

# Count Zinzendorf

by David Smithers

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*Count Zinzendorf's life and ministry were marked by a passionate love for Jesus, a disciplined prayer life, and a bold approach to evangelism and missions, which had a profound influence on the Church and world.*

**Scripture:** Mark 16:15, John 14:15, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:10, 1 Corinthians 9:22, Philippians 3:8, Colossians 4:2, 1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 4:19, Revelation 2:4

**Topics:** "Passionate Prayer", "Evangelism"

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## Description

David Smithers preaches about Count Zinzendorf's passionate love for Jesus, emphasizing his relentless pursuit of Christ's presence and his life motto of having one passion - Jesus only. Zinzendorf's prayer life was marked by prevailing prayer and a dedication to establishing circles for prayer, leading to the influential Moravian revival of 1727. His deep love for Jesus fueled his passion for evangelism, inspiring the Moravian Brotherhood to embrace missions with self-denial, sacrifice, and obedience, motivated by a desire to share the gospel and see souls saved.

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## Transcript

Throughout the history of the Church, it has always been the most ardent lovers of Jesus who have felt the greatest need for more of His presence. Surely it is with this class of saints that Count Zinzendorf belongs. For Zinzendorf, loving fellowship with Christ was the essential manifestation of the Christian life. Throughout the Count's life, "His blessed presence" was his all consuming theme. He had chosen from an early age as his life-motto the now famous confession; "I have one passion; it is Jesus, Jesus only."

### A Man of Prayer

Flowing out of Zinzendorf's passionate love for Christ came a life disciplined in prayer. "Count Zinzendorf had early learned the secret of prevailing prayer. So active had he been in establishing circles for prayer that on leaving the college at Halle, at 16 years of age, he handed the famous professor Franke a list of seven praying societies." Also preceding the great Moravian revival of 1727, it was Count Zinzendorf who was used to encourage prayer for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. John Greenfield describes for us the constant prayer that followed the revival of 1727. "Was there ever in the whole of church history such an astonishing prayer meeting as that which beginning in 1727, went on one hundred years? It was known as the 'Hourly Intercession.' And it meant that by relays of brothers and sisters, prayer without ceasing was made to God for all the work and wants of His church.' The best antidote for a powerless Church is the influence of a praying man. The influence of Count Zinzendorf's prayer-life did not stop with one small

community. It ultimately went on to influence the whole world.

### Souls for the Lamb

As Zinzendorf's passion for Jesus grew, so did his passion for the lost. He became determined to evangelize the world with a handful of saints, equipped only with a burning love for Jesus and the power of prayer. The Moravian Brotherhood readily received and perpetuated the passion of their leader. A seal was designed to express their newfound missionary zeal. The seal was composed of a lamb on a crimson ground, with the cross of resurrection and a banner of triumph with the motto; "Our Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him." The Moravians recognized themselves in debt to the world as the trustees of the gospel. They were taught to embrace a lifestyle of self-denial, sacrifice and prompt obedience. They followed the call of the Lamb to go anywhere and with an emphasis upon the worst and hardest places as having the first claim. No soldiers of the cross have ever been bolder as pioneers, more patient or persistent in difficulties, more heroic in suffering, or more entirely devoted to Christ and the souls of men than the Moravian Brotherhood.

The Moravians beautifully explain their motivation for missions in the following 1791 evangelical report. "The simple motive of the brethren for sending missionaries to distant nations was and is an ardent desire to promote the salvation of their fellow men, by making known to them the gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ. It grieved them to hear of so many thousands and millions of the human race sitting in darkness and groaning beneath the yoke of sin and the tyranny of Satan; and remembering the glorious promises given in the Word of God, that the heathen also should be the reward of the sufferings and death of Jesus; and considering His commandment to His followers, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, they were filled with confident hopes that if they went forth in obedience unto, and believing in His word, their labor would not be in vain in the Lord. They were not dismayed in reflecting on the smallness of their means and abilities, and that they hardly knew their way to the heathen whose salvation they so ardently longed for, nor by the prospect of enduring hardships of every kind and even perhaps the loss of their lives in the attempt. Yet their love to their Savior and their fellow sinners for whom He shed His blood, far outweighed all these considerations. They went forth in the strength of their God and He has wrought wonders in their behalf."

The Moravians had learned that the secret of loving the souls of men was found in loving the Savior of men. On October 8, 1732, a Dutch ship left the Copenhagen harbor bound for the Danish West Indies. On board were the two first Moravian missionaries; John Leonard Dober, a potter, and David Nitschman, a carpenter. Both were skilled speakers and ready to sell themselves into slavery to reach the slaves of the West Indies. As the ship slipped away, they lifted up a cry that would one day become the rallying call for all Moravian missionaries, "May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering." The Moravian's passion for souls was surpassed only by their passion for the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

### They Had All Things In Common

Another vision of Count Zinzendorf's was that of the restoration of Apostolic community. He labored to establish a community of saints that loved and supported one another through prayer, encouragement and accountability. To a great extent Zinzendorf's vision became a reality in the small village of Herrnhut. A deep sense of community was maintained through small groups based on common needs and interests, original and unifying hymns and continual prayer meetings. In 1738 John Wesley visited "this happy place" and was so impressed that he commented in his journal "I would gladly have spent my life here . . . Oh,

when shall this Christianity cover the earth as water covers the sea?"

#### He Had No Other Happiness But To Be Near Him

By no means was Count Zinzendorf's life flawless, but one cannot help but be moved by his consuming passion and pre-occupation with the person of Jesus Christ. A glimpse of his burning love for Jesus can be caught in the following letter. "Our method of proclaiming salvation is this: to point out to every heart the loving Lamb, who died for us, and although He was the Son of God, offered Himself for our sins ... by the preaching of His blood, and of His love unto death, even the death of the cross, never, either in discourse or in argument, to digress even for a quarter of an hour from the loving Lamb: to name no virtue except in Him, and from Him and on His account,-to preach no commandment except faith in Him; no other justification but that He atoned for us; no other sanctification but the privilege to sin no more; no other happiness but to be near Him, to think of Him and do His pleasure; no other self denial but to be deprived of Him and His blessings; no other calamity but to displease Him; no other life but in Him.'

The source of Count Zinzendorf's success was bound up in his total allegiance and love for JESUS CHRIST! Likewise the source of the modern Church's failure lies in her half-hearted devotion and open disregard for the Lover of their souls. As the Bride of Christ, we are in need of some old-fashioned, gut wrenching, REAL repentance. Today, Jesus, the heartbroken Bridegroom, still cries out to us; "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, . . . (Rev. 2:4-5)

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