

I Could Wish Myself Accursed For the Sake of the Lost

Tim Conway | *illbehonest.com*

Tim: You know what's interesting about love? Love is a driving force, isn't it? I mean, think about what people do who love. Love will drive people to do all manner of things. It will drive people to lay down their lives. Right? Won't people give their lives if they love? They will. We as Christians are supposed to love the brethren and be willing to lay down our life. Jesus loved and He laid down His life. Love is an incredibly strong force. Let me say this. Love is strong. I think the thing that comes to my mind when I think of love and I think of love for the lost is the Apostle Paul. Somebody read the first three verses of Romans 9. Somebody just read that.

"I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that 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."

Tim: Do you know what love does? It will cause you to bear about in your own heart unceasing anguish. Did you hear that? Read it again, brother.

"...that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart."

Tim: Great sorrow. Unceasing anguish. You know why somebody will bear that in their heart? Because they love. Okay, here's the thing. Keep reading after that, brother.

"They are Israelites, and to them belong..."

Tim: No, right after the part that talks about unceasing anguish.

"For I could wish that I myself were accursed..."

Tim: Okay, what does accursed mean? I could wish myself accursed. Under the curse of God. And cut off from Christ. For what? "For the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen." For the sake of my brothers. I could wish myself... okay, you know what that does? How can that be helpful to us as soul winners? That statement right there. Does that help you at all? Does that help you want to go down the street here and make sure the East side folks don't perish? Because you hear the Apostle Paul saying that? You know what that does for me? You know what I find is very helpful when I read biography? Which, by the way, that's just kind of a biographical statement that Paul gives to us right there. You know when I read about a Hudson Taylor, or I read about a George Mueller, or a Carey, or a Judson, or a Spurgeon, do you know what I'm struck with? I'm struck with men and women who endured things and did things that aside from

the grace of God there's no explanation for. What does James tell us about Elijah? What does he tell us about Elijah?

(from the room) He's a man with a nature like ours.

Tim: He's a man with a nature like ours. You know what's interesting? Why do you think he tells us that? What did Elijah do? (unintelligible) He prayed and it didn't rain, and he prayed again, and it did rain. Why do you think he would come along and tell us he's just like us? Why would James tell us that? Because we don't think that, right? When we see Elijah and Elisha and these guys from the Scripture, we think they're super-human. When we read about the Apostle Paul, we look at the guy and we think he's not like us.

But you know what? They're made of the same stuff. These are God's people saved by the blood of Christ with all the weaknesses and all the frailties of humankind just like us. And do you know what the biography does? When you read them, you realize, wow, somebody made of the same stuff I am and look at what they did. And what it does for me, how it encourages me is it makes me realize, through Christ I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me. I can do these things. James is telling us this to have us know that if we'll pray like Elijah did, nothing is impossible with God. It's all possible through Him. And what happens is when I read about Paul's burden, it makes me realize this - it makes me realize a burden like that is possible in a person made of the same stuff I'm made of. Listen, isn't there something about Paul's burden when he says that he would be cut off from Christ that makes you kind of sit up and take notice? (incomplete thought)

Listen, how many of you have read a man with such great sorrow over the lostness of his kinsmen that he wishes himself accursed and cut off from Christ? He could wish himself damned. By the way, if that's not an expression of Christ's heart - I could wish myself under the wrath of God for the sake of My brethren. And He did it. But you know what? If we heard that that was Jesus in Romans 9, we'd say, okay, well, He is super-human. We could understand that. He was doing things and thinking things all the time that go above us. But when it's Paul, and we know he's human, we know he's a sinner; we know he's saved, and we see in him - when I read that, it suddenly makes me ask myself that question.

Do I ever feel that? Now the closest I've felt that and I don't even know how to put it in words would be for my children. But what that shows me is that when the Spirit of God takes over a sinner and indwells, and begins to work His fruit in the life of a believer, the chief aspect of that fruit is love. And what Paul shows me is that a sinner saved by grace can love the lost that much through the operations of the Spirit of God. Doesn't it prove that to us? That that is within the realm of possibility? Why is that important? Why would that be important for you and I to realize that? Because I'll tell you this, one of the things that James says is that you don't have because you don't ask. And you don't ask for things that you don't think are possible. Listen, we don't ask. We don't seek. We don't beseech God. We don't fast for; we don't lay hold of the Lord for things that we think are impossible to have. But when I look and I see Paul with that mindset,

you know what? That puts it within the realm of possibility. That if I don't have anything in my life, in my thought life, in my heart, in my soul, in my longing for the lost - I mean, are there any of you that look at that and you're just like I can't even fathom that? I can't even fathom the idea of saying that I'd be willing to not be a Christian and perish for the sake of somebody else. I mean, to even think that way; to even love that way.

Brethren, let me ask you this. What do you think this city might look like if we just had 20 people with that heart? Or even one? Think about the cities that Paul walked into with that heart. He didn't leave them the same. He goes into Thessalonica. He goes into Philippi. He goes into Corinth. And they weren't left the same. Can you imagine 20 people let loose that had a heart that somehow resembled that? Let me tell you this, that kind of burden takes you, you know what you can't do? You can't spend your life doing nothing for sinners. If you're willing to be cut off and accursed, you know what you'll do? You'll go out your front door. It's like I heard John MacArthur talk one time about the guy that said how much he loved his fiance and how much he loved her and he'd swim the English channel, but I can't come over tonight because it's raining. That's just a silly little thing that he tells, but isn't there a reality? We can surmise what great things we'll do.

It's amazing the young people that will say they want to go to the foreign mission field. Why? Well, sometimes it's a romantic thing. But how many is it that like William Carey, he would stare at those maps and he would think of the multitudes of people. How many of those missionaries could hear the cry of the heathen and it just moved their hearts? You've heard Paul Washer talking about laying awake at night for the nations. His heart just aches. It's rent. Listen, young people will say all the time, well, I think I ought to go over to Papua, New Guinea. I've had people from our church - young guys - tell me that. I think I need to go over here. I think I need to go to Laredo. I think I need to go and do this. And yet, what? I don't see these guys out combing the streets. Why? Are you telling me you're driven by a love that anywhere near resembles this?

Brethren, burdened. If we're going to be soul winners, we've got to have burden. And one of the things to realize, look, these burdens for souls like this, they're not natural. They're Spirit of God wrought. That's His fruit: love. Do you think there's anything but love behind a statement like that of the apostles? But what it makes us realize is it's within the realm of possibility in a saved sinner. You can't argue that. You cannot argue that. And how many have borne witness down through the centuries of having similar hearts and burdens? And I'll tell you what, when you see it, their actions bear testimony.

Do you know something? The average American missionary stays on the foreign mission field one year. You know why? Why? Why are all these missionaries going to the mission field and coming back after a year? Never to go back again, most of them. Why? They're not really burdened. It was all glamour. It was romantic. Foreign countries. You know, you get this idea of traveling the world. I see my daughter the other day and she's looking at the world map and she's saying, oh, I want to go here. And the kids are talking about here and here. It's all

romantic. It's all glorious. When it's a map and it's got all different colors and you can imagine. You've seen the National Geographic.

Hey, it's one thing to see a National Geographic about Papua, New Guinea. And to watch this guy getting eaten by mosquitoes, while you're sitting in your living room in your air conditioned house. It's one thing to see that. It's another thing to be there. That guy was so swollen with mosquito bites. Have you guys seen that? Trevor Johnson sent that. Have you seen that one? It's a whole other thing. Are you willing to go in and lay down your life for cannibals? When you have a heart that is willing to be accursed, will you go endure swarms of mosquitoes? Or how about being stoned? Or beaten with rods? Do you realize that when Paul was stoned, he turned right around and marched back into the city and preached the Gospel all over? Brethren, if we were out and somebody threw a rock at us, oh, we'd be telling stories for weeks in the church. We'd have come running home. We'd be warning people: Don't go back into that neighborhood. He marches right back in. Burden, brethren. Like I said, sometimes we don't have because we don't ask. I'll tell you, if you were fervently asking for this kind of burden, even if God gave you half, it'd be a long way from where most of us are now.

You know, listen, I'm just speaking reality here, guys. A year ago, two years ago, do you know how many young guys from our church were going down to the Alamo? But let me tell you this, if it was driven by a heart that was really broken for sinners, it wouldn't have stopped. If the desire is to go because it's a fun social event, and that's where all the people are going to be hanging out on Friday night, well, then, you go as long as they're going. And when everybody stops going, you stop going. But when it's a burden for souls, you don't stop going. Why? Because just because everybody else stops going, the burden for souls doesn't quit. Right? Brethren, soul winners are those (incomplete thought).

I can remember one time, I can remember one time calling John Wheeler. And he's telling me - it's night and it's raining and Octave was visiting and he's out there in the street somewhere and he doesn't speak Turkish. Well, of course, that's what we want to see in missionaries, right? We want to see them out there on the streets. We want to see them out there in the rain. We want to see them out there at night. We want to see them out there even when they don't know the language. Because they have a burden for souls and they just want to reach them. I'll tell you, those are the kind of people that turn the world upside down. But if we don't even know that it's a burden we lack, and it's within the realm of possibility to have a love like this, and we're not asking for it, then we're content to let our hearts go cold and to not run after the lost, and to see people all around us that are perishing. You have the truth that God uses to save people, and you're willing to walk by them and let them go to hell and it doesn't bother you. Why? Because there's no burden. There's no passion. There's no love for them. If you looked at that guy in the grocery store with a love like a mother has for her daughter or her son, it's a whole different thing. You're willing to do all sorts of things.

Jesus said go. He said go. Go to the nations. Well, this is one of the nations. Listen, "go" right there doesn't mean you have to go overseas. It just means you need to go somewhere. We

need to be a people on the go. And what are we supposed to do? We're supposed to make disciples. But listen, again, isn't that amazing? Jesus says go make disciples. What? Can I make a disciple? That's what He seems to imply. Just like Paul says: I can win some. I can save some. What? We can win some? We can save some? We can make disciples? He that wins souls is wise. In other words, yep, you can do it. Oh, not in your own strength. Nobody ever said that. Obviously in the power of God. But you'll never do it in the power of God unless you go. You'll never do it in the power of God unless you're convinced you need to go. You'll never go unless you have a burden to go. You have the love to go. You're compelled by the excellencies of Christ to go. Brethren, these are the things we need. I'll tell you, when we become flat, stale, and are no longer chasing after souls, it's because the excellencies of Christ are not there. It's because the burden to desire to be anywhere near be cut off, to have this earnestness burning within you, it's not there. Your love - it's grown cold. It's because you're not lifting up your eyes. You're not seeing. It's because we're not convinced that we need to go. We're convinced of other things. We're convinced there's other things in life more important.

Brethren, I'll tell you this, if you've been saved for that particular person to be a people who proclaim His excellencies, then whatever else may be true about your life, that's something that you need to be doing in whatever sphere you find yourself in. Some of you guys are in school. So be it. Proclaim His excellencies there. And you can do that verbally. You can do that through written form. You can hand out a tract. You can give them a Paul Washer DVD. Give them one of these we've made up. Or you can talk to them. I know different people have different gifts. I know there's different ways we can go about it. You can leave tracts around. You can be like Mona Leiter. Everywhere that woman goes, if you're walking behind her, you're seeing tracts on the sidewalk. Even sometimes if you're in places where it's kind of like co-ed bathrooms or something, you go in there and there's one there. You're walking through a restaurant and there's an empty table over there. You'll be in another town somewhere and it's like hey, that's one of our business cards. How'd that get here? Well, of course, you're with Mona. Why shouldn't we all do that? What one of you guys, even if you're socially backwards, can't take business cards and just drop them like Johnny Appleseed? I guess that guy was fictitious right? But supposedly, folklore, this guy that just went about all of the United States. He wore a pan on his head. And he threw apple seeds everywhere. We throw the seed. Isn't the Word likened to the seed in the Word of God? It is.

Listen, if you just drop business cards all over and you got to the end of your life and one soul looked up I'll Be Honest, came across Paul Washer's youth sermon and was converted, would that not be worth it? Jesus said lift up your eyes! There's eternal fruit here! It'd be worth it. Is not one soul worth that investment? And who says you'll only harvest one? But if you lived your whole life and only harvested one soul, what a thing! Could you imagine every time you see that person in glory? The Lord used me to save him!