing on your inside says I am not going to be. And that does the process.

Paul says here that everyday he feels a deep concern for the churches coming to him. But there is some thing about Paul when you read this passage here. When I read this passage here I said there is only one thing that drives him through all these forty lashes minus one, and beaten with rod three times and all these shipwreck, there is only one thing that drives him, his love. There is no reward that can pay for all these things that he has gone through. It is his love to bring the gospel to souls who need to hear the gospel. And in these things that make the difference between whether you are a grade "A" Christian or minister and a great "F" Christian or minister. It all has to do with some thing in our heart called passion.

Look over to II Corinthians 2: 3 at what Paul expresses in his life, *And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not be pained by those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears.* This is only one of those things that came to him daily. He says, *for out of much afflictions and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears.* Do you know that I Corinthians was written with many tears? Remember we talked on how the greatest poetry comes from the greatest suffering. What happened to Paul actually? You see these same people whom Paul had brought to the gospel and he had build and planted a church. They began to question Paul. They began to question his apostleship. They began to question his leadership because somebody else came. Apollos came and Cephas came, remember that and they began to break up into groups. Apollos didn't cry for them. Cephas didn't cry for them. And Paul told them you can have ten thousand

teachers but you got only on papa. They got only one who really cares for them the rest are all teachers. That was what made Paul stand out in his life.

When I put people into the leadership I try to hear not only their words or their mind I want to hear their heart. I want to hear their love for people, their passion because I know without that it will be a disaster. For the church is not a commodity. It is an organization of people. And love is the greatest qualification for any leader. Even then, we need to learn to maintain love in our life. Sometimes things catch up with us. And we neglect the most important thing, which Paul says the greatest is love. I think there is no greater poetry that expresses love than I Corinthians 13. Remember this I Cor. 13 was written with tears flowing down his eyes. Paul was literally weeping when he said *love is kind, love thinks no evil, love seek not its own*, etc. Love was literally pouring out from his life when he wrote those words.

Lets read II Cor. 2:4 *For I wrote to you out of much afflictions and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.* This is the man who changed the world in his generation. And if you want to change the world in your generation, this is the key. A thousand pound of love makes your one-ounce of talent go far much further than any thing.

Think about Kathryn Kuhlman's life: it's not just her gifts and her word of knowledge. It is her love. You read her biography, "A Glimpse of Glory" you will understand that the key was her love. She said these words "When she prays for a sick person she feels this love coming out and she feels like she wants to give her life so that this person could live." That is the kind of love that changed the world. Paul had that same passion and love. People sensed whether you love them. When you go to a Kathryn Kuhlman's meetings as you walk in you could sense some thing there: love. People could sense it. There seems to be an inbuilt sensor within all our lives sub-consciously and we are drawn to those who really love us. And we are turned away from those who don't really love. Sometimes people do a job because of duty and because of the rewards but there is no love and people know it. People sensed it. That's why I say it's a difference between a grade "A" and a grade "F".

Lets look at the apostle Paul in the book of Acts chapter 20:31 *Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night and day to admonish every one with tears.* Can you imagine weeping day and night for three years? I am sure he was quite a joyful person. But there are many times tears come to his eyes when he ministered to his people. He lived for only one reason - for souls. Didn't he tell us his reason in Philippians? He says that to be with Christ is better but nevertheless for your sake he chooses to remain. That is the kind of man that will change the world. I guarantee it that if you could weep and pray the way Paul prayed you will be another apostle or another evangelist or another prophet, apostle or teacher that will change this generation. Tears, simple little word but how hard it is to come from some eyes. Tears speak of brokenness; tears speak of contriteness that God loves which the Spirit of God can flow through. And that's the kind of passion that Paul has for those he ministered to. Now Paul knew the importance of this in his own life, so that when he trains his own disciples after him, what would he look for? The passion and the tears. That is why to his main spiritual son, he makes this statement in II Timothy 1: 4 *As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy.* We read about all the others qualifications of a minister that Paul gave to Timothy. But don't forget this: Timothy was also man of passion and tears. That was the kind of spirit that Paul imparted upon Timothy. That makes Timothy as successful as the apostle Paul. I am not sure whether Timothy had moved into that same degree of passion as the apostle Paul. But only those who do can reach that same level will have the type of ministry that Paul had.

Right now if you understand this truth, you will see how far your ministry, your talent, your business can go. As far as God is concerned, it will depend on the largeness of your heart. Not on the largeness of your head. It depends on how large your heart is to contain the world. To be realistic this kind of passion doesn't just come. It is not just something you just make yourself to do it. It comes by meditating upon God's love. It doesn't come by just thinking about sad incidences. It comes only by meditating upon God's love. God's love for the world; Jesus' love for us and Jesus' love for the world. And you get caught up in that love and you began to love in the same capacity that He does. And as you yield yourself to that passion one day, it becomes permanently yours. And your life, your ministry, your business, your character is changed. Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.

Depths of Self-sacrifice

The first quality is having that understanding that burden, the sorrow, the grief of those souls that that we are reaching out to and that will lead us into the second area.

The second is found also in the book of Romans 9 and he says an astounding statement in verse 3, verse 2 is the first point verse 3 is the second point. *For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race.* He says that if he could he would go to hell so that they could go to heaven. Think about his love.

There is another man who says things like that in the Old Testament. Turn to the book of Exodus. Moses was confronted with a situation where God's wrath was upon His people. Exodus 32:10 *Now therefore let me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation. But Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does Thy wrath burn hot against Thy people.* Then when Moses came down to his people although in verse 19 his anger was against the people because they have made God angry and in verse 21 *And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought a great sin upon them?"* Then after all the necessary things have been done, in verse 31 look at Moses praying. And here is where the man of great passion stands out. Listen carefully to these words. The great people in the bible and in history are great because of their passion not because of their ability or their talent. God will supply the gifting and abilities but you have to supply that passion.

Exodus 32:31 *So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas, this people have sinned a great sin; they have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if thou will forgive their sin – and if not, (here is where he sounds exactly like the apostle Paul) blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written.* Of course, God would not do it. But look at what Moses is asking. He is saying, "O God if you don't forgive these people, then let me die with them." This is a man of passion. Although Moses and the apostle Paul is separated by nearly two thousand years but there is still one thing

that stands out common in their life. Moses was great because of his passion. Paul was great because of his passion. Although two thousand years stand between our time and the time of Jesus of Nazareth and the apostle Paul, if you have that same passion there will be a similar greatness of achievement that will come in your life. The second ingredient of a man or woman of passion is the willingness to give your everything including your life for those whom you want to win for God. When you look at all these things, you just give me one thousand people who have this love and I will change the world. But it's hard to find one thousand people with this kind of passion. We all have some passion to a certain extent but we need this kind of great passion to change the world.

There was another man who probably lived only a few hundred years ago. He is known as John Knox and John Knox said to the Lord, "O God give me Scotland or let me die." And Mary the queen of Scot said, "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than the entire army of England." Because when John Knox prays, he was prepared to back his prayer with his life. When you pray and you are not willing to back your prayer with your life, your goods, your substance and your everything, your prayer lacks passion. When you pray for something, you must be willing to back it up with everything. That's the kind of prayer that changes the world. Compared with that kind of selfless prayers, most of our prayers are mere speaking. I mean we pray with half our heart and we are willing only to back it up as far as it doesn't inconvenience us. When we pray for souls alone and there is no personal sacrifice, what kind of Christianity are we advocating? Where is the love that Jesus has for us? Look and behold the Master the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at that kind of love that He gave us. He held back nothing. And those who really know Him hold back nothing. And we need to look at the origin of Christianity and understand that a lot of what we see around is not pure Christianity. The kind of Christianity and the quality of Christianity that came forth from the heart of Jesus has been one that is born in passion, lived in passion, died in passion. That's the kind of Christianity that changed their generation within one hundred years. And its important for us to have that kind of passion so that when we pray we are willing to back it up. Otherwise, we are praying no differently than the same people who lived in Jesus time called the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They do not back their prayers with their lives. Question to us is, "Will you be a person of passion to the Lord Jesus Christ?"

Depths of Unconditional Love

Now the third point is found in Romans 8. We find the first point in Romans 9 verse 2. We find the second point in verse 3. But the third point is derived as a foundation before Romans 9. Romans 9 came forth as Paul was writing about something. He started in Romans chapter one and two about the gospel, salvation, redemption and how Jesus had died for all our sins in chapter five in chapter six in chapter seven. Then when Paul in chapter eight talks about the love of God, that's point three. He talks about the love of God in verse 31 right to the end of Romans 8, which is the foundation behind chapter 9.

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give all things with Him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separates us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For Thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, not principalities, not things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When Paul was talking about Jesus' love, he couldn't help it and say, "O my brethren the Jews." The third point is unconditional everlasting love. That is what builds passion for souls. This is why I don't understand Christians who say that they get hurt and they can never forgive. I can only say that they have not known Jesus' love. The One who died on the cross was betrayed, spat at, punched, whipped, mocked, jeered right up to the cross. And while He was on the cross He said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they have done." How can we say that we know Jesus and have unforgiveness in our heart? We can only conclude that He saved you but you don't know Him. Everyone who knows Jesus will love like Jesus loves. Just like the old song says "How can you refuse Him now? Do you know Him? Do you really know the One who says, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"?"

The third point is based, founded, built upon the unconditional everlasting love of God. That's the kind of love that will give you "stickability" in your life for people; you will never give up in them. If we could have ten missionaries sent from this church with this same spirit of passion, you can send them to the ten hardest countries in the world, I guarantee you those ten nations would be changed. What God is looking for are a people of passion, people who will love the way that God loves. God's heart is grieved because many Christians don't love the way God loves. We say we love God; we say we know God; we say we know the bible from Genesis to Revelation, but Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You know the scriptures but you don't come to

Me.” We only know it in our head but we don’t know it in our heart. Because the greatest is love and God wants to build in our time today a people of passion. That’s the unconditional love that God wants to establish upon our lives.

So, the third point is to keep your eyes focused on God. When Paul talks about God’s love in Romans 8, as he focuses on it he suddenly felt the love coming out of his heart for his own Hebrew people stronger than any ever before. If you want your love to increase for those whom you minister to look at God’s love and let it fill your life. When you have your Romans 8 then you can have your Romans 9. That’s what brought Romans 9, Romans 8. Paul never intended to write Romans 9. It was out of the topic. Every bible scholar will tell you that Romans 9 was a side topic. But it’s because of Romans 8 that it burst out from the scene in his heart. Paul’ heart was aching in love for his people.