

“Confessions Of A Wimpy Lover”

I have recently been in Indiana helping my parents work through some health issues. On the flight there I read a great book, Leading With Love (by Alexander Strauch), which made me reminisce...

For many years I struggled with being motivated to love. Ask me to stop a home intruder, join the Reserves and charge into the sands of Iraq, or solve some major problem in the family and I would be all over these. But, ask me to love? That was (so I thought) like asking me to go on Oprah and tell about a stuffed dog I had named “Toto” as a pre-schooler (o.k., so I was in second grade when Toto left). To say the least, love sounded like something only the wimpy do. Even though I had studied the Bible in-depth for years, I was a closet I’m-not-excited-about-love-person.

Two experiences converged to melt the outer shell of this crusty middle-aged heart. The first was a series of attacks that the leadership of our church and I experienced during 2006. As the elder board was in the crosshairs of this lethal volley, I knew that we could shoot back or we could form a special op’s team, make our way to the enemy lines, and destroy the vitriol with love. After all, doesn’t the Bible say we must do this? “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Prov. 15:1) Again, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.” (Luke 6:27) It hit me that one of the most heroic ways I could honor God was by loving and forgiving those who had wronged me (cf. 1 Cor. 10:23-33). I came to see that my call to love was actually a commission from our commander-in-chief (Mk. 12:31).

The second experience was the reminder that when we love we follow the example of Jesus Christ. “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Eph. 5:1-2) Jesus lived out the most courageous love ever seen—dying for the very people who were enemies and even praying for their forgiveness in the process (Lk. 23:34).

Now, as I remember just how hard love can be, I realize there is no more manly assignment that God can give us. My perspective has truly changed. Now, I realize I was the wimpy one and that the truly strong are those who admit they are weak, need God’s help (2 Cor. 12:10), and love no matter what.

All of these realizations are timely as I dream about what God has for the Evangelical Free Church in Minden. Karen, Jeff, and I were all struck by the love you showed to us earlier this month and how much affection we saw shared among the congregation. When I envision what God will do in the future, much of it has to do with passionate love

for God , for each other, for our community, and for the world. I pray that there will be nothing wimpy about it!

Passionately Loving God And Others With You,

Pastor Tom