

Zeal for God's House

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of having a burning zeal for God's house, urging believers to prioritize purity and purpose over profit in their ministry.

Duration: 57:58

Scripture: Isaiah 59:9, Isaiah 59:15, Matthew 6:33, John 2:13-16, Acts 20:34-35, Romans 12:11, Revelation 12:11

Topics: "Christian Zeal", "Faithful Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being zealous and passionate for God's glory. He encourages listeners to refocus their vision and recognize the shortness of time and the seriousness of life. The speaker uses the example of the apostle Paul, who was zealous even before his conversion, to illustrate the need for a burning passion for God's work. He also highlights Paul's dedication to preaching and working hard to support himself and help the weak, showing that Christian work should not be driven by profit. The sermon emphasizes the importance of actively stirring up the flame of faith and living a life that counts for God.

Transcript

We know that God has given Jesus to us as an example and it must be our desire to see Him more clearly in newer and newer aspects of His glory so that we can follow Him and be increasingly conformed to His likeness. The Holy Spirit, as we have said throughout the years, seeks to show us different aspects of the glory of Jesus and His method of transformation is to show us the glory of Jesus in the scriptures and to stir us to be gripped by that which we have seen and then to work in our hearts to transform us into that likeness. So I thought of one aspect of Jesus' glory that we could just look at in John's gospel chapter 2. John's gospel chapter 2, we read that Jesus came in verse 13 to Jerusalem and there He saw merchants selling cattle and sheep and doves for sacrifices and money changers behind their counters and Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out.

He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables and to those who were selling the doves He said, Take these things away. Stop making my father's house a house of merchandise. His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house will consume me.

We have many times looked at Jesus' humility, His purity, His love, compassion, goodness, gentleness, so many things. I was thinking today about His zeal, His tremendous passion to do the will of God. It was like a burning fire within Him that could not be quenched and that is one purpose of the baptism in the Holy

Spirit and fire.

Without that, it is very easy to become sluggish or if you once had it and you don't seek to stir it up all the time, it is very easy to become sluggish and when we become sluggish, it is very easy to be discouraged and to give up hope. So it is good for us to allow the Holy Spirit to show us this aspect of the glory of Jesus, that He was gripped by a zeal, a tremendous concern in His heart for the house of God, for the purity of God's house. He was not bothered what people thought about Him because He had a zeal for God's house.

The vast majority of Christian preachers today are very concerned about what people think about them. So they are diplomatic in God's house. People can do business in God's house.

It is going on everywhere. You know exactly what it says here, the Father's house has become a house of business and merchandise and profit. You know the principle of all, when it says here, don't make my Father's house a house of merchandise or Living Bible says, don't turn my Father's house into a market.

What is the principle of the marketplace? The principle of the marketplace is profit. If it were not for profit, there would never be a market anywhere in the world. Whether it is stock market or a vegetable market or a fruit market or a meat market, any market, the fundamental principle is profit, gain.

And we could paraphrase Jesus' words into saying, don't turn the church into a place where you are seeking profit or honor or gain for yourself. You know that profit can be in terms of money, it can be in terms of certain other benefits, it can be in terms of honor, it can be in terms of anything. But Jesus is dead against anyone who comes to God's house for personal profit or gain or who tries to make some profit or gain for himself out of God's house.

In every denomination in Christianity, I have seen people who come to the church for profit, for gain and they continue to live there because there is nobody there who has got a zeal for God's house. We have seen through the years how people come to CFC and try to do business here. Well, that is the surest way to turn this church into Babylon in no time at all.

The quickest way to turn a good church into Babylon is to allow people to do business in God's house, make profit for themselves. That is the basic principle of Babylon. You read Revelation 17 and 18 together, you find that is the principle of Babylon, it is the principle of the marketplace, of profit.

So Jesus did not turn the money changers out from the marketplace in Jerusalem. He turned the money changers out from the marketplace in the temple. He was saying in the marketplace you can make profit, no problem.

But you can't come into God's house and make profit, no. And wherever we see anyone seeking to make profit in the house of God, we have to drive him out. If the zeal of God's house consumes you, you will do that.

If the zeal of God's house does not consume you, you won't do it. And that is how Babylon is built. So we can say, where there is no zeal for God's house to keep it pure, particularly from the spirit of the marketplace, in no time at all it will become Babylon.

When Paul left Ephesus, he knew that those other elders would turn it into a marketplace where they would each seek their own gain and honor and profit and gather a little group around themselves. And he

said, then it will be Babylon in no time. So the only way to protect a church from very quickly turning into a place where people come to get some benefit or some profit for themselves and make God's house, the church into a place of doing business, is if God can find some people in the church who are gripped by the same zeal that Jesus had.

A zeal that consumed him. You know, like a burning passion. In the world there are so many people who have a tremendous zeal for wrong causes.

Think of all these suicide bombers. We know they are totally mistaken. But they have such a tremendous zeal.

Such a tremendous zeal to go and die for something false, for a false religion, imagining that they are going to heaven and getting a surprise when they die, discovering where they actually went. But think of their zeal. And I believe that wherever we see zeal in the world, zeal that the devil puts into people's hearts, whether it is to make money or to promote a false religion or to fight for some land or property or the passion, wherever we see that, that should challenge us.

When we see the zeal of businessmen to make profit, gain, that should challenge us to see whether we have the same zeal for God and for his house. It was a characteristic of Jesus. There was a burning passion within him for the Father's glory in his house.

When we come to the church, that's how we should come. With a burning zeal for the Father's glory to be seen in the church. That means the spirit of the marketplace should have been driven out of my life completely.

All of us should be able to say at the end of our lives, in all the years I lived in CFC, I made no profit from anybody of any sort. I did not get any gain or any honor or anything. Then you can say that the spirit of Babylon was not found in you at all.

But if a little bit of that spirit is found where we seek some credit for something or we want some respect from the others for being considered senior or spiritual or some stupid garbage like that or whatever it is, I come to the house of God with the spirit of the marketplace to get some honor for myself. That's the spirit of Babylon and I pray that God will always preserve in the church people who will identify that spirit and crush it and drive it out. Jesus turned out the money changer and said, get away from here all you fellows who are coming to the temple to buy and sell.

Don't make my Father's house a marketplace. And the disciples remembered, zeal for thy house will consume me, will burn me up. That's how we are to serve the Lord.

There is a verse in Romans chapter 12 which says that when we serve the Lord, we must be fervent in our spirit. Revelation 12 verse 11. The Living Bible says, never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically.

Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically. That means the opposite of zeal is being lazy. God never created man to be lazy.

He wanted man to work for six days even before sin came to the world. He ordained a day of rest and then six days of work. And after sin came, the Lord told Adam, you are going to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow.

That means you got to work hard and perspire in order to earn your living. And there was no place for laziness there. And how much more, when we serve the Lord, there is no laziness in anything.

Like it says, you are fervent in spirit serving the Lord. If I pray lifelessly as if we are in a funeral, if I sing lifelessly as if Jesus did not conquer Satan, just did not rise from the dead, if I am sluggish and lazy to study the scriptures, if I am sluggish and lazy to seek God's will, if I am sluggish and lazy to look for opportunities to serve the Lord, to bless people, if I am lazy about these things, then I am sluggish. And then, I can't inherit the promises.

It says in Hebrews 6 that the opposite of faith and patience, we were thinking the other Sunday about faith and patience, long suffering. That means we ask God for something and we don't give up till we get it. And the opposite of that, we read in Hebrews 6 in verse 12, is being lazy, is being sluggish, spiritually indifferent.

And it says that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promise. There is a tendency to sluggishness in our flesh, just like we are tempted to overeat and indulge in illegitimate sex and oversleep. We have a tendency to sluggishness in our life, particularly when it comes to spiritual things.

Even many believers who are very zealous to work late hours and work hard to make money, when it comes to spiritual things, they are sluggish. So it's not that they are by nature sluggish, because when it comes to other things, like making money and looking earnestly for good jobs, they are very zealous. Their sluggishness is limited to spiritual things.

And I think that proves they don't really believe that these things written in the scriptures are true. They don't really believe that it's worth going all out for these things that are written in the scriptures, which means they don't have faith. That's why we need to look at Jesus and see how zeal for God's house consumed him.

There was a burning passion in his life. Throughout his life, many a time he would get alone with God to find out, where am I going to go next, Father? What have I got to do? He was always on the lookout for opportunities. Once he heard the voice of his father saying, go outside Israel.

You know, he never went outside Israel. He once said, I haven't come for others. I have been sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

But once he heard the father saying, to go outside Israel, to the land of Tyre, north of Israel, which is today in Lebanon. And he had a passion. And he walked 50 miles, maybe 18 or 20 hours, a burning passion to do God's will.

And he went there, and there was one needy woman, whose daughter had a demon. That's the one the father saw from heaven. There was one needy woman there, who's got a demon-possessed daughter.

Nobody can help her. She's crying out to some unknown God. But the God in heaven heard her, even though she was not a Jew, even though she didn't have the true faith.

Probably an idol-worshipper. But God cares for even the idol-worshippers, because they don't know. They're doing it in ignorance.

We may look down on them, but God doesn't, because God sent his son to die for them. So God didn't look down on this woman idol-worshipper. Maybe that's how her child got a demon.

God sent his son. And there Jesus was ready to walk all that distance, drive out that woman's, that demon out of the daughter, in the land of Syrophenicia, and then walk back 50 miles. Another 20 hours for one soul.

God knew that he could depend on his son to walk 40 hours to help one soul. Just like earthly companies depend on people to work 40 hours to make money for them, God could depend on his son to walk 40 hours to help one soul. But the reason why Jesus heard that voice and was led to the right places was because he had this burning zeal for the Father's name and for the Father's house.

Nobody could shift him from that zeal. And that's part of his glory that we need to acquire. The Holy Spirit has come to give us that zeal and concern.

I believe it is that same zeal that, you know, very often we may think, why don't we hear the voice of God? How is it that some people are led to those in need and I am not led to those in need? I thought of that, you know, when we look at the life of Jesus. Because Jesus had learned from me. How is it that Jesus in an amazing way, we don't see any external evidence, but I think it was all inward, was led to different people who were in need, to help them.

We would think it was accidental. It was not accidental. He walked listening to his Father.

And so he ran into people who were in need, all the time. Like I said the other day, when he and his disciples were walking through Samaria and they were all hungry, instead of all of them going together to the hotel to eat lunch, as they normally did, this particular day, he said, you go, I am not going. Why did he say that? He was hungry, just like the others.

But he heard a voice, don't go. So he sent them. And sure enough, after they had gone, this woman came to the well and through that woman, not only the woman was saved, the whole of Samaria, many people turned to the Lord.

But what I am trying to say is that voice could be heard by Jesus only because he had this burning passion for God's glory, for God's house to be built. He had burning passion that this one earthly life of his should count for God before his time on earth is over. He was gripped by this all the time.

He would walk down a street and this burning passion, burning within him all the time. It is something like a businessman who is always thinking of money, money, money, money, money. I can imagine his mind also thinks of bright ideas now and then to make money.

When Jesus was thinking like that all the time, the glory of the Father and the Father's house and needy people around him, that was the thing. Just imagine if a man's mind is always occupied like this, just like a businessman's mind is always occupied with making money. Or somebody else in an office is always occupied with how to get a promotion.

Jesus' mind is always occupied with a burning passion for God's glory and concern for people and how he can help needy people and how he can set people free from the bondage of Satan. He walks down a road and the Holy Spirit says, Stop! Look up into that tree. And sure enough, there is a man there.

This is how he lived, you know. It is such an exciting life that you run into people who are in need, who are in the way. And you can look through the Gospels and see so many instances like that where it wasn't an accident, we think it was an accident, that he came across these needy people.

No! The Father led him. And the Father led him because he saw in his heart a tremendous zeal for his house. Has your heart ever been filled with turmoil? Do you know what turmoil is? Turmoil is like an agitation going on in the heart.

Can you remember some last time when your heart was filled with an agitation? It is usually about some earthly thing, but not here, not for David. Remember that time when my heart, this is David writing, was so filled with turmoil, I could not sleep, I could not rest, thinking how I should build a permanent home for the Ark of the Lord, a temple for the Mighty One of Israel. Then I vowed that I would do it, that I wouldn't give any sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids.

I will not enter my house, I will not lie on my bed until I find a place for the Lord. I am not surprised that God gave the plan of the temple to that man, David, just like God gave the plan of the tabernacle to Moses. We read in 1 Chronicles 29 that God gave the plan of the temple to David.

Even though his son Solomon was going to be the cleverest man that ever lived, God could not give the plan, the architecture of the temple to the cleverest man who lived. Isn't that interesting? That the cleverest man that ever lived could not get the plan for the temple, but God gave that plan to a man who said, I will not give sleep to my eyes or my eyelids until the house of God is built. Who had a burning zeal for God's house, the same spirit that Jesus was going to manifest 1,000 years later.

And wherever God sees that spirit, whether it's in a David 1,000 years before Christ, or in Jesus, or in someone 2,000 years after Christ like us, wherever he sees that zeal, God, my whole being, burns with a longing that your church should be built, that your church should be pure. There will be no businessmen in your church. Church will not be a marketplace.

And the church will be free from the spirit of Babylon. God will be glorified in the church. And then people will be added to the church who should be saved.

When that burning passion is in our heart, God will sovereignly, just like he led Jesus, lead you to a Zacchaeus, and to a woman of Samaria who needs to be converted, and to different people like that. Whom he met along the way. And if we find that we have lived many years and we are not meeting such people, you need to ask yourself, why? Why is it in other worldly areas, we have success, but it's only in building the house of the Lord.

And by building the house of the Lord, I don't mean a building, you know, adding people to God's church. That's building the house of the Lord. So when David says here, I vow that I will not sleep till the house of the Lord is built.

It's like a burning passion that people, God-fearing people should be added to the church. Like I have often told our brothers everywhere to pray, Lord, if there is a God-fearing person who is seeking you, someone seeking God in this area, will you please lead him to me or lead me to him. Lord, I long that I can be an instrument in your hand to be led to people who are looking for you.

Or to lead people who are looking for you to me. Why can't God do that? Peter was praying, praying, praying, praying, and God led him to Cornelius' house. He said, go.

God is like that. He does that. Paul was praying and praying and praying.

And like that he was led to the Philippian jailer. And he'd go to the riverside and he'd meet a Lydia. His life was like Jesus' life.

Because he had a tremendous passion in his life. He wasn't in the church for earning profit. No, no, no, no.

He was in the church to give, not to gain. He didn't want anything for himself. He says in Acts chapter 20, he's talking about the sweat of the brow.

Paul says to the elders in Ephesus, he says in verse 31, See how hard he worked, night and day, for a period of three years. I admonish you. There was a man who had meetings every day because he knew he was going to be in Ephesus only for three years.

He preached night and day for all those 1,100 days or whatever it is there, 1,200 days that there are in whatever it is in three years. And all those 1,100 days he preached morning and night, 2,000 sermons. And then what did he do when he went back to his room? It says, verse 34, You know that these hands ministered to my own needs, to the men who were with me.

We worked to pay our own way. And thus I showed you, verse 35, that by working hard in this manner, you must help the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, It's more blessed to give than to receive.

See, Paul worked hard, not only to feed himself, but so that he could have money to help the poor believers. And he wasn't in Christian work for profit. Oh no, that all came much later.

He wasn't going to any church to do business. He worked hard in order to bless people and to be an example to them. He was perspiring in the heat, sitting up late at night, because he had to also preach.

In addition to all his secular work, he had to also preach. And he not only supported himself, it says in verse 34, he was also working to supply the needs of his team. And I can imagine they lived extremely simply because they had a burning passion that in the three years in Ephesus, a solid church must be built there.

And they succeeded. Because they had that spirit. And then Paul says, but I know that after I go, it's going to be different, verse 29 and 30.

Because you fellas don't have that spirit, he tells those elders there. You don't have that burning passion that the church is first, the church must be built, everything else is second. You know, God has always spoken about this, even in the Old Testament.

You read in the book of Haggai chapter 1, verse 4, verse 3. Haggai chapter 1, verse 3. The word of the Lord came by the Haggai, the prophet, saying, the Living Bible says, Is this the right time for you to live in luxurious homes when the temple lies in ruins? Is it the right time for you to think about your home when the church is in this shape? If your home was in this shape, you'd be concerned. What I mean is, supposing you're living in a house where the walls are cracking, and the roof is leaking, and the floor is sinking, and the doors are not closing properly. Even if one of these things happened, we would be concerned.

And the Lord says, look at the state of my church. Look at the state of my temple. In those days, it was a temple.

Look at the state of my church. You know, that applies to the church. How much concern do you people have for that? Does it concern you like your own homes would concern you? Consider your ways.

And that is why you sow so much, but you harvest so little. I think of many, many believers who read the Bible every day. They've got a plan to read through the Bible in one year.

What do they get out of it? Almost nothing. That's what it says here. You sow much, but you harvest little.

What a lot of reading! How much of harvesting? How much of anointed words God speaks to you? Very little. There's not enough food to eat. The Lord says, consider your ways.

Go up to the mountain, verse 8, and bring wood and rebuild the temple. You look for much, verse 9, and when you bring it home, I blow it away. Sometimes God himself allows a financial disaster to happen.

He says, I blow it away. I blow it away because you haven't got your priorities right. Because my house, verse 9, lies desolate, and each of you is concerned only about your own house.

That's why your lives are dry, there's no dew, there's a drought on the land, verse 11, and on all the labor of your hands. I believe that God's will is that whatever we do with our hands should prosper. That's God's will.

That whatever we do, prospers. I believe that Jesus was not a failure as a carpenter in Nazareth. If he worked as a carpenter, he did it successfully.

He wasn't the richest carpenter in Nazareth because he was an honest person and he helped a lot of poor people. But I'm sure there was success in his labors. I believe that's God's will.

God has not called us to be failures. No. God did not create Adam to be a failure.

The Bible speaks about the man who meditates on God's word and obeys it and stays out of worldly ways as one who will prosper in everything that he does. In other words, if we put God first and zeal for God's house consumes us, that means we seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first. God will so bless the little that we do to take care of our earthly needs that it'll be far more than if other people spent ten times that time to take care of their earthly needs.

And that'll be an amazement to people around us. How does that happen? That happens because that man trusts God. But the world is so full of unbelieving believers that they can't believe that's true.

They can't believe that it's like that. It is like that. It is God's will that we should be like a tree, always green, never dry, always bearing fruit, always in a good mood, always rejoicing, always triumphant, always victorious, never in debt.

These are all New Testament passages. And that can happen if zeal for God's house consumes us. See, Isaiah chapter 59, it speaks about a time, we can apply it to the church, where it says in verse 9, it's because I'm reading from the Living Bible, it's because of all this evil that you're not finding God's blessings.

No wonder you're in darkness when you expected light. No wonder you're walking gloomy. No wonder you grow up like blind men, verse 10, and stumble in broad daylight.

Then it says here, truth is lacking, verse 15, and the Lord saw it. The Lord saw the condition among His people. And it was displeasing in His sight.

The Lord saw the evil and was displeased to find no steps taken against sin. The Lord was wondering, why is there nobody in Israel who will take a stand against all this sin going on here? And He saw that there was no man. And He was astonished that there was no one to intercede.

There are few places like this in Scripture where the Lord says, I looked for a man and I couldn't find one. We say, why does God need a man? Can't He do it on His own? No, He doesn't. He always looks for a man.

When He wanted to reach Cornelius, He looked for a man and Peter was unwilling to go and God told him again and again. Peter said, I'm not willing to go and God told him again. Finally, God convinced him, you better go.

God needed a man. I mean, there are 10,000 angels there that are ready to preach the gospel to Cornelius, but no, God needed a man and God needs men today and women. And He saw that there was no man.

He saw that everybody was seeking their own. They were all seeking their profit. They claimed to follow the Lord, but they were interested in their own gain.

And it was displeasing in His sight. And He saw that there was no man and He was astonished that there was no one to intercede. No one to say, God, do something in your church.

Revive your church. Purify your church. Drive out the money changers once again.

Drive out the businessmen. Drive out the people who make the church a marketplace. Drive out the spirit of Babylon.

And when He found there was no man, He Himself stepped in and His righteousness upheld Him. He put on righteousness like a breastplate. Verse 17, speaking about Jesus coming down to earth and a helmet of salvation on His head.

We are also told to put righteousness as a breastplate in 1 Thessalonians 5. And we are also told to put the helmet of the hope of salvation on our head and the garments of vengeance for clothing. And then it says here, verse 17, He wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle. How wonderful! The breastplate of righteousness, that's for us.

The helmet of the hope of salvation and the mantle of zeal for God's house, clothed with that. I really believe that God is looking for many brothers and sisters like that. You see, even when He spoke to the church in Laodicea, Revelation chapter 3, to the leader of the church in Laodicea, write, verse 14, I know your deeds, you are neither cold nor hot.

You think everything is alright with you. You say, I have no problems, verse 17, I am rich and I have increased with goods, become wealthy, I need of nothing. And you don't know your real spiritual condition.

It's a terrible thing when a believer does not know his real spiritual condition. Here is an elder brother who did not know his spiritual condition and the apostle John had to tell him. Imagine an elder brother in a church in the first century that he could not hear what God was trying to tell him, listen fellow, you are wretched, you are miserable spiritually, you are poor, blind and naked.

And he didn't know it. And God had to tell John, John, please write to that fellow and tell him what his condition is. And tell him, it's because I love you, verse 19, that I reprove you.

If I didn't care for you, I would not reprove you. I would just leave you alone and let you die in your miserable condition. But he said, I love you fellows, that's why I reprove you and I discipline you.

You know when a man does something wrong, if God loves him, God will discipline him. God will give him some sickness so that the fellow can repent. If God has given up on him, he will live a healthy life and die and go to hell.

But if God loves him, sincere, he will discipline him. Very often he disciplines, as we read in 1 Corinthians 11, by sickness. So that the chap will wake up.

As many as I love, I discipline. I feel sorry for the people who are not disciplined. That means God has given up on them.

Like it says in Hebrews 12, a father only disciplines his own children. He doesn't discipline all the children that are not his children. And when a child does something wrong, it's like you see somebody on the roadside, some child doing something wrong, you don't go and spank him.

Why? Because he's not your child. But if your child did 10% of that, you'd spank him. That's how God is.

He doesn't discipline people whom he has given up on. I believe there are some believers who have disobeyed God so much that God has just given up on them. You go ahead, do whatever wrong you like, I'll never discipline you.

Boy, that's a terrible condition to be in. Thank God if you're still being disciplined. Thank God if God is still disciplining us.

It shows that there's still hope for us. It shows that he's still treating us like his children. And then he says, in the light of this discipline, what does he say in verse 19? Be zealous.

Be zealous. Don't be lazy now. Let this discipline get the sluggishness out of your life.

And repent. Even in our repentance, there can be a lazy type of repentance and a zealous type of repentance. There's a lot of difference between the two.

And I think a lot of people don't make much progress in the Christian life because even their repentance is so sluggish. Okay, Lord, I'm sorry I sinned. Yeah, it's true, I sinned.

I'm sorry. Even when they ask forgiveness, they say, well, I'm sorry, brother. If I did anything wrong, please forgive me.

You think those sluggish people will get anywhere? Nowhere. Do you know what zealous repentance means? It means if I've wronged you, I do not send letters to you. I come and speak to you face to face.

It's always easier to send a letter than to face to face. Proud people write letters. Humble people speak face to face.

Face to face. Brother, I am, not if I have done wrong. Brother, I am sorry for what I did.

I did wrong. Now don't say that if you don't believe it. If you don't believe it, just keep your mouth shut.

Go and do something else. But don't go and say, if I did something, if I hurt you. This type of garbage is third rate, useless, good for nothing confession, which should be thrown in the garbage bin.

It's better you don't confess at all. Don't go and confess to somebody saying, if I did something wrong, forgive me. If you're not sure, don't confess it.

Say, Lord, I don't have any light that I did anything wrong. Wait, maybe wait five years, you'll get light on it, then go and do it. Then when you confess, be zealous.

Say, brother, I'm sorry, I did this wrong to you. I spoke to five people against you, and I want to tell you that I've gone to those five homes and withdrawn my words, and now I'm coming to you and asking you to forgive me. You show me a brother like that.

I tell you, God will use him mightily. But these lazy half-hearted people who go gossiping in a hundred homes, and then will come to you and say, brother, I'm sorry. It's so easy, isn't it? You do so much evil to somebody, and then with one sentence, I'm sorry, it's all over.

How can it be? You think the righteous God would accept that type of thing? Impossible. I believe there's a lack of zeal in the repentance of many believers. There's a lack of zeal in the way they even ask forgiveness from God and from one another, because they have not seen sin seriously.

And so God has to tell even this elder. He says, be zealous in your repentance. Don't be half-hearted about it.

Zeal, zeal, zeal. That is what God looks for in us. And let's pray that the Holy Spirit will work in us, give opportunity to the Holy Spirit to work in us.

Just one last verse. 2nd Timothy and chapter 1 and verse 6. I want to remind you, Living Bible, stir into a flame, stir into a flame the strength and boldness that came on you when I laid my hands on your head. That's when Timothy received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Now Paul says, you received the baptism in the Holy Spirit when I laid my hands on you. But that's not enough for you. You got to stir that up.

You know like these coal fires and wood fires where people have a pipe through which they blow or they fan the flame or blow into the flame so that the flame comes up and they got to keep on doing it every time it's dying down. They fan it or blow into it so that the fire comes up. That's the picture here.

Do that, he says. Don't just say, ah, somebody started the fire some time ago. But it's dying out.

You got to stir it into a flame. You got to be zealous and say, Lord, why is it dying out in me? Please refocus my vision. Help me to realize the shortness of the time, the shortness of my life, the coming of Christ, the seriousness of life and the opportunity you give me in life with so much of knowledge and

understanding.

Understanding and truth, which I'm supposed to share with other people. Paul said, I'm in debt to the whole world. Even before he was converted, he said, I was so zealous in Philippians 3, he says, to persecute the church because that's what he thought was right.

He was zealous before he was converted because he said the Jewish religion is the true religion. This Jesus is a deceiver. Every fellow who proclaims Jesus is a deceiver must be wiped out because that's what the Jewish religion taught.

The Jewish religion taught that a false prophet must be killed. Don't allow him to live. And here were fellows preaching about a false prophet called Jesus.

And Paul was determined to obey the Old Testament scriptures and wipe them out till God opened his eyes and turned him right around. And that zeal which was spent in persecuting the church now was spent in building the church. Paul had a professor in Bible school called Gamaliel.

You read about Gamaliel in Acts chapter 5. He was not like Paul. He was a mild type of man. He said, well, we don't know whether these Christians are true or whether the Jewish religion is true or Hinduism is true.

We don't know. Let's leave them alone. Let's be peaceful.

Let's follow peace with everybody. He lived and died as a Jew and went to hell. But his student, Paul, he was not willing to live like his professor Gamaliel saying, maybe this is true, maybe that is true.

He said, no. If what Gamaliel taught me from the scriptures is right, then this Christian religion is wrong, 100% wrong. And he fought against it, fought against it.

That's why God picked on him. You know, when we were working in the seas, in the high seas, we learned something that when a ship is stationary or moving very slowly, it's very difficult to turn it around. Boy, it's a tremendous job.

You turn the steering wheel and the rudder. It takes ages to turn the ship around. But if the ship is going full speed at 30 knots, you turn it around, it just turns around so fast, even if it is going in the wrong direction.

So Paul was like that, going full speed in the wrong direction. When God turned him around, he could turn him around very quickly in the right direction. But Gamaliel was this sluggish, slow type of person.

Even in his false religion, he was sluggish and slow. God could do nothing with him. God appreciates sincere zeal, even if you are wrong.

If you are zealous about it, there is a chance that God can turn you around. But if you are lazy and sluggish, you know, people like Sadhusundar Singh, who tear up the Bible and say Christianity, that's all rubbish. And who seek God with all their heart, they see visions of Jesus.

That's it. But these slow, sluggish type of people who don't want to offend anybody, they see nothing. And they accomplish nothing.

So we got to be careful. Let us not be sluggish, but zealous for the house of God as Jesus was.

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