

***Voice of Thanksgiving***  
**Calling a Company of Believers Together For Prayer**  
Inner Court Ministries

For the week of July 13, 2003

***A Call to Prayer***

“If you never have sleepless hours, if you never have weeping eyes, if your hearts never swell as if they would burst, you need not anticipate that you will be called zealous. You do not know the beginning of true zeal, for the foundation of Christian zeal lies in the heart. The heart must be heavy with grief and yet must beat high with holy ardor. The heart must be vehement in desire, panting continually for God’s glory, or else we shall never attain to anything like the zeal which God would have us know.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

***This Week In Prayer***

- Pray for mission outreaches this summer, such as the Crow Indian Camp meeting. Pray for God's protection and provision, and the Holy Spirit's mighty workings.
- Pray for your local church fellowships. The church is central to God's plans for this time. He sent His Son to die for the church and now we must be praying for its strengthening and growth. This is one of many keys to successfully reaching this generation. People are looking for answers to the troubling questions of this age. Many have rejected the church as a place of answers, sometimes with good reason. But the church of Jesus, if it will walk in His direction and guidance, is the place of answer. There is much to overcome, negative press, attacks by the devil, and a general falling away of churches from the faith. Pray for the pastors and ministers of churches, the members, and the outreaches to their communities.
- Pray for Israel. The current activities by the nations of the world are fraught with danger both for the region and for the nations involved.
- Pray for the work of the ministry. In our midst; that is within this company of believers called together to pray; we have many outreaches and ministries. From Belarus to Brazil, God has allowed us to take part in His work. These works of God come with many needs and concerns, but this week pray for understanding and wisdom. It is important that as we plan and work thru His plans, that we hear from God.

***Praying Always for You***

Week by week we are praying for one another as members of this company of believers joined together for prayer. We have been using prayers of Paul as our guide. Pray for comfort in tribulation, Christian life often comes with tribulation, attacks of the devil, struggles between the flesh and spirit, just to name two areas. Pray for one another, not to gloss over, but that we might abound in Christ, even in times of tribulation.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,  
who comforts us in all our tribulation,  
that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble,  
with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.  
For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us,  
so our consolation also abounds through Christ.*  
2 Cor. 1:3-5 (NKJV)

## **Imperative Importance Of The Work Of Prayer**

### **Zeal**

Words are very powerful conveying our thoughts and desires. They can hurt or help. They can soothe or sting. They can deceive or illuminate. As powerful as they are words can be strange. They mean often mean many things. Some words have many definitions. You only know the meaning intended by the speaker by the context of the sentence. Even if you know the meaning you could have problems with words, because word meanings change. Words go through transitions, where the perception of the word changes. At times a word is perceived as good, then it changes, and comes to have a bad connotation. The definition may not change, but society has.

A word used fifty years ago may change, the definition is still the same, but the perception has changed. Good is now bad, words esteemed are now scorned and mocked. And sometimes words are also just changed. The definitions are changed. Once again good becomes bad or visa versa.

Take the word, tolerance - sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own. For years in America this meant allowing people to have their own beliefs and practices. This has changed, now it means that you cannot have a standard or position. Anyone with a standard is judgmental and demeaning others. You can see where this places the Christian. Since the Christian believes the Bible and the values set by the Bible, he or she is judging others. Since having a standard demeans others; this is a negative force in a community or country.

The truth is that in countries where there have been a high percentage of practicing Christians, where Christians hold the standards of the Bible in high regard, there has been more tolerance to people of differing views and religions. The safest place for a non-Christian has been in a Christian nation. This is tolerance.

Another word that has lost its positive message is zeal. Zeal is eagerness and ardent interest in or pursuit of something. Synonyms for zeal include, fervor, passion, ardor, spirit, and drive. For centuries zeal was positive, but today the perception of zeal is fanaticism and mania.

To avoid the reproach we have left off zeal. It no longer is a positive within Christian circles. We must have a measured response. We must not hold our views to dearly. We must not work too hard. We must not be too radical. We must not have a passion. Ardor is bad; we should just maintain an even, middle-of-the-road attitude about every thing. Our song has changed from "Onward Christian Soldier" to "What ever will be will be". We have joined the world and now even a passion for souls is taboo. Thousands pass into a Christ less eternity, but it is not proper for us to be concerned.

Yet, as negative as the word has become, we must have zeal if we are to carry out the commands of the Lord. A church without zeal is merely a social club. A ministry without zeal is just an occupation. A life without zeal is empty and fruitless. One key characteristic of Christianity has always been zeal. To think that we have become to sophisticate for zeal, to think we are to modern for zeal, is to succumb to the destructive lies of the enemy.

Without zeal we will fail to complete the work set before us. Zeal moves men and mountains. It is the difference between the greeting in heaven of “Well?” and “Well done.” The Christian centuries are filled with two types of people, one known for their zeal and one for none. Every page of the Church’s history is lined with zeal. The zealot has written history, filling its pages with exploits. The zealot has changed the course of nations and turned the hearts of men. The zealot has righted wrongs and ended evils. But the non-zealot has filled the graveyards with empty lives devoid of purpose and meaning.

And what about you, could you be called a zealot? Is there enough evidence to convict you? In the things you do, are you along for the ride or are you filled with fervor, passion, ardor, spirit, and drive.

I assume you read the quote by Spurgeon in today’s ***A Call to Prayer***. Here it is again.

“If you never have sleepless hours, if you never have weeping eyes, if your hearts never swell as if they would burst, you need not anticipate that you will be called zealous. You do not know the beginning of true zeal, for the foundation of Christian zeal lies in the heart. The heart must be heavy with grief and yet must beat high with holy ardor. The heart must be vehement in desire, panting continually for God’s glory, or else we shall never attain to anything like the zeal which God would have us know.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon

What is the zeal God would have you to know? It matters not if you are called for nations or the nursery; the question is your zeal. A call to missions or management; the question is your zeal. A call to pray or preach; the question is your zeal. A call to give or guide; the question is your zeal.

Christ was consumed with zeal.

***Then His disciples remembered that it was written,  
"Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."***

John 2:17 (NKJV)

The Apostles were filled with zeal

***For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil;  
for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,  
we preached to you the gospel of God.***

1 Thes. 2:9 (NKJV)

***Therefore watch,  
and remember that for three years I did not cease to  
warn everyone night and day with tears.***

Acts 20:31 (NKJV)

The early church had great zeal

*For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner:  
What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves,  
what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire,  
what zeal, what vindication!  
In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*  
2 Cor. 7:11 (NKJV)

*Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ,  
greet you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers,  
that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.  
For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you,  
and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.*  
Col. 4:12-13 (NKJV)

Seek God to refresh and renew your zeal for Him and every area of your Christian life. Be zealous in your Christian life and ministry.

*For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace,  
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,  
And her salvation as a lamp that burns.*  
Isaiah 62:1 (NKJV)

*Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God  
which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*  
2 Tim. 1:6 (NKJV)

*Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent,  
to stir you up by reminding you,*  
2 Peter 1:13 (NKJV)

*Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord;  
'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest;  
and be strong, all you people of the land,'  
says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts.*  
Haggai 2:4 (NKJV)

**And you? Zeal?**