

# Zealous to Be a Blessing to Others Through Good Deeds

by Santosh Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being zealous in various aspects of our Christian walk. It highlights the need for zeal in repentance, purity, hatred of money, giving, and giving encouragement. The examples from the Bible show how zeal can lead to radical transformation and blessings in our lives and relationships.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:6, Numbers 25:6, 2 Corinthians 8:1, Proverbs 15:23, Proverbs 15:4

**Topics:** "Zeal in Christian Living", "Transformation through Zeal"

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## Description

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## Transcript

God is a 100% God. There's no 99%. A few weeks ago the children told us that if a shepherd has 99, his mind is on the one who's not there.

Thought of that even in the verse that the preschool children memorized. How many are, if you want to know God's will, how many can perish? The answer is zero. Matthew 18:14, it is not God's will that even one of these little ones perish.

And that's true about our children and that's true about every single one of you. Every one of you. Children, I hope you know that God is on your side.

He doesn't want you to perish. He wants to help you. Oftentimes I hear questions, what is God's will? God is not willing that any should perish.

Jesus said it in this verse. Peter says it in 1st Peter 3. There's not one person in the world, even the worst criminal, the worst terrorist, when that person dies without faith in Christ and is eternally separated from God in hell, God's will was not for that to happen. God's will was that even that worst person could have been saved.

The equivalent of the terrorists in Jesus' day was the criminal hanging on the cross next to him. And there were two, as you know. One of them perished and is separated from God for all eternity.

The other one, I want to say, did worse things than the other. And he's in the presence of God today because he had faith. He trusted Christ even at the last moment.

Now the best thing is to trust God today, not to wait till your dying moment. And if there's, if you're hearing this and there's even a little bit of uncertainty in your heart, please listen, especially children, if you're hearing this today and if there's even a little uncertainty in your heart, I don't know if I'm truly forgiven and a child of God. I don't know.

I hope you won't go another day without knowing. God wants you to know, well, God wants you to be his child, that he won't perish forever, and he wants you to be sure of it. That's what we call the assurance of salvation.

It's a big word, but it very simply means, I know I am God's child and I will not perish. I'll be with him forever. So children, you can know that.

Adults, you can know that. No matter how old you are, if there is any uncertainty, even a little bit of uncertainty about whether you are a truly born-again child of God, not just somebody who lives a little bit of a better life than you used to 20 years ago. That's not what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about completely radically turned, that you were a child of your parents when you were born, but now you're a child of God. You know that. And maybe you've been sitting here for years and you're an adult, and you're watching children get born again, and you're sitting here thinking, you know what, I'm afraid to admit, I don't know that I'm born again.

I've sort of just been coming along, and sadly in this country there are such people, adults, who go along to the church meetings and they change this and change that. They quit the alcohol, they quit the drugs, they stop using bad language, but they're not born again. There hasn't come that moment in life where they said, Lord, I completely acknowledge I am a sinner, and I've sinned and dishonored your name.

Please forgive me, and I don't care that I'm 50 years old, and I've been going for all these years pretending that I have it, that assurance. Will you please forgive me? I receive your forgiveness and your justification today, and you'll have no regrets in eternity. You may lose a little face here on this earth.

People will think, your children even may think, oh dad, I thought you were a Christian all along. What will that matter in heaven, if you continue the pretense? And so you can be born again. You must be born again.

None of us will take you to the altar, drive you to the altar, and force you on your knees, and make you say something. It must come from within your heart. We'll preach, we'll urge, we'll strongly encourage you to do it.

And parents, I hope you're doing that in your homes as well, in addition to what we say from the pulpit. Encouraging your children, be saved, repent, turn, be baptized, and then let that continual prodding, as it were, result in the Holy Spirit taking root in their heart and say, yes dad, yes mom, yes Lord Jesus, I want to be baptized. It is not God's will that any, if you're a committed member of this church at RLCF, I hope you know that it is your responsibility to pray that not one of these little ones will perish.

It's not just our elders responsibility, or your parents responsibility for your own children. That's a very selfish mindset. But I believe that God brought you into this church to have a collective responsibility for this family.

We care for all of God's people. We care for those who are not even God's people. We want them to be God's people.

But there's a special care that God gives us when he's called us and united us in a special way that we recognize that this is a circle of responsibility that God has placed us in. For those of you who are part of this church, when you became members we shared that with you. We told you it's not just, oh yeah okay, somebody asked me on the street, what church are you a member of? And you say RLCF.

What does that matter? When you become a member here it means there's a commitment, there's a sense of responsibility and belonging and care, which is a biblical word if you read 1st Corinthians 12 verses 25 through 27. Care. You care about the others and you allow them to care about you.

That happened when you were married. It used to be just you caring about yourself. Now you have a wife or a husband.

That happened when you had children. Used to be just you and your wife or you and your husband. Now you have children that you care about.

And it's the same thing when God plants you in a family, in his family, in a local expression of his body where you allow him to build that care. So I hope all of us have a sense of care for the welfare of every other person in this church, family especially, in addition to other cares you might have for other people. And that it's especially true for our children.

Pray for them, parents. Pray for them, adults. Pray for all these children.

Every time they're up here on a birthday or you see that it's their birthday on Viber, even if you don't wish them personally or greet them, pray for them. That's a great opportunity to pray for that child or to pray for that adult. Lord, I don't know what that person is going through.

They're not my child. But there's something, you have a plan for that child's life. Please do that.

Let your light shine into their heart in some way on this birthday of theirs and let them come closer to you. In Revelation 5, you read about bowls that were poured out, that were emptied in heaven. And it says those bowls were the prayers of the saints.

Prayers that I think God will show how he answered those prayers without even the person praying knowing about it. In eternity, later on, they were poured out. God said, you see that little prayer you prayed? It was a genuine prayer of faith.

The person you were praying for didn't even know you were praying for them, but you did it in sincerity and see how I answered it. See how five years later or 15 years later, when they were, when they left town and they were living some far away, that prayer that you faithfully prayed, and didn't just pray once, but you faithfully prayed, resulted in my being able to work in their life. This is the God I believe in.

We sang, all things are possible to God. I sat here singing. I wonder what that means.

See, under the old covenant, it was all things are possible to God. God, you're over there. You can do something.

Do it. You're over, you're far away. So, but do something, you're God.

That was sufficient faith in the old covenant. Under the new covenant, it's quite different. The hope of glory that we have, we read in Colossians 1 is Christ in us.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. This is glory. It's no longer Christ over there doing something or Christ 2000 years ago doing something.

All things are possible to God. Now, I'm not God, but that line goes on to say to Christ, the power of God in me. So it's no longer all things are possible to God far away.

Maybe he'll do this. Maybe he'll not. I know he could, but I don't know if he will.

That's quite different from saying, all things are possible to God in me. Christ, the power of God in me. So now Lord, when I'm going through this difficulty and this uncertainty and all the other things that are inside of me, wretched, imperfect person that I still am, all things are still possible for me.

That was the point of that song. All things are possible to God, the power of Christ in me. I hope you believe that.

I hope you're singing that. All things are possible in your home, in your marriage, for your loved one, for that unconverted person you know, that God has placed you in the same workplace with. Or that relative of yours who is not just your sister or brother or husband or wife or parent by accident and they're not born again.

It's not by accident. God before the foundations of the world chose you to be their son, their daughter, their brother, their sister, their father, their mother, their cousin or whoever. And knowing that you would be born again, he chose you in him before the foundations of the world.

And part of that which says, okay, this child of mine is going to be born again, but they're going to be part of this family where their relatives are unbelievers. Is it by accident? Of course not. That unconverted relative of yours is part of God's plan.

Trust him. Trust him that God called you and chose you to be the power of Christ, the power of God manifest in that person's life close by. Where that unbeliever, because they happen to be married to you or happen to be your relative, is forced to come in touch with the power of God because it's Christ in you.

And they know a living God, a present God who's not far away, but right in their home. When you go for Thanksgiving, let's say, and you're with relatives or Christmas or whatever, you hang out with relatives. Is it just, oh yeah, my relatives, you know, in the world it's like, ah, I got to put up with my relatives.

And they say Thanksgiving is one of the hardest times for people because they're forced to be around relatives that they have a hard time getting along with. But that's not true. That's the world.

That shouldn't be true for a Christian. Even if your relatives are difficult or impossible to deal with, all things are possible to God, the power of Christ in me. And so the next time God places you in a situation with people who are difficult or unconverted and you wonder, Lord, why am I here? You see, to manifest the

impossible working power of God in every situation.

Let's trust him for that. Let's turn to Titus chapter two. There's a phrase that I read a few days ago in this passage that stood out to me.

And that is in the last part of verse 14, Titus chapter two, verse 14. It says, the last phrase there says, zealous for good works, zealous for good works. Now zeal is one of those things that many people think is an attribute of personality.

That because this person's temperament is a particular way, choleric for example, somebody who's very active, very aggressive by personality. You would think that for such a person, zeal will come naturally. But the natural man has nothing to do with the spiritual.

It's two exactly opposite things. Let's say that you had a particular temperament and then you died and you came, were born again as a new person. There would be no guarantee that you would have any of the temperament that you had in your first life.

And to think that somehow I can carry over my personality or my temperament into the newness of life that I have in Christ is a deception. Now let me be clear. I'm still the same person.

I have the same temperament and the same personality and God can use that for a specific purpose in his body. That's fine. But the characteristic of Christ, the nature of Christ doesn't borrow from my temperament at all.

The divine life doesn't have any of Santosh in it. Zero. It wouldn't be divine if it did.

And so just because I'm a particular way and you're a particular way, you have a particular temperament, doesn't mean that you can't experience the fullness of the divine life with your temperament. And the fullness of the nature of Christ includes zeal. And I know I've met many people say, I tend to be a zealous person no matter what I'm doing.

If you've seen me on the soccer field, you've seen me where whatever I'm doing, I'm probably doing it too fast, including driving and all that. So you might think, well, Santosh, it's easy for you to talk about zeal because that's how you are. And I tell you, that's a lie of the devil.

And I, my temptation, my struggle is I have to make sure that I don't bring my human zeal into the things of Christ. And your temperament, if it's a little bit different, if you're more docile and calm, your struggle, your desire, your eagerness should be that you would have the Christ-like zeal. So I have to get rid of the Santosh-like zeal and gain Christ-like zeal.

And so do you. You must have a Christ-like zeal. There is a zeal about Christ that I want to show you in scripture today that you, we must all aspire for.

Whether you have a zealous personality, human personality or not. Zeal, that means you're passionate, you're eager, you're earnest, you're seeking it. You're not lackadaisical when it comes to the things of Christ.

Now let's read a few verses here before this. He says, now zeal can only come by the grace of God. All the things of the divine nature are given to us by the grace of God.

And so we must be humble to receive it. So it's interesting, in order for me to really have the zeal of Christ, like with everything else about Christ, I must be humble. That's how I know whether it's spiritual zeal or human zeal.

Human zeal, if I've got it personally, I can just continue on and be proud of it. But to get Christ-like zeal, it must come through the grace of God, which I can only get if I am humble. And so having the zeal of Christ doesn't come from, well, let me be a little bit more like that other zealous person who just seems to be 100% all the time.

No, that's the wrong way. You'll have an earthly zeal. You'll copy me or some other person that's even more zealous.

But the zeal of Christ comes through humility, where you begin by saying, Lord, I don't want to be like that other person. I'm not copying some other person's way of preaching or acting or service or anything like that. I want to be like you.

And everything about Christ comes through humility. So it begins by falling on your face and saying, Lord, I acknowledge I have been lacking in zeal. Please forgive me.

I humble myself and I ask you for grace to be zealous. And you get grace. And then it says, verse 11, the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.

And I want you to see the twofold aspect of the grace of God here, instructing us to say no to ungodliness and worldly desires. That means every time you face a temptation to ungodliness or worldly desire, the grace of God says, Santosh, say no. You must still say no.

But the grace of God tells you this is where you must say no. Oh, that lady in the workplace or that girl in school is being a little flirtatious with you. Be zealous.

Say no, deny it. You're in a situation where you want to react in the way your spouse is reacting. No, deny it.

Say no. I like this one translation that says it this way. The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to say no.

That's what deny is. Say no. When you're tempted to act a certain way, speak a certain way, think a certain way, when you hear something about somebody and you're tempted to judge them, or you hear that somebody's speaking evil of you and you're tempted to think evil of them in return, say no, deny ungodliness and worldly desires.

That's the first part. But the other side of the coin of the grace of God is to do something. See, the other is to not do something.

The other is to do something to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age. So it's not just avoiding sin. It's not just denying ungodliness and worldly desires.

Yes, that's where it must start, I believe. But then the other side of that is that you're doing something. You're being zealous, as we read in at the end of this passage, living sensibly, righteously and godly.

And you look that, he continues on, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who showed us the same example. And it says that he gave himself for us for what? Again, you see that twofold purpose. Christ gave himself for us.

If you didn't know it before, I hope you know it from today on. Why did Christ give himself up for you? We've said, for example, that other verse that it says, why did Christ die? That I should no longer live for myself. It's a verse that very people, very few Christians know.

Most Christians know Jesus Christ died to save me from my sins. That's true. But for what purpose? That you might no longer live for yourself, live for God, live for others.

And it's the same thing here. Who gave himself for us for two things I see here. One is to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for himself a people for his own possession.

So redeeming and purifying, that's the personal aspect of it, where my sins are cleansed and I'm saved from sin, like we've been hearing over the last few weeks. Not just forgiven, but saved from it. Having the power to say no to ungodliness, saved from sin.

But the other side of it is zealous for good deeds. I think it would be a great strategy. It will be a great tragedy if I reach the end of my life and I say, Lord, you've set me free from all sin.

You cleansed me from all sin. You forgave me from all my sins. You justified me.

And then you brought me to a life of victory where I'm saved from all sin. And then the Lord will ask me, well, what did you do with that cleansed vessel? It's like, um, it's like, why do we clean? You do the dishes. You know, we don't just do dishes to put them up on, on, on the shelf.

And you come to my house and say, look at all these clean dishes. No, you put them back in the drawer so that tomorrow somebody else can take that vessel and use it again. So you can fill it.

You can put some food on that plate. That's why we do the dishes. Why did God give Christ give himself for me to redeem me from every lawless deed and to purify me.

And so that I would be available for zealous for every good deed. I believe this personally. I hope you'll take this challenge to heart that God has a set of works that he has planned good deeds.

You read that in Ephesians two, we are his workmanship created for God for good works, which God prepared beforehand in Christ Jesus. Ephesians two verse 10. I think that means God has written a book, all the things that Santosh must have accomplished at the end of his life checklist as it were like, just like you do a chore list for your children, right? At the end of the day, I did you do your chores? Let me go through and check.

You believe the Ephesians two verse 10. Let me show you that verse. If you don't believe me, turn there together, Ephesians chapter two verse 10, we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works checklist of good works, which God prepared beforehand.

That is before you were born, before the foundations of the world, even you read in chapter one, so that we would walk in them so that we would check off the list. But remember, it's not your workmanship. We're his workmanship.

That's a good thing. He starts by saying, I'll do the work, but you need to give yourself to me. And you need to hold, allow me to hold you accountable to whether you have allowed me to check off the list.

I will help you. I will strengthen you. You are my workmanship, but there is a checklist and let's not forget that every good deed he says in, in Titus chapter two.

So what should result when you, when your eyes are open to see this is that you say, Lord, I better not waste time. I've been spending all my life. Okay.

Maybe you spent the first few years, many years of your life, just thinking about how to please yourself. That's not even opening the book, the checklist that God has. You're just living for yourself, pleasing yourself.

Then you became a Christian. You're born again. God filled you with his Holy spirit and your sins are forgiven.

And the times of ignorance, God overlooks. Now he commands men everywhere to repent. So now he says, no, you get to open the book.

Now look, look at all what I'm going to do in you through this life. I've given me and the times that you've wasted. It's okay.

It doesn't matter if you're 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 years old. It's fine. It's okay.

Are you only opening the book today? That's fine. Today's the day of salvation today. If you hear my voice, don't harden your heart.

I can finish writing the book. I can finish the checklist because nothing's impossible with me. You say, Lord, I don't know.

I might only have two years left. It's okay. Give yourself to me fully today.

And I will write out that checklist through trust me. It's not too late. Don't waste another moment.

God is saying, and I will finish that book. Everything in that book can be checked off. Every one of those righteous deeds that I've written, if you let me.

So what should result is a zeal for it. If you knew that, you know, you, you, you're running a race, let's say a 400 meter race. And, uh, right when the, right, when the gun was about to go off, you saw somebody over there who traveled a long distance to see you.

So you went into the stands and they want to give you a hug and all that. And then while you're over there, wasting time, the gun goes off, the race has started and you're sitting there. It was like, Oh no, I want to, let me eat this piece of cake real quicker and drink that tea real quick.

And the race is on. And all of a sudden you wake up and realize I didn't hear the gun. They're running.

What would you do? If you really were intent on winning the gold medal, you'd get back in there and run faster than you've ever run before. I've seen few videos here and there of people who fell down at the beginning of the race. One little girl, her shoelace came off.

She ran out of her shoes to start. Not shoelace. Her whole shoe came off and she was running so fast.

What did she do? Went back, got the shoe, put it back on, ran faster than everybody else and won the race. A beautiful video. A little nine-year-old girl, I think.

I always think about that when I think about how many years I wasted in my life. I say, Lord, I can't afford to waste anymore. You've forgiven me so much.

I'm not going to get discouraged over it. That would be even worse. That would be like the little girl sitting there crying, oh, my shoe fell off.

No. There are probably some kids who have done that. But this girl said, no, I don't care if my shoes fall off.

I can still win. And that's what motivated Paul. There was a zeal.

How fast did you think that girl had to run to overtake the other girls who had already been running for 15, 20 seconds in a two-minute race? That's a lot of time. She's the same age as them. And she won.

She ran because she had nothing to lose at that point. Well, I'm already in last place. Might as well try to give it all I got to finish first, right? Do you feel like that? Do you feel like you're already in last place? You look at others who have done so much with their life.

You look at the example of godly men. We read these biographies. We hear about them.

And you think, well, Lord, I'm already in last place. What good is it? Might as well finish last. No.

Don't settle for last place. You, in last place today, God wants you to win. Run so as to win, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9. So this is the zeal I'm talking about.

Let's turn over to 1 Peter chapter 3. Peter and Paul are great examples of men who made a mess of their lives. Did the worst possible things you can imagine. And they were used so tremendously by God.

Because they had faith. 1 Peter chapter 3. We read in verse 8. To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit, not returning evil for evil or insult for insult. So he says, this is the not aspect.

See, what I'm showing you here is don't do evil, but also do good. There is the don't do evil part, which you hear a lot of, personal sanctification, avoid sin, say no to ungodliness. But there's the other side of which is do something with the power that God fills you with.

So don't return evil for evil. Don't return insult for insult. And if you stop there, God will ask you at the end of your life, you say, Lord, I obey 1 Peter 3 verse 8a.

You know how sometimes the children say their verses. No, verse 9. Sorry, 1 Peter 3 verse 9a. Sometimes we allow the children to memorize a instead of the whole verse.

That's okay. But at the end of your life, God will ask, what about B? 1 Peter 9a says, don't return evil for evil, insult for insult. But the B part of that is giving a blessing instead.

What does that mean practically? That means when somebody does something evil for you, normally the unconverted you would be zealous to return evil. Oh, you cut me off. Guess what? I'm going to find a way to get ahead of you and cut you off because you did that or not going to let you in.

Oh, you said this about my child. I'm going to say this about, I'm going to spread a rumor about you evil for evil. Then you were born again.

The life of Christ is in you and you're being purified from these evil habits, evil actions, evil words, evil thoughts, returning evil for evil. And so you don't do that anymore, but it doesn't stop there. You're not just a cleansed cup destined to be empty.

God wants to fill you up with what? Oh, you, you did something evil to me. Lord, give me, let me be zealous to give a blessing instead. Not just, okay, Lord, I guess I should bless this person.

You know, I often think about that. Pray for your enemies, bless those that curse you. Does it come reluctantly? Lord, they said that evil wanted me.

I guess, I guess I should bless them. Let me think of some way to bless them. A meager blessing Lord, give them a quarter as a blessing or the life of Christ that wants to be zealous to bless them.

Lord, will you lavish that person with a blessing today? That person that just did me some harm. Above all, draw them closer to you. I don't want to have any judgment towards them.

This is lavish blessing in return for evil. You're returning, giving a blessing instead for you were called for this very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. Um, um, the one who desires, uh, let's skip down to verse 13.

Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? What you've seen here again is not, see, I, I know that we all have a zeal to not sin. I think you've been in this church long enough or heard preaching from this church enough to know that I think all of us probably have a zeal. I don't want to sin Lord.

I want my cup to always be pure, always be pure. Don't allow any filter come in there. But I wonder if perhaps we have been lacking in a zeal to have my cup filled with a blessing for somebody else.

Maybe it used to be in your marriage that when there was a conflict, you would both husband and wife, you'd be going at each other back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth for hours, days, even weeks sometimes. Well, then you get to the point where you give your spouse the silent treatment where they're, they're getting at you, but you're just keep your mouth shut. Keep your mouth shut.

Don't, don't, don't say anything in return. Keep your mouth shut. Keep your mouth shut.

That's progress, but don't stop there. Will you cry out for a blessing in return? This is how Christ was zealous for good deeds. So overcoming, you know, we like the global meeting we had yesterday was two parts to overcoming.

One is overcoming sin, but also overcoming Satan. Now, if you overcome sin and you make it your goal in life only to overcome sin in your life, I think the devil will leave you alone at some point because he sees that you've got a very selfish self-centered gospel that you want to be free from sin. You don't care.

Everybody else is a slave to sin. You don't care about that other person, that other person, or even your own spouse. As long as I don't fall into sin, it's okay.

The devil might leave you alone, but the moment you take the battle to him, the moment you say, like it says about the young people in first John two verse 14, you have overcome the evil one. Not only are you intent on overcoming sin in your life, your intent in overcoming Satan, which means if you see somebody where Satan has a foothold, some area where Satan has a foothold, somebody, you know, where the devil is harassing them, they're plagued by discouragement or condemnation or sin, living wanton sinful lives. You're saying, Satan, I'm going to fight against you.

Then the devil will pick a fight with you. Are you content that the devil doesn't mess with you? Think about this. Let me ask you seriously.

I'm not trying to be frivolous, not trying to be joking. If the devil doesn't mess with you, are you happy? Are you like, okay, the devil doesn't mess with me. He doesn't try to shake me.

That probably means that you're not trying to shake his kingdom. The devil will pick a fight with you if you try to shake his kingdom. If you're not trying to shake his kingdom, he'll leave you alone.

He'll still try to tempt you through your flesh, through earthly desires, but he may leave you alone for some time because you're not causing any damage to his territory, which is that coworker of yours, that relative of yours, that marriage of yours, that child of yours, that parent of yours. If you leave his kingdom alone, he might leave your kingdom alone, but that's not the life you want to live. The church that Jesus is building is taking down the gates of hell, is looking for the gates of hell and taking them down.

Now, this thing about zeal, there is, I was looking it up just out of curiosity. The words zealous and jealous sound similar, and I wondered, is there any relation? I looked it up, and actually it is. That zeal actually comes from a jealous desire, that that zeal, and that's why I thought it was really an eye-opener for me where I understood it, that our zeal doesn't come from, well, I must be zealous.

It's me having a passionate desire for Jesus, my bridegroom, the captain of my salvation, my redeemer, my savior, my God. I have a jealous desire for him, and he has a jealous desire for me, and out of that, my zeal comes. It's like a, you know, let's turn to James chapter 5. Actually, it's very interesting that James actually uses the word adultery in this context.

If you think, let's talk about the earthly example for a moment. What is it that makes a woman, a wife, upset when her husband commits adultery? It's that she's possessive over her husband. She wants her husband to be hers alone, not shared with another woman.

So that's why any woman should be, and would be, affronted and angry and upset if their husband commits adultery, and that's the language of the picture that James is using, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Verse 4, you adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. And again, like I was just saying, likewise a husband, a man, would be jealous.

It's because he's jealous of his wife, that she belongs to him, she must be his and his alone, that he would be upset if she committed adultery on him. This is, even the world understands that. There's no earthly, even ungodly marriage, where adultery would be tolerated lightly.

Even the unconverted, ungodly, heathen people are affronted. Why? Because you were supposed to be mine and mine alone. What were you doing giving your love to somebody else? And that's the picture that he uses here, and he says, do you not know, do you think, verse 5, that the scripture speaks to no purpose? Is it just empty that he says he jealously desires the spirit which he has made to dwell in us? That's why you can't play around with the world.

You can't play around with sin. Because Jesus is a jealous bridegroom. He's a jealous husband.

When you have a lustful thought, you're committing adultery with the world. When you have a, when you gossip, you're committing adultery with the world. When you have a proud thought, you're committing adultery with the world.

When you're self-seeking, selfish, when you murmur and complain, when you are angry towards somebody else, you're committing adultery with the world, and he's jealous over it. And he has a zeal over it as well, and it's our passionate, you know, they use this word partisan in government, like partisan, that means the republicans always vote for the republicans, the democrats always vote for the democrats, they're partisan, I'm, I have allegiance, I'm loyal to my party, and there's a sense of that, that zeal must come from a sense of loyalty to Jesus Christ. I believe, dear family, that if there's a lack of zeal in your life about the things of God, if there's a lack of zeal to read the Bible, to know God's word, if there's a lack of zeal to pray, if there's a lack of zeal to come to the meetings and pray and, and be encouraged and encourage others, I want you, I'm not telling you, but I want you to go in secret and question your loyalty to Jesus Christ.

If you were truly loyal to Jesus, there would be a zeal over it, over your relationship with him, and that's what will ultimately set you free from sin, a zeal for the things of God. You know, Jesus is like that himself, you, I'll show you a few examples, um, uh, in Isaiah 59, this prophecy about Jesus. Isaiah is a wonderful book, often you, if you read the, carefully, you'll see this phrase, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish it.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish it. It's a wonderful phrase. It's like God was telling Israel, they're in sin, they're defeated, they're just down in the dumps.

He says, I'll do it. I'm zealous to do it. Like we've heard dad say, I am more eager that God is more eager that you would be filled with the Holy Spirit than even you are.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish it. And so you read here in Isaiah 59 that Jesus, this wonderful picture, um, Isaiah 59 verse 17, he put on righteousness like a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on his head. And he put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped himself with zeal as a mantle.

Well, that's not mentioned in Ephesians six, you know, um, this, the same thing, it talks about the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the sword of the spirit, the shield of faith, and all these things, shoes, shoes shot with the gospel. But it doesn't mention zeal there, at least not that I remember, but we're given the same picture here. When you put on the armor of God, when you have, when, when you put the sword of the spirit in your hand, when you read God's word, when you put on the breastplate of righteousness, when you, uh, have the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, you see yourself getting put with that armor.

I believe there's two ways to do it. One way is like David, when they put Saul's armor on him, you kind of just collapse under that. Like, I can't go to battle now.

This is such a heavy thing. The breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation. The other way, the right way to do it is to see how Jesus was.

He's my example. When the breastplate of righteousness was put on him and the helmet of salvation was put on him, he wrapped himself with zeal. It says, let's go, let's go.

And I see the captain of the salvation doing that. And behind them, a few mice coming along, you know, like little timid mouse, a timid mouse here, timid mouse is there following Jesus. Like, Oh, what's going to happen this week? How do you see the army of God, which is you brother, sister, child, how is it? You've seen the captain of self, your salvation put on the helmet and the breastplate and the sword of the spirit.

And he's zealous. He says, let's take this week on. I'll do this.

The zeal of the Lord of the hosts will accomplish it. And we all like little mice come behind and says, yes, Lord, please don't let anything bad happen to me. I don't want any sickness.

I don't want this. I don't want that. This isn't the army of the Lord of hosts.

Now, I'm not trying to whip you up into some frenzy, but like we've been singing all morning, open the eyes of my heart. Lord, show me that I've been like a mouse following the captain of my salvation, hoping that they won't fight me. They won't pick the battle against me.

Oh, that other brother. Yeah, he can handle it. That other sister, she can handle it.

But that godly person he can help, but not me, Lord. I'm the little mouse. That's just hoping to be carried along in battle.

No, he's given you the same sort of spirit that he had. He's given you the same helmet of salvation that he had the same breastplate of righteousness, the same shield of faith. It says that Jesus himself put it on and he did so with zeal.

I'll just talk briefly in the next 15 minutes or so on a few areas where we must be zealous. We must be zealous to repent. Revelation 3 verse 19, Jesus says to the church that was the worst of them all, be zealous and repent.

It was so bad that he says you must take it seriously. You must be zealous. If you've seen the depths of sinfulness and laziness in your Christian life, God's showing you that.

Be zealous and repent. Be zealous in your repentance. And an example of that is actually what we read in 2 Corinthians chapter 7. The church in Corinth was one of the most carnal churches in their day, planted by Paul, and yet they became very, very carnal.

In fact, they became so bad that there was all kinds of sexual sin, greed. They would come to their breaking of bread meals and they would all bring their own meal. And some were very rich and they had a lot of food and they'd have five course meal for them and their children and then next to them would be the person who barely has a piece of bread and just sits there and the children are each given a little piece of that piece of bread and they sit there and eat it and they wouldn't share.

This was going on in the church. Can you imagine? I can't even imagine in any earthly club where that would happen. But this was the church in Corinth.

And then there was a man who was sleeping with his father's, with his stepmother. That was going on and all kinds of other things that he had to deal with in the church in Corinth. And he wrote them a letter.

He says, I'm going to come with you with a stick, give you a real spanking, you entire church. And they repented. They repented so radically.

I think they didn't know it. They didn't see it. I don't know how they could have seen it, but they were so blind.

But thank God that Paul had the love to spank them, as it were, through that letter, read 1 Corinthians. And then the end result of that was that they genuinely repented. Look at this, 2 Corinthians chapter 7, we read in verse 11.

He says, the sorrow, he says, verse 9, verse 11, behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow has produced in you. It's kind of like he gave them a spanking, like you give the little child, let's say, a spanking. And the result of that was that child was so convicted about the seriousness of what they'd done that they went 150% or 200% to do better.

Not this grumpy, oh, why did you punish me? Fine, I'm just sullen and sulking. You know, that's natural for children. When you correct children and discipline them, it's likely that when they receive that discipline, they'll sulk.

It hurts. It's painful. But what should we do who are now mature in Christ? We should, like the church in Corinth, repent.

Say, oh, wow, I've hurt you so badly, Lord, I'm going to repent. And so the result was it, it produced an earnestness, a vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, zeal to set it right. When you're corrected about something, and somebody gives you a correction, perhaps it's your spouse in love.

What is the result of it? I know what it's like when I'm in my flesh is like, ah, she doesn't really understand me. After all these years, really? That's how it is? Yeah. Or does it result in a zeal? Lord, I want to set this right.

I want to love my wife as you love the church. This is zeal. Now, also, you read earlier in verse seven, that it says that, that he was comforted, Paul says, also by that he was comforted with which he was comforting you as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me.

I missed that until a few weeks ago, that the church in Corinth had a zeal for Paul. This is the man who just gave them a spanking. And they're like, Paul, we want to love you even more.

You corrected us. You, you, you, you, you showed me what was wrong with me. You love me so much.

I want to give you a bigger hug than I've ever given you before because you just corrected me. You know, again, wouldn't it be wonderful if our children did that? Probably some of our children go to the point where very quickly, they're able to discern my dad loves me. My mom loves me.

That's why they've disciplined me. That's right. And they run up to you and give you a hug and say, thank you, dad, mom.

I'm still going to face the discipline I know, but I realized that you love me. Now, maybe our children won't be there too, because they're not mature enough to understand that. But you and I are.

What son is there whom the Lord doesn't discipline? God says, Jesus says, all whom I love, I discipline. Every child of mine whom I love, I discipline. So the next time the Lord disciplines you in some way through somebody, do you want to go to the Lord and give him a big hug and say, thank you, Lord Jesus, for loving me enough to discipline me.

And then can you go to that older godly brother who corrected you and give him a hug and say, thank you, brother, for loving me enough to show me the truth. I know you're doing it out of love. I love that the church, and that's why I believe it went well with them.

What zeal for me, a zeal for the corrector. So zealous in repentance. It's very important.

I already talked about zealous in purity, not having any spirit of adultery. I want you to, I want to talk a little bit more on that briefly. Numbers chapter 25, there was an incident, Numbers chapter 25, an incident after, you know the story of Balaam and Balak, how God, how Balak tried to get Balaam to curse the people of Israel multiple times, and he couldn't.

And every time he tried to curse them, try to get Balaam to curse them, Balaam would put a blessing on them. And it was just getting worse. And finally Balak gave up.

But then Balaam told him, hey, let me, don't, you're barking up the wrong tree. I'll show you how we can overcome them. You can't overcome them by cursing them because God's on their side.

How you can overcome them is bring impurity into their midst. Cursing them won't work. And I'll tell you this, remember this, dear fathers, mothers, no curse against you can ever succeed.

No curse against you can ever come. If you're in Christ, if you're born again, if you're a child of God, you're united. Even if your spouse is not united with you, there's no evil, no weapon formed against you can prosper.

But what will be the downfall of your marriage in your home is allowing a little bit of impurity in. Allow a little bit of carelessness. Lower your standard on what movies you allow to be watched in your home.

Oh yeah, then corruption will come in. Then your family will fall apart. Do that.

Allow a little bit of worldly music, worldly dress, worldly conversation, influence of worldly friends. That's how they'll win. And that's how the Moab came against Israel in what's called the Sin of Peor here.

But what he did was, Balaam said, hey, get some of these Israelite men to marry some of your women. Intermarry with them and make peace with the people of Israel and just say, as a mark of our peace, let's intermarry a little bit. Let's mix a little bit of the world with you in and that's it.

Corruption came in. And it says in Numbers 25 verse 6, Behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. So here's the people

have seen their sin, they're weeping, they're repenting before God.

And here comes, now you read that he was the son of one of the leaders of one of the tribes, of tribes of Simeon. This leader's son comes in bringing his girlfriend right in the midst of it. And everybody was just like, oh, what do we say? Don't offend anybody.

And then there was one man, verse 7, Phinehas, the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron the priest, the grandson of Aaron. I don't think Aaron would have. Aaron was a weak-minded person.

He allowed them to make the, you know, he made the golden calf and all that. But his grandson had the fire of the Holy Spirit in him, on him, the zeal of Phinehas. When Phinehas, the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he saw them coming.

He says, you think while we're here weeping and repenting of our sin, you can bring that sin in just so callously? I mean, this man who brought the Midianite woman must have thought, yeah, they like me too much. I'm a gifted person. They're not going to question me on it by bringing this unconverted woman in.

But Phinehas said, I don't care who you are, whose son you are. Maybe your father is a respected person or not, but I'm going to come. He took a spear in his hand and he went after the man of Israel, verse 8, into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man and the woman, through the body.

And then the plague stopped because there was a plague coming through the people of Israel. And the entire congregation would have been destroyed if not for Phinehas. And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, verse 10, verse 11, Phinehas, the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away my wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them.

Don't you think it took zeal from Phinehas to take a spear and so forcefully push it through that man and the woman? Because he was jealous with the jealousy of God. That jealousy lit a fire in him and he says, I got to do something. Not anger, not flesh, not fleshly anger, but the anger of God burned within Phinehas.

He says, therefore, verse 12, I give him my covenant of peace, something he never told Aaron. I give him my covenant of peace and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the sons of Israel, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood. I pray this often, not just for my children and their children and children after that, but for everybody at RLCF.

Lord, let this church be a church of the perpetual priesthood. Will you make a covenant with us that your presence will be here always? Not this building. I don't care about this building, but where we gather, wherever that is, if they kick us out of this building, we'll go somewhere else, but the presence of the Lord, will you establish a covenant with us, Lord? Pray that for your home, brothers, sisters, children, pray that for your lives, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood where we shall always, we, our family shall always stand before you, Lord.

This church will always stand before you. Every single one is going to take some zeal, a radical attitude towards sin. Fathers, when you see your children starting to take a little bit of the spirit of the world and they'll be old enough where they'll start to want to have girlfriends or boyfriends for your daughters, what will you do? They're like, yeah, it's innocent.

It's that they're just teenagers. What's wrong with that? The zeal of Phinehas, the zeal of Phinehas. Yeah, zeal for purity.

That's what it is. It's a zeal for purity in the church. If somebody comes to you and wants to gossip about somebody else, will you have a zeal where you tell that person to their face, I don't care who you are, you're an older sister or a younger sister.

If you're here to gossip about that other person, I'm going to go and tell that other person that you're gossiping about that person. That'll put an end to it. That's the kind of zeal we need in the church, a zeal that will put, they'll say the sin stops here.

I will not perpetuate this gossip any further, no matter what pretense or what religious language is used about it. So much division in churches will be brought to an end if gossip is stopped immediately. So many other things, the spirit of complaining, spirit of grumbling.

Don't let it find a root in your home, put an end to it. A zeal for purity. Another zeal is a zeal for the hatred of money.

Do you hate money? Yeah, you could say, yes, I do. I hate money. I love God.

But do you have a zeal for it? The only time you see Jesus acting in anger, let's turn to John chapter two, actually that word zeal is used there, was when he saw the abuse of money in the church, in the temple of God. When he saw people bringing money into the church, into the temple, into the place which should have been a house of prayer, money, asking for money, begging for money, making money. It says verse 17, you know the story when he cleansed her.

It's the only time you see Jesus acting this way. I never see Jesus doing anything physically aggressive, never, except twice. John two, at the beginning of his ministry.

And again, at the end of his ministry, Matthew 21, you read, and it's also reported in Mark and Luke where he cleansed the temple. As far as we know, he did it twice. That's the only time you see him kicking over tables, taking a whip and beating them out.

It's the only time you see physical aggression from Christ. Why? Because he hated money so zealously. He said in Luke 16, you cannot love God and mammon.

You either love one and hate the other. You either serve one and hate the other. It's love or hate.

If you love God, there must be a radical, zealous hatred for money and anything to do with mixing money with the church, in the church. And that's why, you know, you've heard us say, yeah, maybe other churches also now are in the habit of not passing an offering plate. It's sort of considered rude.

So they put a box in the back. But I tell you, it must be a clear and unequivocal, unequivocal means no doubt about it, stand against money, that we will never ask for money in this church. We won't slip in a subtle, hey, we need some money, we're running short.

There must be a radical stance against money. We still get emails. Why can't you make it so that we can give electronically? Because we want to have a zealous attitude towards money.

We want it to be clear to people who don't know anything about us. When they go to our website, man, they don't mention money at all. In fact, they put a list of conditions that you must meet before you meet, before you give money.

You ever heard of such a church which says, before you give, check, do this checklist. And it's a pretty difficult checklist. You must have forgiven everybody.

You must have enough needs for yourself. You must not owe anything to anybody else. You must be free of debt.

All these things, you make it difficult to give money. That's zeal that Jesus had. Zeal for God's house.

It says in verse 17, his disciples remembered that it was written, zeal for your house will consume me. The one time it's mentioned, you know, it's quoted from the Old Testament. But what was it, when was it that the father said, Jesus, I'm going to manifest your zeal outwardly.

You get to do it. When? When they mix money and religion, money and Christianity is mixed. Have a radical attitude towards that money.

You know, if Jesus had not done that, if Jesus had only come to live a perfect life, never committing sin, never acting out on this zeal, I believe they would never have killed him. There are many good people who live good lives, you know, leaders of other religions that weren't put to death. Why did they put Jesus to death? Because he had a zeal.

He didn't just come to preach holy inner sanctification, but that the result of that would be that we have a jealous, passionate commitment to God. That's where Jesus came, that he came to do the will of the father, not just to avoid sin. Jesus was jealous and zealous in his devotion to his father.

And that's why he was killed. And if you're looking for a Christianity that just makes sure you don't offend anybody, just don't stand against the evil practices of Christendom, the money making practices of Christendom. Just leave everybody else alone.

Just live and let live. Like they say, you won't fulfill the purpose of God. You might get to heaven, I don't know, but you won't have finished the checklist.

Is there a checklist somewhere in one of the pages in your book that says you must speak out against this? Do you find a burning hatred? I mean, I've had people come to me even, and it's sad. There was a situation where I was in where somebody asked me for money on behalf of somebody else, somebody else that I respected, a godly man. And this other person asked for money on behalf of the other person.

I just hung my head in shame. And this was a co-worker of that other man. And I was just so grieved that this is what's going on.

I'd respected that other man so much. And it was sad. I don't think that other man would have wanted for the money to have been asked.

But anyway, besides the point, if Jesus only came to overcome sin in his private life and leave everybody else alone, leave the territory of the devil, leave the Pharisees making money in the temple, he would never have been killed. But it says both in Mark and in Luke, right after that, I think in Mark 11. Mark 11, you read that he chases out the money changers.

And then verse 17, he began to teach and say to them, my house will be called a house of prayer. You have made it robber's den. The chief priests and the Pharisees heard this and began seeking how to destroy him.

You mean that if you, if you make God's house a house of prayer, people want to kill you? Yes. Because it'll mean that you'll have to stand against the evil practices in Christendom. And this is where the devil will want us to compromise.

I've seen in my dad's example, an extremely strong, almost fanatical attitude towards money, against money. Almost seems, really, does it have to be that extreme? Your flesh might think that. And I've come to see that that's what's preserved his ministry over the years, that he stood for that.

And your RLCF, especially for the local church, I pray that we will never lower our stand against money. We've heard about registries and how it's really just glorified begging. And it's a common practice in America.

And if you've done it in the past, that's fine. The times of ignorance God overlooks. But it's in things like this, where we adopt the practices of the world.

We allow the spirit of pure, the Balaam's to come in and mix money, mix a little bit of thing. Well, it's harmless, isn't it? I mean, we can convert. I mean, I'm sure that man who brought that his girlfriend into the temple, into the camp, thought, I'm sure she can convert to our faith.

Let's get married, and then I'll work on her. That's not the spirit of Phinehas. It's not the attitude we must have towards money.

Let's have a radical attitude towards money. Just a couple more briefly, and I'll finish. 2nd Corinthians chapter 8, a zealous attitude towards giving.

We've heard often how there's a gift that nobody seems to covet. That's the gift of giving, the gift of giving. And here you see a tremendous example in 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 of the, again, the church in Corinth.

They, you know, they were so bad in the first letter, and they, something changed. You see what radical repentance can do? It can turn things around so quickly that things were so bad that now they, it turned so good for them. And here Paul goes so far as to encourage them to give liberally, but he gives them the example of the church in Macedonia.

That's really the example that we're given here. He says, 2nd Corinthians 8, now brethren, verse 1, we wish to make known to you the grace of God, which has been given in the churches of Macedonia. Remember I talked about how all of this zeal comes through the grace of God.

And it's, Paul says that the churches in Macedonia got such grace that, verse 2, in a great ordeal of affliction and their deep poverty. So think about their cup, overflowing with affliction and poverty. Their cup is full of affliction and poverty.

What flowed out? If you fill a cup with water, what do you expect to flow out? Water. If you fill a cup with orange juice, what will overflow? Orange juice. If you fill a cup with poison, what will overflow? Poison.

Fill a cup with dirty, mucky water, what will overflow? Mucky water. The things of heaven are different. You fill a cup with deep affliction and poverty, what will overflow when you have the grace of God? It

overflowed in the wealth of their giving.

This is a miracle. God filled their cup up with a great ordeal of affliction and deep poverty, but he gave them an abundance of joy and an overflow of giving, liberally. Oh, it's tremendous.

You read the testimony of these famous godly men and women who served in remote parts. They weren't famous in their lifetime. We read about them now, we hear about them now, but in their lifetime they were unknown.

They went, like we sang last week, to serve, unloved, unsought, unknown. Jesus Christ himself was unknown and unsought and unloved in his time, and so must his church be. And look at how the blessing, that the more God has allowed them to face affliction and poverty, they're giving more.

Do you find, can you trust God? And I've longed for this, brothers and sisters, that the more I experience affliction and poverty even, or whatever it might be, the more I've had a difficult week. It ought to be that I come here and God is allowed, able to use me even more and serve, and I'm able to serve even more. Not in my own strength.

I tell you, in my own strength, there'll be times when I just want to collapse. I felt like that five years ago, when it seemed like all hell broke loose in this church, and I just wanted to quit and give up, run away and hide, bury myself in a hole. And God says, no, you got to get up and serve.

You got to trust me for a grace that's not related, that's beyond what you're experiencing. If your cup's been filled up with affliction and poverty, ask God to turn that miraculously into an overflow of giving, where you want to serve somebody else. And they know you're going through a hard time, but you're giving, and you're not sitting there and asking people to feel sorry for you.

You're not sitting there with a sad look on your face, your head hung down, like everybody knows you're going through a hard time because it's written all over your face. Oh, ask God for grace. This is not the grace of God.

He's the glory and the lifter of my head, where you'll have no idea what kind of a week I've had, because it's overflowing with giving liberally. Where the church, where the people who received from the church in Macedonia had no idea. You mean Macedonia was poor? They gave us so much, how could they be poor? You mean that person served so much, and yet they're afflicted in their body so much? We sang Annie Johnson's Flint song this morning.

Until you read her biography, you could never have guessed how afflicted she was in her body. I love it. She says when the afflictions increase, God gives even more.

And here we are, hundreds, decades later, singing her song. The overflow is liberal. The overflow is an abundance of joy.

Do you long for this? When the more God fills up your cup with affliction, you're not sitting there whining, saying, Lord, when? Why me? When's it going to end? When's it going to end? But you're letting him use his, letting the grace of God turn the affliction, the depth of affliction and poverty, into an overflow of joy and giving, joyful giving. I long for that. Let's be such a church.

Times of affliction are coming, family. We're experiencing a relative time of peace and calm, I believe that. But I hope you're ready for the affliction that's coming, not with dread or fear, but with joy.

Lord, when you allow this church again to be afflicted, what you, what everybody else will see, squeezed out of that, is what's been inside all along. The fragrance of Christ, the life of Christ coming out within us, which is giving, which is love, which is joy. Okay, last one, and I'll end.

That's zealous in giving encouragement. Proverbs chapter 15. Proverbs chapter 15.

I touched on this earlier briefly, but read in verse 23. Proverbs 15, verse 23. A man has joy in an appropriate answer.

So you, somebody asks you a tough question, and you give them an appropriate answer. That's joy. But you know, there are proverbs, many of the proverbs are contrasts, where one is evil, one is good, or one is good, one is better.

One is better, one is the best. And here's one of those. Yeah, it's good if you have a good answer to give to somebody, where it's an answer, but what's even more delightful is a timely word.

Well, they didn't ask you the question, but you just gave a timely word, a word in season. That means your wife was going through a hard time, and she didn't want to burden you with it, because you got everything else that's going on in your mind with work. But you saw a little bit of a look on her face, or maybe a little bit of an interaction.

She's going through a hard time, and so you said a timely word. It wasn't a, she asked you a question and answered, that's good. But you were discerning through the Holy Spirit.

You had the grace of God in your life, where you saw a little bit of a look in her face that told you she needs a word of encouragement now, that she's not even asking for. And you give that word of encouragement. How delightful.

Do you want a delightful marriage? I think we all do. Learn to give those timely words of encouragement, unasked for, unsought, where you're saying, Lord, show me. And you may be sitting there at work, and you don't even know that your wife is struggling with something at home.

You're in the workplace away, or you're in your office locked up on your meeting, and somehow you're so in tune with the Holy Spirit, that he says, send your wife a text, or just, you know, you can't leave right now, you're far away, just send her a text, say, honey, I love you, I'm praying for you, whatever you might be facing, God will help us. What a difference it can make in our homes. Earlier, you read in verse 4, you know, it talks about a perversion, a perverse tongue, the latter part of verse 4, which is what we used to be, right? She says something back, or he says something to you, you say something back that's evil.

But you know what's the opposite of that? A tree of life, a soothing tongue. So I see there's three ways to look at it. There's the perverse tongue, there's the silent tongue, and then there's the soothing tongue.

Which one will you choose today? Many of us have settled for the silent tongue, I won't fight back with you, and somehow I think I'm better because of it. No, what God wants from us is a soothing tongue, a timely word, a word that takes whatever struggle your husband might be facing, or your wife might be facing, or your child. Maybe you see some rebellion or disobedience in your child, how will you deal with

it? Will it be a, you dare not speak like that to me, son, daughter? Or will it be a soothing tongue? Yes, firm.

Yes, rebuking. Yes, hating the sin and the rebellion that's in there. Yes, even correcting if needed.

But a soothing tongue, which is the tree of life. Zealous. It's one thing to say, okay, Lord, I guess someday I'll have a soothing tongue.

Or do you want to leave this place saying, Lord, I haven't had it and I'm going to pursue it. I'm going to pursue it. I'm going to be zealous that in every situation where you want me to give a timely word, I will say it and I will finish that checklist.

I won't miss a single one. There are opportunities you and I are going to face this week, dear brothers and sisters, to be zealous for good works, with our words, with our actions, with our prayers for each other. Let's take it to heart.

Say, Lord, you've got that list. I don't want to do it in my own strength, but will you give me your grace? I humble myself. Give me your grace that I will be zealous for good deeds, for every good deed that you've planned for today and each day like that.

Amen.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/sD4ZP3Ektsg.mp4>

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