

The Passion of God - His Love for Sinners

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[0 : 00] What a joy and a privilege it is for me to be here again with you ministering God's Word. And just coming in as a visiting speaker on a one-off Sunday.

I am normally an expository preacher and that's what I've been doing in my own church for the last 27 years. But today, as a one-off, I'm going to speak to you topically on the Great Commission that is here before us in Matthew chapter 28 from 16 to 20.

The passion of God, His love for sinners. And that is something so amazing about a holy God who loves sinners like you and I.

Once those of us who are lost and now brought into God's fold. Do you know the uncertain times that we live in?

The uncertainty that is around us. We think that things are in control. And then one volcano goes up in Iceland.

[1 : 31] And almost the world comes to a standstill. This weekend, three of my flights were cancelled too. We were stuck in Belfast.

The only flight that took off in this last five days from Belfast to mainland was from Belfast to Glasgow Friday night.

And somehow my family and I, the six of us, were on that flight. And we drove all night, Friday night to London.

I arrived 4.30 in the morning to be in the board meeting where your minister was also supposed to be with us. And finished that and 4.30 was on the train back to Glasgow.

We did all night and then all evening again. But what a privilege it is to be here. Why? In all the unchanging times, the changing times, sorry, the unchanging word of God remains with us.

[2 : 40] And in the word, what do we hear? We hear the voice of God calling out to the lost. And that is what gives purpose and meaning and direction to all that we do in our lives.

And let us just briefly this morning analyze how God has gone after man right from the creation of the world. I strongly believe that God's heart beats with a passion to save the lost.

From the first dark day when sin separated him from his creation, he has been reaching out to mankind. Where are you?

God called to Adam and Eve in the garden. Like a father searching out for his lost child. He has been calling out to the world ever since.

And the very fact that you and I are seated here in the house of the Lord and worshipping him is because there was a day we heard that voice clearly in our hearts and in our lives.

[3 : 53] I know there was a day my late grandfather heard the voice of the Lord in his life. He was an Islamist. He was a Wahhabi Muslim sent from Saudi Arabia to preach Islam in India and then marvelously saved through the ministry of John Hyde, Reverend John Hyde, a Presbyterian minister.

And was saved. And therefore, you might be wondering where do I get my Anglicized surname as Shaw. I have no relation to any Shaws in this land.

But it was Shaw, S-H-A-H. My grandfather had to drop the H for a W to be saved from being killed and the new identity that he had to take upon himself.

Drop the Sayyid in front of his name, tracing his ancestry to the Prophet Muhammad's family himself. That changed the destiny of an entire family.

The voice of God. The voice that the world needs to hear today. And the Old Testament is a record of God calling out.

[5 : 11] He first called through Abraham. All people on the earth shall be blessed through you. And then he called through the prophets who showed the way of genuine repentance and faith.

And finally, finally, I get so excited when I read Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 1. And in these last days, he has revealed himself through his Son, our Savior, Lord Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus made an atonement on the cross. And three days later, conquered death once and for all.

And we must remember, all this was done because God has got a passion for sinners. Let me also put this passion of God for sinners in perspective that Satan also has got a passion.

And his passion is to thwart God's plan. Satan has been trying to stamp out the Son of God since the beginning of the human race.

[6 : 28] After Adam and Eve had sinned in the Garden of Eden, God pronounced the judgment in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head. And in the very next generation, he had orchestrated events by sowing discord and jealousy. Until one of Eve's son murdered the other one.

Satan moved to kill all the male babies. Satan went after Jesus in the wilderness. He offered an alternative to the cross.

He knew what would happen to him when Christ fulfilled the will of God in paying the price for our salvation. And now, in our days, the evil one walks through false gods.

The country that I come in, come from, has got 650 million gods and goddesses. Many living gods that are there in this country of 1.2 billion.

[7 : 39] And in your own culture, where you come from, and in your neighborhoods, where you come from, there are those false gods.

Gods of materialism. And he works in the church through divisions, jealousies, etc. But let's go on to look at Jesus' passion for sinners.

Jesus placed the highest prize possible on a soul of man. Matthew chapter 16 verse 26 says, What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? The soul is eternal. And it will never die.

Therefore, you could see Jesus' hand on the skin of, on the festering skin of a leper.

You see Jesus hugging Zacchaeus. Over and over again in the ministry of Jesus. We hear that passion for sinners.

[8 : 53] And do you know the great revival that is going on through India, very specially among the Dalits, the communities that have been outcast by the high caste Hindus, and the amazing turning to the Lord among this community has been because those who were cast out by the society, culture and community is being embraced by the Lord.

And people are coming in, in their thousands from this community, embracing Christ. Because right from the beginning, those who were considered as sinners, God was embracing them through Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 26 to 28, come to my mind when it says, Brother, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards.

Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

He chose the lowly things of this world, and the despised things, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are. God's amazing love for you and I, that we are here today as the family of God.

[10 : 25] And I'm going to come to you in a minute. But let me go to the apostles for a minute. God's passion, Satan's passion, Jesus' passion, Apostle's passion.

Let's look at the apostles' passion for the soul of man for a minute. The apostles accepted the commission of Jesus to go into the entire world and to preach the gospel and to make disciples.

No trip was too far if by making that trip a soul could be won. No expense was too great if by making that expenditure a soul could be won.

No suffering was too intense if by suffering a soul could be won. Why? Because the soul is of infinite value. Jesus called Peter and Andrew to stop catching fish and to start catching men.

Matthew chapter 4 verse 19 says, Come follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you what? I will make you fishers of men. And that became the apostles' all-consuming passion.

[11 : 39] 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 16, Apostle Paul, who had the same passion, he writes, I am compelled to preach.

He does not say, I want to preach or I am excited to preach. Here he says, I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.

And friends, when the apostles says like that in the scripture, he is not saying of the ordained community. He is not saying just of the missionaries that need to go out and preach.

He is talking about all those who believe. All those who are convinced that Jesus is Savior and Lord. And I tell you, this is the message that the world is waiting to hear.

And this is the message that we need to take out to the waiting world there. Paul begins Romans chapter 1, and verse 1, and he says, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

[12 : 47] This is Paul's single passion that is heard in his letters. He says, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

It is considered that Paul's heart beat for the gospel. And it was gospel, gospel, gospel. Brothers and sisters, family of God, when we sit over here, what is our heart beating for?

And if you place your hand upon your heart, what do you hear? And I'll just come in a minute to you and challenge you on your passion.

What are your passions? But let's stay here for a minute with Paul. The depths of Paul's passion is felt in Romans chapter 9, verses 1 to 4.

At the moment, our church in Delhi and our other churches are going through the book of Romans. And because I was at home for a longer period, I took them from chapter 1 to chapter 8.

[14 : 01] And then others are taking them on currently from chapter 8 onwards. But in chapter 9, verses 1 to 4, it says, I speak the truth in Christ.

I am not lying. Conscious confirms it in the Holy Spirit. I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.

Do you know what Paul is saying? God, you can cast me out but save my people. Can you hear that passion?

Paul is saying, I am willing to go to hell if by going to hell my relatives and countrymen can be saved. Do you know, friends, this is not mere rhetoric.

This is the passion of the greatest apostle. And friends, as soon as we start talking about passion, many of you who might be in your 70s or 80s might be ticking yourself off and say, this is not for me.

[15 : 11] you tell me, you tell me, where in the scriptures it is written that passion for sinners is only for those who are 24 to 60. Nowhere.

This passion for the lost is one of the continuing condition in the life of a believer. and that is what we see in the life of the apostles.

Men and women through the centuries have been consumed by this passion throughout the ages. once Jesus looked over the city of Jerusalem and he wept.

Matthew chapter 23 verse 37 and he says, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you were not willing. Could I ask you a question? Have you ever wept over your city? When you have walked on the streets of your city the ungodliness that you see in them has it bothered you?

[16 : 31] Have you wept over the city? Do you know what are the things we have wept over? In fact, sometimes we have been more sorrowful when Scotland has not done well in football or in rugby.

We are more sorrowful in those stages than to see our neighbors our colleagues our relatives heading towards eternal destruction.

Matthew chapter 9 verse 36 says of Jesus when he saw the crowds he had compassion over them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without shepherd.

could I ask you friends what is it that erects you from inside? When you see the crowds when you see majority of people not obeying not following not understanding not hearing not seeing who God is people yesterday yesterday on the train there was a little boy of an Indian family talking to another boy of an Irish family that was sitting right ahead of us in the train and the little boy said if you are bad and you die do you know what will happen and my ears perked up to listen and the Hindu boy was saying to this little Irish boy nine year old both the boys because later on we got talking to them that's how I know the little boy said if you die and you live a naughty boy life you will

become an insect in the next life and the little

Irish boy was scratching his head and looking at him and I said oh my goodness you know if he had talked that to my little boy nine year old Isaac who has already preached his first sermon when he was eight years old John 3 16 last year in the States and when he was seven year old shared his testimony before a large audience in Ireland two years before that you know if he would he said he said that's rubbish because it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment but friends why I'm sharing this illustration is because right in our neighborhoods right in where we are people have people are confused they do not know where they are going they do not know who the true and the living God is and it is your and my responsibility as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim to be bold to witness to say it

[19 : 25] God loves people all the people of the world and so must we a young salvation army officer wrote to General Booth the founder of Salvation Army and he said to him I am ready to quit I have tried everything and I failed General Booth wired back because those days were the days of telegram wire you would not understand if you are a current generation person but he informed him back and said try tears try tears John Henry Joweth has written some powerful words to us and he says the gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of a bleeding heart as soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless we can never heal the needs we do not feel tearless hearts can never be the heralds of

God's passion Henry Martin missionary to India prayed lord lord let me burn for India 1793 William Carey age 32 offered his life to serve India and for 44 years he laid down his life to serve India there were no missionary societies anywhere in the world in 1792 but William Carey made a map of the world placed it on the wall of his cobbler shop and began to pray for the entire world and he became so burdened that soon he left home and went to Bengal there he preached every day to the people and yet for seven years there was not a single Bengali convert and over the years Carey translated the Bible or parts of the Bible in about 40 different Indian languages or dialects the Hindi Bible that I still hold in my hand was the one that was translated by

William Carey I can go on to several men through the ages who had a passion for the soul of man John Wesley John Knox George Whitefield and coming back to Apostle Paul who was so stirred by the cries of the men from Macedonia and the cries from Athens Corinth and Rome what I was saying to you family of God this morning in being providentially here with you because I could be missing also from being here if I had not persevered and somehow said whatever happens I'll be here John Henry Jovet again says to be in the sacrificial succession our sympathy must be a passion our intercession must be groaning and our service must be martyrdom in everything there has to be the shedding of blood have we served to the shedding of blood have we served to that extent could

I ask you in closing this morning what is your passion what is your passion what is it that grabs you God's love for sinners continues to embrace this world let me read to you a few figures it is research that there are 15,988 distinct ethno linguistic groups in the world of these 6,641 are unreached that is fewer than 2% of them are Christians that's why they are considered unreached there are 2.7 billion people who live in this world today from these ethnic groups who are considered unreached of the 100 largest unreached people groups where are they 45 of them are in India 7 are in China and 7 are in Pakistan the 4 largest unreached people groups are the Japanese in Japan 131 million unreached Japanese the Bengalis in Bangladesh 121 million the sheikhs in India 76 million the Brahmins the upper caste Hindus in India 56 million of these 100 largest unreached peoples 46 are Muslim people groups 38 are Hindu people groups 8 are Buddhist and 12 of them have got population that is more than 50 million people friends could I ask you what is your passion sports music career holiday home improvements cars bikes what is your passion a person's passion is the thing that he is most concerned about thinks the most about and affects his life the most today there are these many unreached people groups with over 700 evangelical churches for every one unreached people group the great commission that I read to you is very much doable

[25 : 42] God never asked us to do something that we cannot do which he has not laid an example before us friends it is not an option it is a mandate it is not it is not to be an omission in our lives two weeks ago I was standing in New Delhi next to George Werwer the founder of Operation Mobilization I had the unique privilege to translate for him and he said the greatest challenge today in the church is that 80% of the church is not involved in witnessing are you part of that 80% that

keeps its mouth shut when the opportunity comes do you know brothers and sisters in the world that we live in one of the sobering statistics is that every three minute someone in this world refuses to stop talking about his master and his savior jesus christ and lays down his life as a consequence of witnessing every three minute there is a martyrdom in the church of the lord jesus christ let me read you an illustration and then sit down the son of god is sitting on his glorious throne strategizing with his angels about how he will rescue humankind from their enemy here's the plan he says i will slip into the pool of humanity as a helpless baby and let thirty years pass without a ripple then i emerge as a humble teacher traveling by foot and relying on the handouts of my followers for about three years i touch the untouchables rub shoulders with sinner and pour my treasure of eternal truth into the callous hand of unschooled disciples then at the climax of my earthly life i surrender myself to the prince of darkness and allow evil men to brutalize and murder me a shadow of despair blackens the earth for three days and on the third day i break death's grip and rise from the grave victorious but instead of unveiling myself as a conquering hero i peek in to see my most faithful followers then i quietly ascend to heaven before i leave i entrust my story to a huddled group of apprehensive believers telling them to use it to reach the world well what do you think god will go to the most incredible lens and do the most unexpected thing to save sinners and it is your and my privilege to be co-workers with him body of christ family of god will you go out today and open your mouth wherever god has placed you to be his witness to his saving grace and the gospel of salvation may the lord bless you this morning you you