

# Zeal

by Samuel Logan Brengle

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*True zeal is a burning desire to save souls, born of the Holy Spirit and springing from a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.*

**Scripture:** John 2:17, Romans 10:1

**Topics:** "Sacrificial Love", "Zeal for Souls"

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## Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the necessity of zeal in soul-winning, drawing parallels between the fervor of military leaders like Sheridan and the passion required to save souls. He argues that true zeal must be sacrificial and rooted in a deep understanding of both the dire state of sinners and the incredible grace available through Christ. Brengle warns against various forms of misguided zeal, such as partial zeal, party zeal, and zeal born of ignorance, urging believers to embody a zeal that is tender towards sinners yet uncompromising towards sin. He highlights the example of Paul, who labored tirelessly for the spiritual growth of his converts, and ultimately points to Jesus as the ultimate model of sacrificial zeal. The sermon calls for a fervent commitment to the mission of saving souls, reflecting the love and zeal of God.

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## Transcript

It is said that Sheridan went to battle with all the fury of a madman, and recklessly exposed himself to the shot and shell of the enemy. He told General Horace Porter that he never went into a battle from which he cared to come back alive unless he came as a victor. This desperation made him an irresistible inspiration to his own troops, and enabled him to hurl them like thunderbolts against his foes. If he became so desperate in killing men, how much more desperate, if possible, should we become in our effort and desire to save them!

It was written of Jesus, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up," and so it can be of every great soul-winner.

Not until a man can say with Paul, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself;" and "I am ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus," can he hope to be largely used in winning souls. He that is anxious about his dinner and eager to get to bed at a reasonable hour and concerned about his salary, and over solicitous about his health, and querulous about his reputation, and the respectability and financial condition of his appointment, and afraid of weariness and painfulness and headache and heartache, and a sore throat, may make a very respectable field officer or parson, but not a great soul-winner.

There are various kinds of zeal which should be avoided as deadly evils.

First: Partial zeal like that of Jehu. (2 Kings 10:15-31.) God set him to destroy the wicked house of Ahab and the worship of Baal, and he did so with fury, "but Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the God of Israel with all his heart, for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam which made Israel to sin," and in due time God had to cut off his house as well.

This kind of zeal is frequently seen in those who violently attack one sort of sin, while probably they themselves are secretly indulging in some other sin. Such people are usually not only intolerant of the sin, but also of the sinner, while true zeal makes one infinitely tender and patient towards the sinner, while absolutely uncompromising with his sin.

Second: Party zeal like that of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In these days it takes the form of excessive sectarian and denominational zeal, and makes bigots of men. Zeal for the particular church or organization to which one belongs is right within certain limits. We are converted through the instrumentality of a certain religious organization, and we become children of its household, or we are led into it by the Holy Spirit through a blessed, divine affinity with its members, methods, spirit and doctrine, and we should in that case be loyal and true to its leaders who are over us in the Lord and who watch for our souls, and follow them as they follow Christ. We should also be loyal to the principles of the organization so far as they harmonize with the word of God, and we should seek in all true ways, by prayer and supplication and ceaselessly zealous work to build up this organization in holiness and righteousness, and this we can do with all our might, if we do it in the Holy Spirit, and can be assured that God is well pleased with us. But we must at the same time beware of a party spirit that would despise other work and workers or tear them down that we may rise on their ruins. Such zeal is from beneath and not from above. It is contrary to that love which "seeketh not her own," and looketh not upon her own things, but "also upon the things of others," and will come back, boomerang-like, upon our own pates, and bring ruin upon ourselves.

"For the love of God is broader Than the measure of man's mind, And the heart of the Eternal Is most wonderfully kind."

And true zeal makes men like that.

Third: The zeal of ignorance. Paul said of his kinsmen, the Jews, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved, for I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Romans 10:1-3.)

True zeal is from above. Its source is in the mountains of the Lord's holiness, and its springing fountains in the deep cool valleys of humility. It is born of the Holy Spirit and springs from a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." This knowledge is twofold:

First: It is the knowledge of the dread condition of the sinner without Christ -- his slavery to Satan; the inherited depravity of his nature; his bondage to sin, his love of it; his enmity toward God, of which he is probably not aware; his guilt; his helplessness and his ignorance of the way back to his Heavenly Father's house and happiness, and his awful danger, if he neglects the offer of salvation and life in Jesus Christ.

Second: It is the knowledge of the unspeakable gift of God, of the possibilities of grace for the vilest sinner, of the Father's pitying, yearning love, of sins forgiven, guilt removed, adoption into the Father's family, illumination, consolation, guidance, keeping, depravity destroyed, cleansing through the Blood, sanctification by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, of salvation, from the uttermost to the uttermost; of unbroken fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ through the eternal Spirit, of a life of blessed service and fruit-bearing and of a faith and hope that bear the spirit up over sorrows and trials and losses and pain and sickness, enabling it at last to cry out in supreme victory and holy triumph: "O Death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

True zeal makes one faithful to Jesus and the souls for whom He died. It led Paul during his three years' appointment at Ephesus "to warn everyone night and day with tears to serve the Lord with all humility," to keep back no truth that was profitable for the people, but to show them and teach them "publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20.) He was not content simply to get sinners to accept Jesus as their Saviour, but taught them that "Christ in you is the hope of glory, whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto I labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." (Col. 27:29.) Paul was jealous for the perfection in love and loyalty of all his converts, and his zeal led him to seek with all his might to lead them all into this blessed experience. And as was Paul, so also was Baxter, who labored indefatigably in spite of lifelong sickness, and at times almost in intolerable pain, for the perfection of his people. And so also was Wesley and Fox and General and Mrs. Booth, and so will be every soul-winner who is full of the zeal of God.

True zeal is sacrificial. Jesus, consumed with zeal for the glory of God in the saving and sanctifying of men, "was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Isaiah, who foresaw the humiliation and sacrificial life and death of Jesus, said by inspiration, "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheek to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." And again Isaiah said, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on Him the the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53.) He poured out His soul unto death for us, He gave His life a ransom for Men. Bless His name! And the gift of His Spirit kindles and sustains this same sacrificial zeal in the hearts of all true soul-winners.

"Enlarge, inflame and fill my heart With boundless charity divine, So shall all my strength exert. And love them with a zeal like Thine; And lead them to Thy open side. The sheep for whom their Shepherd died."

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