

Zeal

- I. **Matt 7: 13** “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy^[a] that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.
 - a. Have you ever noticed that Jesus never sugar coated the gospel
 - i. He simply spoke the Truth
 - ii. He didn't try to sell it to our flesh...
 - b. He's essentially saying if you want life, then you can only follow me, it's going to be hard, and most people will not go with you
 - c. The way is **singular, Christ and it's not easy**
 - i. Did you catch He is telling us the secret to *life*
 - ii. Both salvation and life and life abundantly here on earth
 - iii. Life (Zoh wayh) meaning one who is possessed of vitality (strength, vigor, health) that is what your spirit is designed to look like
 1. even in the midst of hardship and being an outsider to society
 - iv. Which are two things that don't seem to go together: a spirit full of vitality in a life marked by hardship and rejection by society
 - v. But it's ALL.OVER.THE.BIBLE
- II. **Romans 5:3** ³Not only that, but **we rejoice** in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces **hope**,
 - a. For believers, suffering is the starting point to a journey towards hope. You start with suffering, you end with hope.
 - b. When you are suffering, is that the trajectory you think you are on?
 - i. For the majority of the world, you start with suffering and you end with depression. Or you start with suffering you end with addiction. You start with suffering you end with anger, bitterness, fighting.
 - c. How do believers, who have entered by the narrow gate of Christ, end at such a different place than non-believers? And is this hope just positive thinking that we'll get a certain outcome from the suffering?
- III. ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
 - a. This hope is powerful and effective, not deceitful. Why. Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us
 - i. This means that in the midst of your suffering, or your enduring, or your character building, God's love is pouring continually into your heart through Holy Spirit.
 - b. This is why Jesus is the only one who can say if you choose to follow Him, though it be hard, or at times lonely, you will have tapped into the secret of eternal salvation and life and life abundantly on earth

- c. But so many Christians do not feel they are walking in life and life abundant. They don't see their suffering and enduring as leading them towards a hope that doesn't put them to shame.
 - i. But remember the gate is narrow.
 - ii. singular. It is Christ. Supreme. This part is REALLY IMPORTANT
 - iii. Where All else flows from union with Him.
 - iv. If Jesus is left behind when we get into your car for work then our life has become Christ AND career. If we spend more time getting ready in the morning than with Jesus then it's appearance OVER Christ. If you love your family, your spouse, your babies, truly love them, more than Christ...

IV. ³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

- i. If you are panicking about a loved one to the point you cannot hear God's voice, that should be like a warning signal of the Lord letting you know that this loved one has become louder to you than Him, **and He needs to be heard no matter what you are facing.**

Because HE has the Words of Life.

1. Story of pastor who when he was young he ran away from home to live a life on the streets and the Lord told the parents not to pray for the first 3 days, they were only to worship because their spirits were in such a vulnerable place
2. His voice needs to be louder than your panic

- ii. If work is so stressful you can't hear the Lord
- iii. If money problems are so loud you can't hear the Lord...

- V. All those examples most people on this earth, the majority, are living in this form of disorder.
 - a. It's easy and we are tempted by culture every day to make an idol of family, career, appearances
 - b. To let THEM dictate how you spend your time, money, devotion, and focus
 - i. And it's where you begin to see burnout
 - ii. My prayer for this house is that not a single one of you would have to walk through burnout from life, but that you would be known as a burning one for Jesus and Him alone .

VI. Cory's prayer "Lord return **zeal** (which is what I want to talk about today) return zeal to your house. Make us the burning ones." And just a couple weeks ago while I was in prayer with a friend she said LORD GIVE ME ZEAL!

VII. How does the Lord restore holy zeal in us?

- VIII. What even is it? Zeal.
 - a. Paul defines it in an unusual way. He says do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit
 - b. So when he's saying do not be slothful in zeal, he means be zealous about being zealous.

- c. And he describes it further in saying Be FERVENT in spirit. That Greek verb means literally to boil.
- d. Can you imagine your spirit so active and alive it's boiling- you're boiling over in zeal for the Lord
 - i. The opposite of dry and heavy and tired
- e. But how? Lord how? We don't want to fake this. We don't want to mask anything. We want it to be genuine and genuinely for the Lord.
 - i. John Piper said Zeal for the sake of zeal is energetic atheism. That's not what we're looking for. We want genuinely burning hearts, boiling spirits of zeal for Jesus.
- f. The Word of God shows us **how Jesus causes our hearts to burn**. And it's so simple. But so easy to overlook and undervalue.

IX. Let's go to **Luke 24:15**

- a. For context: this is day 3 after Christ died on the cross and He comes in contact with some of his disciples but keeps them from recognizing Him. And I want you to notice in this first section how Jesus asks them questions to draw out how they're really feeling and thinking in that moment

X. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

XI. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, named (Klee Oh Pass) Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

XII. ¹⁹And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

XIII. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²²Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

XIV. ²⁵And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

XV. ²⁸So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

XVI. ³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “**Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?**”

- a. Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?
 - i. There it is. There is the secret. If you want to burn, genuinely burn in today’s world, it can only come from walking closely with the Lord and the rhema Word of God. I’ll explain rhema word of God more in a moment but that first part of walking closely with the Jesus-
 1. Again, they let Jesus ask questions and peer into their thought life, their hearts. They shared their grief, hope, disappointment and bewilderment with Him.
 - a. That’s such a large part of intimacy with Christ is sharing it all with Him.
 2. So we have walking closely with the Lord and the rhema word of God
 - ii. By rhema I mean when Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God to your spirit. You’re reading the Word and suddenly it feels like God is speaking directly to you and directly into your situation.
 - iii. Has anyone experienced this. Right. This should be a normal aspect of Christianity
- b. And did you notice what the disciples did when Jesus acted like He was going to leave?
 - i. They *begged* him to stay.
 1. Just a little longer. Stay. Don’t go.
 2. They longed to be with this man. That is the beauty of time spent with the Lord. We just want more.
- c. So. When this whole scene started, The disciples started with suffering right? It says they stood still, looking sad.
 - i. But they didn’t stay standing still and looking sad. They started walking with Jesus, letting Him examine their hearts, and then Jesus began speaking back to them relevant scripture to speak into their situation.
 - ii. That’s what Holy Spirit does for us now, amen?
 - iii. They started with suffering. They ended with hope. Christ is alive; He has conquered death.
 1. And what happened to their hearts?
 - a. Their hearts were burning. And it’s really that simple.

XVII. To burn with zeal, to boil over in your spirit- those aren’t personality traits.

That’s a spiritual response to the King of Kings and His Word.

- a. If you are feeling dry, heavy, tired in your spirit. My first question would be tell me about your daily time with Jesus
 - i. And I don't mean telling Him your laundry list of needs as though He doesn't know
 - ii. I mean enjoying Him, resting in His presence, delighting in each other
 - b. and how much are you feasting on the Word of God with Holy Spirit.
 - i. Because if those two things are in place- they should frame the way you see and live.
- XVIII. We serve a jealous God. A God jealous for every last bit of us. The fullness of intimacy of unity. Like Steffany Gretzinger says: All He wants is everything.
- XIX. When Holy Spirit convicts us of sin in our thought life or actions, He is simply showing what separates us from Him. It's not a shame thing it's a desire for unity thing.**
- XX. Jesus is jealous for unity. He is the perfect example of being zealous for it on our behalf.
- XXI. John 2:¹³The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. ¹⁵And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."**
- a. Did anyone watch this scene in the Chosen? They showed how normal this house of trade had become. How normal the compromise. People were laughing, talking, not doing anything that looks violent or evil.
 - b. And yet Jesus took out a whip. He cracked it. He flipped tables. He disrupted. He shocked.
- XXII. And He never apologized for it. Why. Because there are lines of holiness that in love must be drawn to protect our unity and purity with the Lord
- a. But His devotion in that moment was shocking to all who were around Him. And no one joined Him. I can just imagine everyone standing in silence with mouths open.
 - b. HE was alone in His zeal for full purity and oneness between man and God
- XXIII. When Jesus speaks of the last days, the end times, he says the love of many will grow cold. Do not be surprised if at times you feel like an outsider if you are zealous for the Lord.
- XXIV. Why. Because zeal is a fruit of a burning heart. And a burning heart is lit in the presence of the Lord. And for many, remaining in the presence can be the most difficult choice. We all slip out at times.

- XXV. What would it look like for Jesus to walk through the temple of the Lord within you. To walk through your thought-life with you. What areas would HE want to pour more of His love into? More of His boldness? More of His purity? More of His joy? More of His power? Wisdom?

Mixture is the easiest thing for the flesh to befriend.

Let's look at a second instance of zeal in the Word. We're gonna go OT. And I warn you now it's WILD. Numbers 25

- I. It begins with Midianite women of Moab, who worshipped (bawl) Baal Peor who was a god that they would worship by conducting lewd sexual acts. And these women caught the attention of Israeli men. Leading them to commit shameful acts followed by making sacrifices to their god.
- II. And it says "So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor" they bound themselves to this god
- III. And the Isrealites are dying by plague and by the Lord's command
- IV. So it's a really serious, desperate moment

Numbers 25:6

⁶And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁷When Phinehas the son of (El ee AY zer) Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand ⁸and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. ⁹Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

The Zeal of Phinehas

¹⁰And the LORD said to Moses, ¹¹"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them,

Both Phineas and Jesus in the temple were facing mixture. People's devotion was straying.

And the prophesy that described what was happening in Jesus "zeal for my Father's house will consume me." And what the Lord said in regard to Phineas was "he was jealous with my jealousy."

So zeal for my Father's house will consume me and he was jealous with my jealousy. Holy zeal is birthed out of oneness with God. It means you feel the way the Lord feels and that includes feeling the Lord's jealousy for unity and you do whatever the Lord tells you to, to respond fully. That is zeal. And first we deal with what's going on within us, and then at times we will be called to be part of restoration within the body.

And because of the Lord's work on the cross, we aren't looking to whip or spear our brothers and sisters in Christ right. Galatians 6:1 If anyone is caught in any transgression, **you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.**

But beyond this, there is a holy zeal within us, emanating from Christ, to reconcile the lost back to Him. This is the last form of zeal I'll cover today.

- I remember one time I flew to the east coast for a filming thing and I asked a makeup artist to tell me fun stories about the well known Christians they had interviewed. And amongst the stories she told was one of an evangelist. He was flown in to be interviewed and the welcome team kept losing him because every time they turned around he was ministering Jesus to someone. Praying healing over their body. Releasing a prophetic word of encouragement. And people were getting touched by God.
 - It is testimonies like that, that spur me on because while some people reject the gospel message, others *do say yes*. Their hearts were wanting to say yes, they just don't know Jesus..
- Offering prayer to big, tough looking dude...
- There was another time I told a guy in bar that God loves him and he looked at me so bewildered and he said you are the second stranger to say that to me today...

Listen to what the Lord says to us:

2 Corinthians 5:¹⁹ in Christ, God was reconciling[▣] the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, **God making his appeal through us.**

This is the beauty of a zealous heart for the gospel.

Recap

Zeal is the fruit of a burning heart. And a burning heart is lit and stays lit in the presence of the Lord. It comes from walking closely with Jesus, letting Him fully see into you, taking in the rhema Word of God through Holy Spirit and responding out of that burning

zeal when you sense something in you is out of alignment. And we carry that zeal out to others as ambassadors of reconciliation.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Read Romans 5:3-5 and Phillipians 4:4-7 In the midst of suffering, how does the Lord lead you into *genuine* rejoicing? What does that look like for you?
2. Have you had any experiences where you felt the Lord's zealousness over the temple of the Lord within you, and how did you feel led to respond?
3. Talk about the difference between genuine zeal/burning for the Lord, versus "spiritually performing" in front of others.
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 and share any testimonies you may have of sharing the gospel with non-believers to spur each other on. And how you overcome fear of man in those moments.