

From Where I Sit . . .

“HAVING A PASSION FOR LOST SOULS”

I remember reading many years ago in a Muskogee, Oklahoma newspaper an advertisement something like this: “If you’re interested in knowing more about atheism...” and gave an address or phone number to call for material. **We should be so zealous** in letting people know that we would love to talk with them about the Lord. This is the message that burned the hearts of the men on the road to Emmaus after Jesus’ resurrection, and it’s the message that compelled the Apostles and disciples to traverse land and sea spreading the glorious good news.

If one were asked to give the prime reason for the church’s existence, I dare to say we would get an assortment of answers. One might say: “To bear glory to God,” “To honor Jesus by wearing His name,” “To be saved.” These are **not** incorrect statements and probably reflect how some particular person views the primary reason we exist as a church. I’d like to add to that list of ideas this thought: **We exist to bring forth fruit unto God.** *“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:4).*

We are indeed **saved to save others.** Realizing that Jesus alone saves, please understand by this statement that we mean that we are to share with others the opportunity to learn of salvation. We are to do as the Apostle Paul, and with his passion: **“We persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11).** No church has the right to exist if it selfishly hordes the message of saving grace. We are not a saved fraternity. No church can truly be a church of Christ if it does not have Christ’s spirit of love for the multitudes who are as “sheep having no shepherd.” He died for them. We must at least live toward them in a manner that will let them know of His saving love.

Paul’s encounter with Jesus left him with a passion for souls that would drive him to the ends of the earth for converts. He would bear tribulation if necessary, saying, **“We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed” (Romans 5:3-5).**

Paul would bear affliction if necessary, saying: **“for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).** He would suffer if necessary, saying: **“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).** The words of one of our hymns stirs an emotion within me each time we sing it:

*Jesus the Savior came down from above,
Came to bring mercy and love;
Crucify Him” the mob scornfully cried,
So he on Calvary died;
While on the cross He prayed, “Father forgive,
For they know not what they do”
For us He died that for Him we might live,
Can He depend on you?*

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