



Out of past history, His Holiness brings into light an astounding thought pertinent for evangelism today....

Fearless and Zealous

ՕՄԱՏՉՕՂ ՆԵՄ ՕՄՐԵՂՈՉ

The Honored Apostles Incurred

ՆԵՄԻՕՂ ԵՏՏԱԻՈՎՏ ՌԱՍՈՇՏՈՂՈՇ ԶՎՍԵՍ

Beatings, Insults, Torture, and Imprisonment

ՀԱՆՍՁԱՍԻ ՆԵՄ ՀԱՆՈՇԻ ՆԵՄ ՀԱՆՕՎՍՊՈՎՍՅ ՆԵՄ ՀԱՆՍՏԵՔՈՎ

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117th Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and the See of St. Mark

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they (the apostles) never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is the Christ.” (Acts 5:42) “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47) and “more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.” (Acts 5:14)

Out of and due to this zeal, the apostles were imprisoned, flogged, and released. **“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.” (Acts 5:41)** And when they were brought before the assembly the chief priest said to them, **“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name...Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” (Acts 5:28)**

And when they were expelled from Jerusalem following the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the Holy Bible says of them, **“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.” (Acts 8:4)**

They were like pieces of coal ignited by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and who sparks flew in all directions to the ends of the earth, and set the whole world on fire. Thus they carried out the Lord’s command when He had said to them, **“...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)**

They bore witness to the Lord Jesus Christ and thus obtained the crowns of martyrdom and witnessing.

They had absolutely *no fear of death*, and their difficulties,



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sufferings, trials, and prison neither troubled them nor deflected them from their purpose. The important thing was that they witnessed for the Lord and let whatever would be taking its course.

Besides the twelve disciples with their *zeal*, we must put the name of the apostle St. Paul.

St. Paul was one of the most outstanding human examples of holy *zeal*, if not THE most outstanding.

When St. Paul was converted to Christianity, an amazing energy of fervor and power entered him, so that he was able to testify to the Lord in Jerusalem and in the country of Judea, in Cyprus, and in Asia Minor, before going on to Greece and Italy. It was St. Paul who founded the Church of Rome,

in addition to which he wrote fourteen epistles which were important in laying the basis of the Christian faith and in its spread. Some of these epistles were written while he was in prison.

What *zeal* was this, that a person proclaimed the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ even when in prison! And what a lovely thing he said about Onesimus, that he **“my son... whom I have begotten while in chains.” (Philemon 10)**

From prison St. Paul wrote to the Ephesus, telling the people there: **“As a prisoner for the Lord, then I urge**





you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (Ephesians 4:1) Even while he was a prisoner in jail, St. Paul was concerned for the salvation of others.

Furthermore, his concern for the salvation of others surpassed his concern for himself. Thus in his amazing love for his compatriots he was able to say that the very moving phrase, which is so full of love and *zeal*... **“For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race.” (Romans 9:3)**

So St. Paul’s *zeal* was based on a deep love which made him want to save everyone, and which made him fear lest anyone should fall. He said to the Corinthians, **“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your mind may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ,” (II Corinthians 11: 2-3).**

Out of *zeal* for the Kingdom, St. Paul was constantly traveling, and enduring hardships in order to spread the faith.

He said about his ministry: **“...three times I was ship wrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, and I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea...I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst, and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else...” (Corinthians 11:25-27)** And what else could there be?

He says, **“Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.” (II Corinthians 11:28)** This is really *zeal*, and before this we can only stand and marvel, when we are more used to seeing a youth fight with vain glory just because he has

been selected to teach a Holy Bible chapter in the Church Sunday School classroom or delivers a sermon in Church! How trivial such things seem in comparison to the *zeal* showed by St. Paul!

Besides his preaching in various new fields, St. Paul was also concerned for the existing Churches, that they should be organized, visited, and cared for, even while he was in prison. How great were the sufferings which St. Paul endured because of his *zeal* for the Kingdom of Heaven!

He described them with the words **“I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned...” (II Corinthians 11: 23-25)**

And concerning his problems, and those of his colleagues in the ministry he wrote, **“as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships, and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger... genuine, yet regarded as imposters...dying and yet we live on...sorrowful, yet always rejoicing...” (II Corinthians 6: 4-10)**

In the ministry of St. Paul and his fellow workers, ZEAL was never in anyway separated from the Cross.

For this reason when St. Paul describes his life and theirs in the ministry he says, **“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.” (II Corinthians 4:8-10)**

Meditation: Is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed with in our existence today? Are we filled with the same fearlessness and zealousness exhibited by the apostles and St. Paul in telling others about our love for the Lord Jesus Christ? ❀