

10-25-20 REFORMATION SUNDAY

Sermon- To Be Trusted With the Good News.

Scriptures- 1 Thess 2:1-13, CTW- PS 90: 13-17

Hymns- 455, Lord Speak to Me (463 Methodist Hymnal), 30

Theme- If God wants us to do something, He will give us the strength and courage to boldly speak out for him despite any obstacles that may come our way. Boldness is not reckless impulsiveness. Boldness requires courage to press through fears and do what is right. Think of your own faith life...what have you done with the good news?

I. Introduction:

When Dwight L. Moody was in London during one of his famous evangelistic tours, several British clergymen visited him. They wanted to know how and why this poorly educated American was so effective in winning throngs of people to Christ. Moody took the three men to the window of his hotel room and asked each in turn what he saw. One by one, the men described the people in the park below.

Then Moody looked out the window with tears rolling down his cheeks. "What do you see, Mr. Moody?" asked one of the men. "I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior." Obviously, D. L. Moody saw people differently than the average observer does. And because he saw eternal souls where others saw only people strolling in a park, Moody approached life with a different agenda.

D.L Moody may not have had the education that others possessed, but he had a heart for souls. Sometimes those who have the greatest impact for Christ are not the ones with the most talent. Often it is the people with the heart, passion and drive to serve the Lord who are the most fruitful for the Kingdom.

Over the years I have seen God use people with no notable talents, zero education and little to no experience to do great

things for His glory. Though they lack natural talent, they possess a love for God. And those who love God will love His Church.

Our text today presents us with Paul as a great example of someone who greatly loved the Lord and His Church. He is writing to encourage the members of the church at Thessalonica. In this portion of his letter we see how much he cared for this church. We get a glimpse into his heart!

Paul is really asking the question **"Do You Love The Church?"**

These verses show us several characteristics that will be present in the lives of people who love the Church. First of all we see that:

II. THOSE WHO LOVE THE CHURCH WILL SUFFER WILLINGLY. Verses 1 and 2

Paul and his associates had seen much success in Thessalonica. The people turned from idols and trusted in Christ as Savior. Word was spreading throughout the region about what God was doing in their midst.

A. However, the success in the Thessalonian Church came at a great personal price for Paul. He and his associates faced great opposition and physical harm.

Just before their arrival at Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were seized, beaten and imprisoned. They endured great persecution because of their work for Christ. Paul faced opposition and persecution throughout his entire ministry. But he had a heart for the church and he willingly suffered for the sake of the gospel.

We, however, have the freedom to worship whenever and however we choose. We do not have to fear being arrested, beaten or killed. But people all over the world are suffering and dying for the cause of Christ.

Why are they willing to suffer? Why do they put their families in danger? Why do they risk death? They do so because they love the Lord and because they love His people. Countless souls have paid the ultimate price in their service of the Lord.

Illustration: Consider Dr. Martha Myers from Alabama:

After graduating from college and attending medical school she had every opportunity to live a comfortable and successful life right here at home. But she chose to become a medical missionary and help people physically in order to minister to them spiritually. Dr. Myers had a heart for the people of Yemen. For 25 years she traveled from village to village taking the Gospel to those people.

On December 30, 2002, a member of Al-Qaida burst into the hospital where she was working and killed Martha Myers and 2 other American Missionaries. She would probably still be alive today if she had taken the easy road and remained here in the U.S.A. But God placed a special calling on her life and she had a heart for service.

B. As followers of Christ we should love our Savior. If we truly love our Savior we will love His Church. And if necessary, we should be willing to suffer for Christ and for His church. Paul could have lived a life free from all the pain and suffering that he faced. But he had a calling on his life and he was faithful to that calling. Paul loved Jesus, he loved the church and furthermore, he loved lost people. Because of this, he shared the Gospel with great fervency, even in the face of much opposition. NEXT:

III. THOSE WHO LOVE THE CHURCH WILL EVANGELIZE PASSIONATELY. Verses 3 and 4.

Paul preached the true Gospel to these people. His heart's desire was to see lost people saved. His goal was to see unbelievers become part of the Church. He and Silas were called and commissioned to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ. They were approved and entrusted by God to accomplish this task.

Their ultimate desire was to please God, not man. Notice what Paul says in v4 "On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts."

A. It was a great responsibility and privilege for them to be sent out as ambassadors for God. We possess that same responsibility.

Paul and Silas evangelized with great passion. One motive for their evangelism was the concern that they possessed for others. We should have that same concern for the lost people that we encounter on a daily basis. If we truly believe in Hell, Judgment and eternal damnation then we should do all we can to warn lost people of what is to come if they die without Christ. (think of Reverend Moody's tears!)

As Christians, we have been delivered from the wrath to come. Many of our neighbors and loved ones are facing that impending wrath. As born again children of God we should have enough concern and compassion to evangelize passionately.

IV. THOSE WHO LOVE THE CHURCH WILL LABOR ENTHUSIASTICALLY. Verses 5-8 (Beware of those who would STEAL your Joy!)

In those days there were false teachers who were driven by money. They would tickle the people's ears in order to get into the pockets.

A. This is an issue that remains prevalent in our day as well. Some people pretend to be God-called preachers but the reality is they are just trying to profit from the ministry. Paul did not try to win the Thessalonians over with flattering words. He survived with what he earned by his own hands and what was provided by the Philippian Believers.

Paul was not there for the money, he was there because he loved the people. He was there because he had a heart for the church. Paul was willing to do whatever was necessary to reach these people with the gospel of Jesus Christ!

B. We have ample opportunity to reach people for Christ. We may not be tuned in to see it! We encounter people on a daily basis who are in need. We should do all that we can to meet those needs. We also will encounter people who will try everything they can to STEAL OUR JOY!

When we lend a helping hand, people will be more apt to listen when we share the good news of Jesus Christ! Paul would remind

us You say that you love the Lord and His Church. If this is true then you will labor for the Lord and in His Church enthusiastically!

Next, we see that:

V. THOSE WHO LOVE THE CHURCH WILL LIVE HONORABLY. Verses 9 and 10

Paul had great confidence in the manner in which he and Silas had lived when they were in Thessalonica. He says "you saw it with your own eyes and God is my witness that we lived holy lives when we were among you."

A. These men were visible examples of holiness. In His Word God says... "Be thou holy for I am holy". We are God's children. Because of this relationship we should bear the characteristics of our Father. Holy lives identify us as God's Children.

Many people say that they have a heart for the church, but their actions are doing more harm than good. Those who are a part of the church yet do not live holy lives bring shame and reproach on the name of Christ and His Church. If you truly have a heart for the church you will live honorably.

VI. THOSE WITH A HEART FOR THE CHURCH WILL INVEST COMPLETELY. Verses 11 and 12

A. Paul did not just tell these people about Jesus. He did not stop at leading them to faith in Christ. Paul continued to invest in their lives. He was actively involved in the discipleship process. In fact, that was the purpose of this letter. His desire was for them to grow in the faith and to live a life that was pleasing to God.

In order to disciple the Thessalonian Christians, Paul had to invest much time and effort. He still had many other responsibilities. But through it all, he took the time to minister to his brethren in Thessalonica.

We must follow his example and do the same. We have been called to share the gospel of Jesus... But this involves more than just pointing people to faith in Christ. Jesus said (in the Great

Commission) that we are to "teach them the things that He has commanded us".

We have been called to make disciples. In doing so we may have to suffer, if so... may we do it willingly. We must have the passion to evangelize everywhere we go. This requires us to labor and serve with great enthusiasm.

We must serve others... love others and tell them that Jesus saves. We are surrounded by lost people. These are people who will die and go to hell if they don't turn to Jesus. They need to know that Jesus is their only hope! In fact, there are lost people in this place today who need to hear that Jesus is your only hope! He is the way of salvation! The only way that you will ever be forgiven of your sins and given eternal life is by repenting and turning to Him.

B. I encourage all of us to do so today! In order for us to be effective in our efforts to win people to Christ, we must live honorable and holy lives in front of them.

Furthermore, we must be willing to "give it all we've got" when it comes to ministry. We should do all that we can to see lost souls come to faith in Christ...and to see Christians grow and mature spiritually.

We possess the great honor of being called men and women of God. Like Paul and Silas we should love the Lord and we should love His church.

So, to summarize, If we truly love the church:

- a) we will suffer willingly,
- b) we will evangelize passionately,
- c) we will labor enthusiastically
- d) we will live honorably
- e) and we will invest completely.

Again I ask... "Do **You Love** the Church?"

Let Us Pray...

