"Zeal in Prime Time"

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"Sacred Zeal" by Jeff Purswell

P. 5 ...*New Yorker article: "A Unified Field Theory of Bob Dylan - He's in his eighties. How does he keep it fresh?" "...In his own way, Dylan is reminiscent of Verdi, Monet, Yeats, O'Keefe, a freak of creative longevity."*

P. 6... *In Andrew Bonar's diary, he records a moment from his ordination where an old minister approached him and spoke to him very solemnly. Years later, these were the words that continued to ring in Bonar's mind. "Remember that very few men and very few ministers keep up to the end the edge that was on their spirit at the first."*

"Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord." **Rom. 12:11**

ZEAL Defined & Clarified

P. 9 *"...zeal is presented to us; as an imperative. ...it's commanded. ...We all have portraits of zeal in our minds, usually certain extroverted people, or compelling public ministry. Those kind of perceptions exclude all manner of Christians to which this command applies. It excludes the more quiet among us, the less publicly prominent among us. ...This zeal is not a superficial virtue. It's not a function of personality. Paul is not requiring the emulation of type A leaders. And he's not merely addressing public ministry.*

"...translated elsewhere as eagerness or earnestness. It's more than an emotion, although it's not less than emotional. ...an earnest commitment to something or someone; devotion to a cause; a single-minded determination toward a goal; an unswerving resolve..."

A PASTORAL ADJUSTMENT

1Pet 3:7 "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel..."

Rom 8:18ff [18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ...[20] For the creation was subjected to futility ...[23] And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfuits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait... ...[26] Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

...Husbands are called to be "understanding" ...Pastors/Fellow Christians are called to be "understanding"

"Zeal" like "Joy" is ALWAYS Biblically Encouraged/Commanded ...even though it is Not Always Easily EXPERIENCED!

5 Zeal Corrupters

(1) FAMILIARITY ...Have you noticed how familiarity can deflate ZEAL?

Jam 4:13-14 "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"– [14] yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring..."

Ecc 1:9-10 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. [10] Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us.

...This "familiarity" can be a ZEAL KILLER! ...draining "earnestness", "devotion", "enthusiasm" from your MARRIAGE/RELATIONSHIPS ...your CHURCH

"familiarity breeds contempt" ...Geoffrey Chaucer (*The Tale of Melibee*) -

(2) CYNICISM ...Are you guarding your Zeal from the corrupting effect of cynicism?

Ecc 1:1-11

Definition – Cynicism is an attitude defined by a deep distrust of others' motives, often assuming that people are fundamentally selfish, insincere, and driven by self-interest. It is characterized by a mix of pessimism, suspicion, and a belief that true selflessness does not exist. [1, 2, 3] A pervasive feeling of disillusionment. It often stems from repeated disappointments… **Synonyms**: skepticism, suspicion, distrust, doubt, scorn

(3) FATIGUE ...The enthusiasm and earnestness of Zeal takes ENERGY!

(4) FLESH

(5) HABITS/TRADITIONS ... When it comes to Pentecost and the Ministry of the Spirit...

- What are some ways you experienced the Holy Spirit early in your Christian Life? Describe what it was like to take steps of faith in this area back in those days.
- What is an aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry that has become more impacting or deeper in the last 5 years?
- How do you see your role and responsibility to model and transfer the Ministry of the Spirit to the coming generations?
- What would greater ZEAL look like for you in engaging the Ministry of the Spirit?