

Sharing Your Life



Jim Cymbala February 10, 2018

God made some verses in 1 Thessalonians come alive to me. Like most ministers, I had studied Paul in hopes of gleaning the secrets of such powerfully effective labor for Christ. I already knew his unchanging message — the gospel of Jesus Christ. I had also analyzed his methodology: he depended totally on the Holy Spirit. Daily he was led and strengthened by the Spirit's power.

But now a third truth began to jump off the pages of my New Testament — Paul's motivation. In reminding the believers of his visit to Thessalonica, which resulted in their conversions and the founding of a Christian church, Paul said, "As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children" (1 Thessalonians 2:6-7). The picture here in the original Greek is of a mother nursing her baby. What a tender picture of love and devotion. When a mother nurses an infant, it's all about the baby, not her. Paul declared that was how he was while among them — all the attention and concern was for them, not him. The apostle's motivation was a fervent love for the believers in Thessalonica that could only be explained by God's own love controlling him.

But then he went further: "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us" (2:8).

"We loved you so much," Paul said, "that we didn't want to share only the gospel with you, but our *own lives* as well!"

No wonder Paul's messages reached the hearts of the people. His words were not only from his mouth, but also from a tender heart. What would make a minister want to give not just sermons to people, but his very life as well? It was love — God's love!

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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