

## Holy Zeal

**References :** Holy Zeal, H.H. Pope Shenouda III

**Notes for Servants :**

**Objectives :**

**General:** Holy Zeal

**Specific:** Zeal for God=s word and for our faith

**Instructions:**

Review last week's lesson.

Give a brief description about the church occasion(s) for the coming week.

**Bible Verse:**

**“The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”**

(John 2:15-17)

### **Definition**

Holy Zeal is a fire burning in the believers which impels them to strive to save others and build the Kingdom of God. It is manifested by a fervent heart, full of God=s love and wanting it to reach every heart.

Zeal emerges from a deep love of God and His Kingdom and trying to gladden Him by more repenting people. It also comes from compassion for people, desire for their salvation and caring for their eternal fate. If you see a friend of your or a relative or any body that you care about is doing a wrong thing that might result in destroying his/her life? How would you feel inside? You would like that person to know that this is wrong and to do the right thing. Why..... because there is a feeling inside you that urges you to say this is wrong and this is right. This feeling can also be called a zeal.

### **Kinds of Zeal:**

1. God=s Zeal
2. Holy Zeal
3. Zeal for unjust causes

#### **1. God=s Zeal:**

- In the first commandment God Says: *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God@* God has a zeal for his name and for his commandments.

- AThe zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this@ Isa 9:7, God=s zeal (based on his love) for His beloved creation namely, the human being made Him incarnate to save us. God has a zeal for His children He doesn=t want them to be captured by the devil.

- *And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that*

*sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. (John 2:15-17). God has zeal for His House because it is the house of prayer and there are certain ways in which God=s house should be respected.*

## **2. Holy Zeal:**

A holy zeal is a blessed thing, zeal for the word of God.

*For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Rom 10:2-3)*

Saul before becoming Paul said he *was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*@ (I Timothy 1:13), persecuting Christians thinking that this might be a blessed job he is doing for God. Knowing his heart and knowing that what Saul was doing was based on wrong believes, Jesus appeared to him, thus turning that zeal into a holy blessed zeal, through which Paul became one of the greatest saints in the history of spreading Christianity. That when he stood before kings and governors his words about his faith were so strong that Felix the governor *and as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled*@ (Acts 24:25).

## **3. Zeal for unjust causes:**

Zeal can be for wrong causes like some other religions fundamentalists who think that doing evil things or killing is a proof of their zeal for their believes. We have an example in the bible that some Jew fundamentalists swore not to eat any food until they kill Paul.@ **And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.** (Acts 23:12)@. Similar was Saint Peter=s cutting off the servants= ear (Matthew 26:51-52) and Moses= killing the Egyptian (Exodus 2:12). There are even zeal in sports, some sports fans might have a very strong zeal for their teams that drives them to have un-necessary fight while watching games.

### **Examples from the bible for zeal:**

- § Strong zeal led Abraham to intercede for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-33)
- § Moses wrestled with God and say *ALORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people... ? ... Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written*@ (Exodus 32:11,32) This wrestling with God involves supplication, intercession, eloquence, conviction, love of others and holding fast to God to Aprevent@ Him from destroying them.
- § When Nehemiah learned that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down he wept and prayed. However, his zeal led him to leave the land of captivity and lead the people to rebuild Jerusalem=s walls (Nehemiah 2-6).

### **Is Zeal necessary?**

- § Zeal kindles the heart, strengthens the will and impels others towards repentance and the Kingdom of God. If zeal was n=t necessary then why did all of the apostles went to preach God=s Gospel to the Genitals and most of them paid their lives for that. Why did St. Paul for

example wrote his letters to the growing churches to correct and strengthen their faith. Saint Paul even talks about this partnership with God in His work *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* (I Corinthians 3:9)

§ In contrast feeble, half-hearted advice yield no fruit as the lukewarm and unproductive rebuke of Eli the priest to his sons (I Samuel 2:23-25) and Lot's warning to his relatives in Sodom (Genesis 19:14). Zeal is the fire about which Christ said *I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?* (Luke 12:49). This was the fiery action which began on the day of Pentecost and led the Apostles to stand before the Jews and Romans boldly.

### **How can we apply Zeal in our lives:**

§ A person does not need to be a preacher to be zealous. Zeal moves people to pray for all those billions who do not know God, all the Christians who are Christians in name only, those whom the devil led astray. Praying for the poor, the sick, for all of those who have no one to mention them and need God's help. How many times did we pray for people who had a flood that destroyed their homes or any natural disaster.....??

§ The fathers of confession are motivated by zeal to pray for those and weep for their return to God. *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!* (Jeremiah 9:1). *My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.* (Psalm 119:139). King David also said *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.* (Psalm 69:9)

§ When we follow the gospel's commandments and abide to the word of God and the church's tradition in spite of the temptations we might face is a kind of zeal. For example when we fast and our colleagues or friends ask us to share with them a delicious food (which we are not supposed to eat during fasting), or when our parents are invited to Christmas party while we are fasting. Sticking to our fasting in these cases is a kind of zeal. God will bless us more when we say no to our friends (sorry we I am fasting) and when our parents have just salad or potatoes during the party. In God's eyes it will mean a lot. When we are travelling by aeroplane a lot of people ask for special meals like Muslims no ham, Hindus veg. food ...etc. This is a kind of zeal for what they belief, and we in our turn who know the true faith should abide by our belief and have zeal for it.

§ God's House namely the church has certain rules that we should be zealous for, during the mass there is no side talk, just praying. So if we have zeal and we see a boy or a girl talking or playing inside the church, nicely we should approach him telling him how we should behave inside the church. Similarly is dressing in a proper way as we are in God's house and approaching communion.

### **Conclusion**

If God so humbled Himself to make us partners in His work, He Who can save the world without us, how can we ignore this grace and obstruct the growth of His Kingdom.