

A Passion For Souls – Various Scriptures

Bibles; 2 Cor 5; With RTR coming up, we're going to take a break this week from 2 Tim, and talk about **A Passion For Souls** (various Scriptures)

Given the present state of our culture, and the fact that more/more people need the Lord . . .
I don't think I need to say much about the need to reach out to them
That we need to go to *them*, instead of expecting them to come to us, just b/c we've hung a sign out; I think you understand that
The problem is – we often lack the *passion* to do so

And if that's you – if you've lost a passion for souls, or never had it in the first place . . .
My hope is that this message will jump start such a desire in your heart . . .
And lead you to share the Good News of Jesus with boldness, as God gives you opp

It starts with . . .

The love of God (1 John 4:19)

1 Jn 4:19 – *We love because he first loved us.*

Apart from God's love for us, we have no love for others
Apart from God's passion for us, there is no passion for others
At least not one that has eternal consequences *****

It's his love that has been poured into our hearts by the HS, that stirs us to share it w/
others

It's his love, in giving his Son to die on the cross, in our place, for our sins, and the forgiveness that comes with it – that compels us to want *others* to experience it

And yet we lack a passion for it b/c we take God's passion for us, for granted – it's passé
Or maybe you've grown so accustomed to his unconditional love, that it's not a big deal anymore
Or maybe you're even calloused to it

If so, stop; Call a time out in your life and re-consider things
Ponder anew that God in his greatness would even *consider* you, let alone love you in your smallness

That God in his goodness, would love you in your sinfulness
That God in his grace would save your life at the cost of his Son's

B/c a passion for souls starts with the love of God

Second, it starts with . . .

A fear of God (2 Cor 5:10-11a)

2 Cor 5:10-11a – *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.*

Knowing that God's wrath is real, and that every single person is facing a day of judgment – should spur you on with a passion for souls
A passion to do everything you can to ensure that they will face that judgment with the confidence and assurance . . .
That Jesus Christ has paid their price, appeased God's wrath, and satisfied all his righteous demands for their sin

B/c apart from such confidence – there's no hope

No hope of withstanding his scrutiny; No hope of escaping his condemnation

No hope of avoiding eternal punishment

A passion for souls starts with a *fear* of God's wrath and judgment, toward those with unconfessed, un-forgiven sin

Whether or not *they* realize that, we should; There's no getting around it

Their doom approaches, their judgment is certain, God's wrath is a fearful thing to face

All of which should spur us on in our passion for their souls

It starts with the love of God, a fear of God, and third . . .

And a sense of responsibility (2 Cor 5:20)

Having been given the ministry of reconciliation – referring to the reconciliation between God and man . . .

2 Cor 5:20 says – *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.*

We are God's ambassadors, with the *responsibility* to spread the word about the reconciliation he offers through faith in Jesus Christ

Reconciliation that's needed, b/c people who haven't repented of their sins to live God's way, and turned to Christ as their Savior and Lord . . .

Are separated from God and in desperate need of being reconciled

And it's our responsibility to tell them

Which is why Paul ends this verse with – *We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.* (2 Cor 5:20b)

We beg you, we plead with you; As ambassadors of Jesus . . .

Be reunited with God, as he first intended and created us

- When's the last time you felt like that?
When's the last time you implored someone to be reconciled to God
The last time you begged them, for their sake and God's, to turn from their sin?

Becky's great grandfather was an extraordinary example of this

Saved as an adult, he made a commitment to God talk to people about their need for a Savior, as much as he could – and he lived it out

He talked to all kinds of people in all kinds of crazy situations

Like the time one Easter, when he went with some of his grandkids to the mall to have breakfast with the Easter Bunny

They had a nice time and all; And eventually made their way to the parking lot . . .

When they realized that Grandpa wasn't with them

But it didn't take long to spot him, b/c he was there in the parking lot too, kneeling with the Easter Bunny in a prayer of salvation; Funny but *typical*

B/c he had a passion for souls that was borne out of a sense of responsibility, as Christ's ambassador

- How about you?
How's *your* sense of responsibility?

Do you ever act on the impulse to speak, or say *something*?
To invite somebody to church? Or Small Group? Or whatever you're involved in?

I hope you do
B/c the more you do it, the more passion you'll have to do it again

It starts with the *love* of God in your heart . . .
A *fear* of God in your soul; And a sense of *responsibility* as an ambassador for the Lord

It grows with . . .
A conviction about God's Word (Ps 19:7-9, 11)

Ps 19:7-9, 11
When you're convinced that God's Word is perfect and sure (7), and right and pure (8),
and true (9), and helpful (11), just like this says . . .
Your passion to see others embrace it will grow exponentially

When you experience its reviving effect in your life . . .
When you increase in your wisdom as a result of reading it (7b) . . .
When you feel the joy that comes with knowing it . . .
When you "see" its truths; When you heed its warning; When you receive its reward . . .
Your passion to see others experience the same, will grow by leaps and bounds

Your passion for souls is directly related to your conviction about the *truth* of God's Word
Your conviction that hell is real and heaven is glorious
Your conviction that people are lost and Jesus saves
Your conviction that God wrote a book and we'd do well to live by it
Your passion for souls is directly related to your conviction about the truth of God's Word
Little conviction; Little passion

Which means if you're going to grow in your passion for souls, you need to grow in your
conviction about God's Word
And if you're going to grow in your conviction about God's Word, you need to read it
and know it

Second, a passion for souls grows with . . .
A commitment to prayer (1 Tim 2:1-4)
1 Tim 2:1-4; Having just talked about the fact that *Christ Jesus came into the world to*
save sinners (1:15), he says . . . (read it)

V3 says this is good and pleasing in God's sight
What is? Prayers of salvation
B/c v4 says, God desires that all would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth
IOW he says pray for all people, and implies that one of those prayers s/b for their
salvation, b/c that's God's passion for their soul

- And there's nothing like praying to sync your passions with God's
To align your desires with his desires
And his passion is for people to come to a point of true faith, true repentance, and true
surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ
But it starts with prayer

And that's why we've included a **prayer card** in your bulletin for RTR
So that you can and will be *intentional* about praying for those you could invite

You might be surprised not only at the *opp's* you get to invite them, but your boldness in
doing so
B/c a passion for souls grows with a commitment to pray for them

And third, a passion for souls grows with . . .
And a community of believers (Heb 10:24-25)
Heb 10:24-25 – *Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not*
neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and
all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

It takes a community, to stir one another up to love and good works, including a passion
for their souls
You can't do it alone, and you probably won't even try
And if you do, you still have nothing to offer them afterwards . . .
No church, no loving community in which to grow, and no real fellowship of believers if
you're not plugged in yourself *****

- You see, one of the reasons we come together corporately, and meet in SG's, or get
together for coffee – is to encourage and spur one another on to witness
Which happens most when you share stories about those for whom you're praying, and
the conversations you have with them

Like the wife who shared in one of our SG's that her husband recently came to Christ after
years of prayer and patience
Or the high school student who prayed with his SG for his mom and dad, and then saw
them make that commitment and surrender their lives
Or the mom who shared with me after a service recently, that she had just led her son to
Christ in the hallway during communion

Those things are a *huge* encouragement to the rest of us, to do the same
Which is why a passion for souls grows within a community of believers, a *church*,
that's passionate for souls

It starts with the love of God, a fear of God, and a sense of responsibility . . .
It grows with a conviction about God's Word, a commitment to prayer, and a
community of believers; and . . .

It leads to . . .
A great burden for others (Rom 9:2-3)

Rom 9:2-3 – [Paul says] *I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I*
could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my
brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Paul's kinsman were his fellow Israelites
And though they were descended from God's people of old, children of the *flesh* . . .
They weren't children of promise; They weren't saved (8)

And so great was his concern for their souls, that he had *great sorrow, unceasing anguish*,
and a mind to switch places with them if that would help *****

Which of course it wouldn't, but it illustrates how great was his *burden*, for their souls

A burden to want the best for them

A burden to see them avoid a wasted, miserable life

A burden to prevent the worst for them – now and for eternity

A passion for souls is not a walk in the park

In some cases it includes great sorrow and unceasing anguish, which many of you well
know re those in your own families; Keep on

It leads to a great burden for others, and . . .

A compelling desire to share (Jer 20:9)

To share what you *have*; To share what you *know*; To share who you *love*

Even when it's not so popular or well received, like it was for the prophet Jeremiah

Listen to what he says after being beaten and put in stocks for speaking about God . . .

Jer 20:9 – *If I say, “I will not mention him [God], or speak any more in his name,”
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with
holding it in, and I cannot.*

Jeremiah couldn't help but share what he knew

He couldn't help but speak about God for the sake of those around him

Even if he tried to hold it in, he couldn't

Just like Peter and John couldn't help but speak of what they had seen and heard when it
came to Jesus and the things done in his name (Acts 4:20) *****

• I admire the life of D.L. Moody in this respect, the founder of Moody Bible Institute

He too had a compelling desire to share his faith

And on one occasion, seeing a little girl standing on the street, he invited her to his

Sunday School – which she promised to attend, but didn't

So Moody watched for her for several weeks, and finally saw her again

But starting toward her, she ran away; At which point, Moody ran after her

And as R.A. Torrey tells the story, he chased her up one street and down another

Until she ran into a saloon, out the back door, up a flight of stairs, and into a room over
the saloon where she hid under a bed

And Moody followed her all the way, pulled her out by her foot, and led her to Christ
right then and there

The cool part is, that girl grew up to marry one of the foremost leaders of Moody church
under Torrey's pastorate

And their children went on to do the same

Torrey later wrote – “When Mr. Moody pulled that little child out from under the bed by
the foot he was pulling a whole family into the Kingdom of God, and eternity alone will
reveal how many succeeding generations he [influenced].”

(*Why God Used D.L. Moody*, by RA Torrey; 1923)

That's the kind of evangelism we need (**quote**)

*It's not better methods [according to Robert Coleman], but better men and women who
know their Redeemer from personal experience*

Men and women who see his vision and feel his passion for the world

Men and women who are willing to be nothing so that he might be everything

(Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*)

• When you've been with Jesus, you can't help but talk about him

When you see the things he's done, you can't help but name his name

When you've experienced his amazing grace, you can't help but pass it on

A passion for Christ leads to a passion for souls

And a passion for souls leads to a compelling desire to share

Something like a fire in your bones that makes you weary of holding it in

Do you have that? If not, get it; Get it, and fan it into flame

And finally, a passion for souls leads to . . .

And a life that counts (James 5:20)

James 5:20 – *Whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from
death*

That's a life that counts

You can do a lot of really good things, but this one ranks near the top *****

Something we have an opportunity to do *every single week* around here, by inviting them
to church – inviting them to come and see

It doesn't get much easier than that

And with RTR coming up, we have a *unique* opp to do so

To bring a sinner back from his wandering

To invite your *unsaved* family and friends, for a day of music, fun, and the gospel –
youth style

Take advantage of it – use the **invitation** in your bulletin

B/c unless mass evangelism is embraced at the personal level, we'll never reach the world
with the Good News of Jesus Christ

We have to go to them (**summary**)

Pray (for communion)

The Lord's Table

The Lord's Table would be a good time to reflect on Christ's passion for your soul, and to renew your passion for others

If Jesus is Lord and Savior of your life – join us

You don't have to be a member, just a believer

Examine yourself, get right with God . . .

And thank him for his passion and sacrifice on your behalf

But if he's not Lord of your life . . .

If you haven't trusted him to save you from your sin – let the bread and cup pass

Take the time to reflect on what's preventing you from doing so

Hang on to your bread and cup, and I'll lead us in taking them together (serve)

- At the last supper Jesus said – *This is my body, which is given for you.*

IOW this *broken* bread is symbolic of his sacrifice on our behalf

Do this [Jesus said] *in remembrance of me*

After that, he took the cup, saying – *This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*

IOW the contents of this cup are symbolic of his blood, the life he gave, to guarantee yours – full and forever

Do this, as often as you drink it [he said], *in remembrance of me*

Worship – Might To Save

Close

PwtP's

No Service – Saturday night, Aug 8th