

## INTRODUCTION

There is forgiveness of sins with God, for sinners who repent. That great forgiveness is on the basis of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His perfect life is counted for those who believe in Him. His vicarious suffering and death are counted as payment for sins for those who trust in Him. And His resurrection to everlasting life show what He gives to those who hope in Him.

We have these wonderful truths from the word of God, the Bible, to tell the world, and to tell our fellow believers in the church. But the sad fact is that many people do not want to listen to us, even when we are saying the truth from God that they need to hear, for their salvation, and for the growth in the faith. What do do about that? Are we to shout louder? Are we to nag them? Are we to manipulate them? To trick them? No, to gain a hearing from those who don't listen at first, we are to make ourselves an example.

The scriptures say that we are to be an example in spirit, which is what I began to speak to you about last time. "In spirit" means something like, "in your attitude" or "in your mindset," but it is not just something mental, it also is spiritual; it comes from your regenerated or born-again inner man. Being an example "in spirit" has to do with the condition of your spirit inside you, as producing your attitudes, which then show in what you say or do, *and* in how you say what you say, and how you do what you do.

As far as I have learned from the Bible, there are essentially two aspects to being an example to the believers in spirit:

First, to be meek in spirit

1. when faced with the wicked people of the world, and the sin remaining in the flesh even of Christians
  - a) not being fretful
  - b) not being envious
  - c) not being angry
2. delighting in the Lord; fearing God, not men
3. and so, being quiet
  - a) tranquil, calm
  - b) silent

The scriptures speak of this spirit of meekness showing up

- in meekly correcting or restoring those who are sinning
- in quietly submitting to those who are in authority over us

That's how far we got last week, before running out of time. So today we take up right there, with the second aspect of being an example in spirit.

**To be an example to the believers in spirit, is to be meek in spirit and to be fervent or zealous in spirit.**

## TEXT

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

## BODY

**To be an example to the believers in spirit, is to be meek in spirit and to be fervent or zealous in spirit.**

- I. See How Our Lord's Apostle Exhorts Us to Being Fervent or Zealous In Spirit, In Serving the Lord Jesus Christ - Romans 12:10-12 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; (11) not lagging in diligence, fervent in **spirit**, serving the Lord; (12) rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;
  - A. In today's verse, we read that the apostle exhorts us to be an example "in spirit"
  - B. Here is a place where he uses more words, so we know that at least part of what he means by being an example "in spirit" is to be fervent in spirit
  - C. See that this is connected to the Lord Jesus; the main thing we are to be fervent or zealous in is "serving the Lord"

To be an example in spirit is to be fervent or zealous in spirit, serving the Lord

- II. What Is Meant By Being Fervent or Zealous In Spirit
  - A. By the context: you see in Rom 10:11 that being fervent in spirit is between two other phrases, which I think help us get the idea; in the matter of serving the Lord
    1. not slothful or lagging; but instead fervent in spirit
    2. so, then,
      - a) eagerness instead of reluctance
      - b) willingness instead of resistance
    3. a person who, in serving the Lord, will not really have a good attitude toward it, will not really want to do much, unless he is really urged or compelled to it by someone else, is not being a good example in spirit
    4. but a person who, in serving the Lord, is eager to do so, and happily serves the Lord without having to be pulled along by someone else, is being an example to the believers in spirit
  - B. By some synonyms
    1. to be fervent; to have fervour
    2. to be zealous; to have zeal
    3. to have ardor
  - C. By the concept behind the original Greek word: G2204 *zeo* lit. to be hot
    1. as water, when it boils
    2. as metal, when it glows

- D. Revelation 3:14-19 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: (15) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. (16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (17) Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- (18) I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.
1. unlike some of the other churches, this church is not said to be into idolatry or fornication or any other particular outward sin
  2. but the church is enjoying its material comfort, and is ignoring its spiritual poverty; it is focusing on the physical things of the earth, rather than the spiritual things of heaven
  3. so, the Lord Jesus says that is like being neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm; He says He will vomit or spit them out because they are lukewarm
  4. see the remedy that the Lord Jesus commands: be zealous and repent
  5. so, part of what it means to be fervent or zealous in spirit is to be intent on your spiritual need for Jesus Christ rather than being made numb to it by the things of this world
- E. Some things that people say these days, that get close to the idea, but miss the mark
1. excited; enthusiastic; passionate
  2. but each of these words used to be used for something undesirable for the Christian, because they indicate that you are being moved or swayed by things that are carnal - mere emotion or feeling
  3. the words "excitement" or "enthusiasm," are hardly used in the Bible
  4. the Bible uses the word "passion" many times, but never in a positive sense, as if it is a virtue
    - a) neither the older Bibles we use
    - b) nor the newer: ESV 2016, CSB 2017, NASB 2020 - none use this in a positive sense; only in describing what is sinful
  5. so I do not recommend that you try to be an example to the believers in excitement or enthusiasm or passion or being passionate
  6. but I think when Christians today use those terms, most of what they are trying to say is really the biblical concept of fervor or fervency or zeal; of being fervent or zealous in spirit
  7. so if you are used to thinking about this concept in terms of being "passionate," I recommend you abandon that mis-used term, and adopt what the Bible says here, that we are to be an example not in being passionate, but in being zealous
- F. And that's what kind of spirit the apostle commends to us - being fervent in spirit

To be an example in spirit is to be fervent or zealous in spirit, serving the Lord

To be example in spirit is to be hot for the Lord, to be zealous, to be more attentive to the spiritual things of the Lord than the temporal things of the world

### III. Examples of Being Fervent or Zealous In Spirit

#### A. Phinehas - Numbers 25

1. 11 zealous...with My zeal (NKJV, CSB)
  - a) ASV,ESV jealous with my jealousy
  - b) KJV zealous for my sake
  - c) “jealous” and “zealous” are both versions of the Greek *zelos*, and are used to mean the same things when the subject is the church being unfaithful to God
2. Phinehas was zealous with God’s zeal, or zeal for God
  - a) Israel was committing fornication
  - b) that led them into worshipping false gods
  - c) God had zeal against such sin, for His name’s sake
  - d) Phinehas was zealous with that same zeal, with God’s zeal
3. so, to be an example to the believers in spirit in the New Covenant church, as Phinehas was in the Old Covenant church
  - a) not violence
  - b) a firm stand against fornication and for purity
  - c) attention to keeping worship pure
  - d) commitment to church discipline
    - (1) in the OT there was the command to rid the congregation of offenders by killing them
    - (2) in the NT, the congregation is not not to do violence to anyone, but to rid itself of offenders by expelling them from the membership until they repent

#### B. Apollos - Acts 18:24-28

1. 25 being fervent [G2204 *zeo*] in spirit
2. 26 to speak boldly
3. 28 he vigorously refuted...from the scriptures
  - a) KJV mightily
  - b) ESV powerfully

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

1. 13 - great zeal for you [UBS/ESV “has worked hard”]
  - a) CSB - “works hard” - footnote: has a great zeal
2. 12 - G75 *agonizomai* for you in prayers -
  - a) ESV struggling
  - b) CSB wrestling

#### D. The Lord Jesus Christ - John 2:13-17

1. He observed sinful corruption of the worship of God in His temple
2. He drove out the corruption from the temple
3. this was in fulfillment of the OT prophecy that Messiah would be eaten up or consumed by zeal for God’s house

## CONCLUSION

So, to be an example in spirit is to be meek in spirit; and

To be fervent or zealous in spirit, serving the Lord

-to be hot for the Lord, to be zealous, to be more attentive to the spiritual things of the Lord than the temporal things of the world

-to be fervent or zealous for God as were Phinehas, Apollos, Epaphras, and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Note the completeness of these two aspects of being an example in spirit, taken together

-being meek in spirit - fearing God, not men, you calmly refrain from what God forbids

-being fervent in spirit - fearing God, not men, you zealously do what God commands

Be an example to the believers in spirit, in both meekness and fervency or zeal, and pray that the Holy Spirit of God will work in those who see you, to make them listen to the truth you have to tell them about God, about His law, and about the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Stephen - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Isaiah 9:2-7

Dillon - Scripture Reading - Numbers 25:1-13

Roel Jeff - Congregational Prayer

Journey - Prelude "One Day"

Rita - Trinity xvi "Doxology" + Trinity 1 "All People That On Earth Do Dwell"

Rita - Trinity 164 "Angels From the Realms of Glory"

Rita - Trinity 207 "Christ Jesus Lay In Death's Strong Bands"

