Vision – Passion – Sacrifice

"I must be about my Father's business." Lk. 2:49

"I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the other towns as well." Lk. 4:43

"Them also I must bring." Jn. 10:16

A great "must" dominated the life of Jesus from its beginning to the end. That same divine compulsion must dominate our lives as well. The "other sheep", the Father's business, the inescapable Cross, vision, passion, sacrifice – these compulsions of the Lord Jesus must move deeply in our hearts.

Where there is no **vision**, the work perishes. Workers become mere employees in the international job market. All effective workers in our part of the world have been men and women of vision who see in "the laws that blaspheme and the tyrannies that fetter" a challenge to the Lordship of Jesus and the liberating power of the Gospel. They see in the needs of others a claim on their care. They see in sin-blighted situations the transforming possibilities of redemption and seeing them, they lay hold of them for God.

Our enemy always seeks to dim that vision, to afflict the senses of a worker, to depress his/her spirit and weaken his/her faith. He does this by flaunting the visible evidence of his power and the apparent inviolability of his rule. Worse than this, he shows the sheer numerical weight of the lost continually passing into a Godless eternity. All this tends to blunt our concern for "the other sheep". It lessens our sense of urgency and above all, it tends to diminish the value of every single person.

Moses endured ***"as seeing him who is invisible"*** (Heb. 11:27). Such vision is costly because it inevitably leads to identification with the Crucified. Moses weighed the issues – deliberately refused – resolutely forsook – magnificently chose and went out to suffering. Can we suffer and endure? We can't do it without vision.

Vision is essential, but also there is no substitute for passion. **"Now let my soul burn out for God."** wrote Henry Martyn on arrival in India. **"I have but one passion: it is Christ and Him only!"** said Count Zinzendorf of the Moravians. Vision, knowledge, training and cultural understanding are all needed. They provide the fuel. But passion kindles and sets it aflame and a worker never amounts to much without it.

John the Baptist was a burning in a shining light (Jn. 5:35). We must burn if we are to shine. Passion springs from devotion – the constraining empowering love of Jesus. **"My heart an altar and Your love the flame."**

"I must be about my Father's business." (Lk. 2:49)

"Woe to me if I preach not the Gospel." (1 Cor. 9:16)

"My little children of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19)

"My heart's desire and prayer to God … that they might be saved." (Rom. 10:1)

Paul, like his Master, was moved by a mighty passion. **"Desperate tides of the world's great anguish forced through the channels of a single heart."** For him there was no faltering, no turning aside, but a love that flamed more and more ardently and a zeal that endured to the end.

What about sacrifice? Amy Carmichael speaks of the bloodstains that mark out the track of a worker. A comfort-loving Christian can never be the disciple of a Cross-bearing Lord. The worker should not spare himself but press on in the power of the Spirit of our Crucified Lord. ***"I will show him how great things"*** – not that he will achieve, but – ***"that he must suffer for My name's sake"*** (Acts 9:16).

On the night before the Cross, Jesus prayed: ***"That the love with which You have loved me may be in them."*** (Jn. 17:26) A few hours later that love of the Father gave the Son to death on the Cross. God's love didn't withhold the ultimate sacrifice. Let none of us who would follow Jesus slide subtly into the treason that hopes to soften the rough realities of a Cross. This is not the way to know the love of the Father – to find the pearl of greatest price.

For the Son of Man "must" and as was our Master, so shall we be. Is my life dominated by a "must" – of a vision for the loss? of passion? of sacrifice?

Amy Carmichael wrote:

"Make my thy mountaineer;
I would not linger on the lower slopes.
Fill me afresh with hope, O God of hope,
That undefeated I may climb the hill,
As seeing Him Who is invisible,
Whom not having seen I love."

May God help us as we press on with the task He has set before us.