

BRIDE**SACRIFICIALLY MOTIVATED**

1 Thessalonians 2:1 – 16

Pastor Daniel Hahn

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MESSAGE NOTES

The Big ME ...

12% in 1950

80% in 2005

93% in 2015

God is manifested through "... my own voice, from within myself. ... God dwells within you as you yourself, exactly the way you are." — Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*

Willingly sacrificial (2:1 – 12):

1. Communicating the Gospel through our lives even when we're opposed. (2:1 – 2)
2. Focused on the Truth even when we're accused of having some self-serving motive. (2:3 – 6a)

We should not try to love people; rather we should train to become the kind of person who would love them. Only then can the ideal of love pass into a real possibility and practice. Our aim under love is not to be loving to this or that person, or in this or that kind of situation, but to be a person possessed by love as an overall character of life. Our responses to the specific occasions when we are to act flow out of our overall character. I do not come to my enemies and then try to love them; I come to them as a loving person. The good tree bearing good fruit. — Dallas Willard, *Life Without Lack*

3. Driven purely by love for people even when it's difficult and costly. (2:6b – 12)

Time is what we invest to be a part of a community, and time is the currency in which we pay the cost. And it's not always time that can be scheduled or planned in advance. When my brother has an urgent need, I have an urgent need. I notice people who seem to have all kinds of time for hobbies and do-it-yourself projects. They have time to "go deep" with golf or sports or music or yard work because they aren't in community. Because they don't make the investment in developing community, they never have to pay the cost. But from the standpoint of intimate friendships, they live alone. They're rarely needed or called upon by others. Consequently, when they have needs, they'll likely go unnoticed and unmet.
— Regi Campbell, *Radical Mentoring blog*

The outcome (2:13 – 16):

They do not hesitate to describe their faith as Christ "living in" them. ... their little human lives had, in Christ, been linked up with the very life of God. ... These early Christians were on fire with this conviction ... they were pioneers of a new humanity, founders of a new Kingdom. — J. B. Philips

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you define “evangelism” and what sort of images does it bring to mind?
- How do many people in our culture feel about anyone talking openly about their faith?
- How do you feel about telling others about your faith? Why do you think God has always worked through people to reach people — rather than, say, putting a big message in the sky?
- What realities could have prevented Paul from sharing the Gospel with others?
- Verses 3 – 6 are a clear description of Paul’s motives. Why would “motive” be such a crucial factor in the process of sharing our faith? Can you think of situations where wrong motives seemed to negatively impact people’s receptivity to the Gospel?
- What words characterized Paul’s heart and methods in verses 7 – 12? What are some practical ways we could show these same qualities to people today? Can you even think of one way these could be displayed in your own life and relationships right now?
- In what specific ways can gentleness and caring become more a part of our on-going effort to reveal Christ to the world?
- What is one very practical way you could incorporate Paul’s example into your own life this week?