

## Compelled

### Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 9:7-16

*I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!*  
1 Corinthians 9:16 —

Five hundred miles north of Tokyo, in snow country, a modern-day Paul labored until he burned his life out for Christ. We got to know Rev. Matsuda during the years we were learning Japanese. We attended his church each Sunday. At fellowship dinners we ate with his little flock and learned how delicious Japanese cooking can be.

We noticed that there were Sundays when Rev. Matsuda could not stand at the pulpit; he had to bring us the Word of God sitting in a chair in front of the congregation. Little by little we came to understand the conditions under which he worked and was losing his health. He was a “tentmaker,” supporting himself, his wife, and three children with a daily job while serving as a pastor. He drove a route around the countryside, selling and sharpening scissors for barber shops and supplying cosmetics and shampoo for beauty salons. Day in, day out, in the heat of summer, in the blizzards of winter, Sunday’s sermon took shape as he drove his little van along treacherous mountain roads.

Rev. Matsuda could have been pastor of a large city church and received an appropriate salary. But he sensed the call to spread the gospel in rural northern Japan. “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

### Prayer

*Lord Jesus, you made the ultimate sacrifice for us. Help us not to count the cost of living for you. May we be willing to lay down our lives for the people you call us to serve. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Witness](#)

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