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Zealous for the Lord Acts 21:17-26

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Let's have a word of prayer. "Father in Heaven we have been moved by such beautiful music. Praise team, the offertory, now the ministry in music, and our hearts are tender toward You. Lord, we are about to open Your Word and we are pleading with You to be the One who teaches us. We asked that miraculously, mightily, powerfully You would speak to our hearts. Each and every one of us that are here would hear exactly what you want us to hear. That we would experience what You want us to experience. We pray Heavenly Father that our hearts would be affected and changed for eternity. And we ask and we pray this in Jesus' name, Amen."

I read a story this week about a family, mom and dad, grandpa and grandma and a four year old boy. They traveled to Europe together. They spent three weeks in Europe. They saw mountains, castles, rivers, cities, monuments, cathedrals. They saw all that you'd ever want to see in Europe. And when they came home some family members who were unable to make the trip asked the four year old, "Tell us, what do you remember about Europe? What did you think was exciting?" And this little four year old thought for a moment and he said: "Did you know grandpa can take his teeth out?" You know children have a way of just taking things that are complex and bringing it down to a simple thing. The things that impressed that four year old, grandpa could take his teeth out.

You know in the realm of religion, we have a tendency to take what is simple and make it complex. And in the complexity of it, we argue and debate and forget the simplicity of it. And consequently, much of the experience of people in church is just one fight after another over standards, beliefs, practices, traditions, customs, and those types of things. It happens within the congregations, it happens within denominations. It happens between denominations. Today, we are going to study that in the Book of Acts, chapter 21, as we continue on our series with the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul and his eight companions will arrive in Jerusalem.

Our passage for study today is chapter 21 verses 17 through 26: "And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When we had greeted them he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;' but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come."

"Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual

immorality. Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.”

Well, they arrive in Jerusalem. They are welcomed by the people. And Paul gives the report to the Elders. That is mentioned in verse 18. “On following day Paul went in with us...” So he’s got these Gentiles with him. All of them were Gentiles except Timothy who has been circumcised. His mother was a Jew, his father was not. So he’s got these Gentiles, and they are there with the Elders. All the Elders are present in verse 19. “When he had greeted them, he told in detail...” That is Paul told in detail. Now in the Greek, that is detail. That means he didn’t miss anything. He went through the whole missionary trip that he had been on the third time out and all that had been taken place. He told them all the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

Verse 20 is very telling. “When they heard it, they glorified the Lord.” They said, “Yeah, that’s cool,” and they glorified the Lord. And then it says, as if they brushed it aside. “And they said to him, ‘You see brother how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed...’” And you almost get the impression that they said, “Yeah, that’s great, but do you know how many thousands of Jews have believed? Good for those Gentiles, good for you. But we’ve got thousands of Jews who have believed and we actually have a problem. Verse 20 says, “...and they are all zealous for the law,” zealous for the law.

What does law mean? In the New Testament it comes down meaning one of three things generally. One, it can mean the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible, the writings of Moses. They are called, The Law. It can also mean something associated with the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments which are a part of those first five books. Many times it means, Jewish Religious System, the traditions that have come down to them since they came back from Babylon, the traditions and the teachings that were added to by the Pharisees when they started to gain respectability. And so it’s talking about a customs and the teachings and practices of being a Jew. We have to look at this in its context to try and figure out what it is. And just a simple reading will let us know that it is talking about the customs and practices of the Jews.

This debate about the law is not foreign to our denomination. In the eighteen hundreds, in the later part of the eighteen hundreds they had a huge debate about the Book of Galatians. What’s the law that is spoken of in the Book of Galatians? I want you to know brothers and sisters, it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter if it’s the Ten Commandments, the Law of Moses, or the Ceremonial Law. You and I can’t be saved by keeping anyone of them. So the principle applies, and it’s a wasted breath to get into an argument with somebody over what law are they talking about? You can’t be saved by keeping the law.

Well, Paul is there. He is there in Jerusalem, and he has just been told that there are thousands of Jews who are zealous for the law. They are zealous for the religion of the Jews. Here is what they’ve done. They took the customs, the practices, the traditions of Judaism, and they added Jesus to it. And that’s a problem. And on the other side of the road is another ditch, and this is what the Gentiles were involved in. The Gentiles started with Jesus, but then they started adding customs, practices and beliefs. As they say, “For every good mile of the road, there are

two miles of ditches.” And each of these groups was struggling to keep Christ in the center. Salvation is in Christ and Christ alone. And they would add on, or they would just add Christ to what was already there. That’s the environment that we find the apostle Paul.

Verse 21 it says: “But they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.” This is a wrong report given by Judaisers. These are the individuals that Paul had to fight all the time. We know that from the book of Galatians and other experiences where the Gentiles would become believers in Christ and then Jewish people would come in and say, “Now you have to be circumcised, and now you have to do certain rituals,” and so forth and so on. There was a constant conflict over that.

Now as is always true, when there is a zeal for the law, people will determine that a particular way of doing something or a particular way of believing is the only way. And so when they try to impress that upon other people, if that person doesn’t agree with them, because they are not in the spirit, they have a tendency to attack that person. They would take their statements and twist them and distort them, and make them say things that that person is not actually saying. And they would get a hearing, they would get a crowd. And if you learned nothing else today, learn this brothers and sisters. When you hear something about somebody else, don’t take it at face value. You need to investigate and see what they really are saying.

So that’s the environment that we find the apostle Paul. Thousands are zealous for the law. They are legalists, and they have heard Paul that you are against the teachings of the law. We have a problem. Verse 21, so you see, if you have forsaken Moses, you are hitting at the very core of what it is to be a Jew. Apostasy for Moses is how it could be translated. It cuts across their patriotism, their historical traditions, their social relationships, their public law, it goes to the deepest religious feelings that they have. So much so that when the author of Hebrews wrote, and that would be after this experience, he talks about Jesus being greater than anything that has preceded him. He says, “In times past God spoke to us by the prophets. But now in these last days He has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.”

And then he goes on to demonstrate that Jesus is greater than the angels. “To which of the angels did He say, ‘you are my son?’” Do you know who the author talks about next? Moses! He is greater than Moses. Why did he wait to talk about Moses after the angels? The Jews in their thinking thought Moses to be greater than the angels. So the guy is going down the rope, working from the least to the greatest. Jesus is even greater than Moses. So for Paul to be accused of apostasy for Moses, this is a very deep, heartfelt experience for the Jews. Circumcision - that was a covenant sign of the Jews. Their very existence is associated with that and the promises to Abraham, and then the customs. If you would like sometime today, or sometime this week, read Acts chapter 6:11-15, and you’ll discover that when the men accused Steven, they accused him of doing away with the customs. Now these are unconverted men, who are saying that these are men who were seeking his life. Unfortunately that same spirit and that same attitude are in the Christian church at this time, these individuals who are zealous for the law.

Let’s go to chapter 21 verse 22: “What then? The assembly must certainly meet for they will hear that you have come.” The Elders are concerned. “These people, these thousands of people

are going to hear that you are here Paul, what are we going to do?" They already have an answer. It's a rhetorical question. They already know what they are going to do. They say in verse 23, "Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law." Then they go on to say, but as far as the Gentiles, now they just need to abstain from eating meat offered to idols, from meat with the blood in it and from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.

So what's Paul going to do? Paul, I will show you in a few moments, doesn't believe that this is for salvation. In fact, he teaches against this type of stuff. But here he is stuck. He's been wanting to go back to Jerusalem for so long. Unfortunately the Bible doesn't tell us what he is thinking. But what Paul would do is a major mistake. He should not have done what he did. Paul should have stood up and said, "That is wrong." And I'll tell you why he should have said that was wrong. It comes on several levels. First of all, Paul is asked to sponsor four men. It's a very expensive vow that they are taking. Those four men will live one week in the temple premises. They will have to rent rooms for one week for all four of them. Then at the end, he has to buy four lambs from the temple. You know, from the local mafia there. They have their hands in it. That's going to be expensive. Then he has to buy some of the other ointments and things associated with it.

In fact, back in the day when this story took place, wealthy people were asked to do this as a demonstration of their piety. So they would also get check-marks towards God for sponsoring somebody through this process. Now as you know, Paul is not a wealthy man. He is very hard worker. He's told us in the sermon to the Ephesians, couple of chapters before that he worked his way. Nobody gave him anything. He worked. He worked hard. He even paid it for other people. But he has been traveling for some time now. He doesn't have money saved up. Here is the rub. Basically what the leaders in Israel are saying is that "You'll have to get the money from another source."

Now I haven't mentioned this in our journey with Paul, so I'll mention it now, and you'll understand what's going on. All through Paul's journey on his way towards Jerusalem, he has been collecting money from the Gentiles. In fact, that's why there are eight men travelling with him. They have a lot of money. There is a lot to carry, and they are helping him. They come. They bring that money sacrificially given by the Gentiles to the Jewish people in Jerusalem because they believe in the larger church. They are happy to do it. Paul brings that money, lays it down before the Elders. They say, "Man, that's great, praise God! Now, you know, we've got thousands of people." In essence, they are saying: "Paul, just take some of that money that the Gentiles gave."

Now I promise you, those Gentiles did not give that money to be used in a sacrificial system that was done away with at the cross. But what is Paul going to do? The best we can discern is that he is just trying to get along. He will spend the rest of his life trying to undo what he did though. I'll show you some verses that indicate that. So, Paul is told to sponsor these men. It will be expensive, "But if you do it Paul, then all these legalists will know you're one of them." That's essentially what is being said. Now I want you to know, doing something wrong in order

to appease a larger group, never works. It never works. It will backfire. It will in fact, paralyze the church. Because think of what these men are doing. They are saying in essence, that we have two distinct churches. We have a Gentile group and we have a Jewish group. And in Jewish group, they do all the customs, the laws and the traditions, and the practices that we've all done, we add Jesus to that. And we have a Gentile group, and they start with Jesus and then they start adding their own customs and practices. Two distinct groups, it doesn't make sense.

And then, what they really should have done, Paul should have said, "I am not going to do that. Jesus is our righteousness, Jesus is our salvation. There is no salvation by keeping this customs and these laws." He should have said that and the leader should have said: "You are right. We need to talk to those people." But unfortunately that seldom is the option that people in leadership take. Because note this. People who are convinced that they are right, and they have God on their side, will take you to the distance. They are willing to die for their position. And unfortunately, many are willing to kill for their position. They know, this is a volatile group, highly emotional, could erupt any time, a lot of political expediency. They asked Paul to do this. It's unfortunate that often times in church life, the people with the least amount of faith, the least amount of Christianity, the least amount of good behavior are the ones who set the standard and the agenda for everybody else. We are just trying to get along. Well, that's what's happening here in Jerusalem.

I want to show you why what Paul did was wrong. Look at Romans chapter 10. Paul has already written this letter to the Romans. As some of you know, the church at Rome was a very unique church. It was not started by any of the apostles. It was started if you will, by laymen. People who had been there on the Day of Pentecost, saw the Holy Spirit, and experienced Christ. They went back to Rome and they started a church. And they invited Gentiles in. It's a church where you have Gentiles and Jews worshiping together and no apostle over them. It's a very unique situation. Paul had written to them when he was in Corinth. Probably, at least a half a year before his experience here in Jerusalem. So this is how he feels about it.

Romans 10 verses 1-4: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own..." By the way, the Greek work for own is "idios." You can translate that into English if you want. My wife has been trying to get me to use better speech. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Some of you are nervous with that. Some of you are uncomfortable because you don't see how it relates.

Well let's put something to rest. There is no such thing as righteousness in this universe unless it comes from God. He is the source of righteousness. Unless we have Christ in our heart, it doesn't matter what practices and customs and teaching we maintain. We are lost. The condition for eternal life for Adam and Eve was simply this. They could stay in that garden for eternity as long as they lived a life of perfect obedience to God. They didn't and they were out. The condition for eternal life today is identical: a life of perfect obedience to God. We do not

have that to offer, no matter how hard we try. Too late, too bad! But Jesus came as a human, lived on the earth, lived a life of perfect obedience, died on Calvary as a substitute-nary death for us, took our punishment upon Him, paid the price for sin, and when we accept Him as our Savior, we get His righteousness. That's the only way. It comes that way.

Now trying to add to that only dirties it. You can't do anything to add to it. Your best efforts don't add to it. It takes away. And so we start with Christ, and we seek to add things to Him, we'll find ourselves in a ditch. And we have all these things, and we seek just to plug Jesus into it, we will find ourselves in a ditch. Paul says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." Look at Romans 3 verse 28, and while you are turning there, I want to deal with another matter regarding this. Some of you are uncomfortable because you are law keepers. I tried to be. I want to keep the Ten Commandments, I think they make sense. And the reason I want to keep the Ten Commandments is because I have the Lord in my heart.

But I want you to know something. When it comes to beliefs, practices, customs and traditions which are generally ratcheted up to the level which they are never intended to be, people set a lean on that and think that unless other people see it the way they do, they are lost. And consequently by concentrating on a zeal for the law, they are not associated with being people who have a zeal for the Lord. And some of you may be saying, "But Pastor, you are doing away with standards." You better say, "Amen" I certainly am. Because there is not a single standard, there is not a single doctrine; there is not a single teaching that will save you. You have a Savior, and His name is Jesus.

Now, so how does it balance out? Well the balance is this. If you have Christ in your heart, you are not going to look for a loophole to find the way to sin. You are in connection with God. You will seek to do what pleases God. It is natural, supernatural I should say. If you don't have Jesus in your heart, it doesn't matter what the teachings of the church are or what your practices are. You are lost. Those are the only two conditions. Either Christ's righteousness or not, that's it. Nothing in between; you either 'is' or you 'ain't.' And God says, "You can be in Christ." Romans 3 verse 28 Paul says: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." Justified by faith, faith in what? Well, he will deal with that in Galatians chapter 2.

Let's look at that, actually we'll deal with that in Ephesians, but let's look at Galatians chapter 2. Now Paul had written Romans before he went to Jerusalem. You see where he is at, "Nobody is saved by the law." He knows that, it's clear, he is teaching it. And he is teaching it to Jewish people. Now, we come to the Book of Galatians which is also written before this experience. And there is a debate whether it's written in the year 49 or the year 53, it doesn't matter. For us, it's already out there. It's already in print. Paul is on record as to how he feels about it. He is struggling with Judaisers. Galatians 2 verse 16, he says: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." None! No justification in the works of the law.

And that doesn't matter if it's Ten Commandments, the writings of Moses, or the customs and practices of the church. It all applies. There is no righteousness in that. You come to Galatians 3 verses 1-4, he says: "Oh foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the

truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified. This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit from the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" The answer is, by the hearing of faith. So they embraced Christ, they've got the Holy Spirit because of faith. Verse 3 says, "Are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" In other words, we started with Christ, but now we are adding things. But now you got to do this, you've got to do that, and what happens when we emphasize those things, when we get a zeal for the law and not a zeal for the Lord, we become known for those things we are zealous of. And they become our defining personality.

So in our context, we have people who will categorize each other by the way they eat, by the way they dress, by the way they keep the Sabbath, on and on. You know the list. You live in the midst of that environment. And what we are not known for is having a zeal for the Lord. And that's what we must have! Well, let's go to Galatians 3 again and we'll just read quickly here starting with verse 23. "But before faith came we were kept under guard by the law." Before faith, we were under the law, "...kept for the faith which will later be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

Now notice Paul's theology regarding Jews and Gentiles. "For as many of you as were baptized in Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ. And if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Do you see why Paul is making a mistake back there in Jerusalem? This is his theology. This is what is out there. This is what the record of his theology is. One more passage here in Galatians, I find it a fascinating passage. Chapter 5 verses 3 and 4; we are familiar with the term, "Fallen from Grace". It says, "And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." Usually the phrase, "Fallen from Grace" means somebody committed adultery or somebody fell from a position in the church and they've "fallen from grace." Fallen from grace according to Paul is when we seek to establish righteousness by what we do. That is "Fallen from Grace."

So Paul makes a mistake, the church leaders make a mistake, the church as a whole makes the mistake, and Paul will spend time from prison trying to get them back together which the emphasis of the Book of Ephesians that in Christ, this wall that is between a Gentile and a Jew, can be taken away. That's what he will preach in the Book of Ephesians. We'll come to that in just a moment. What about in modern times? Does this have any application to Christianity today? Within our denomination and across denominations, there is a constant push in the Christian community to become religious. Where we define ourselves by certain beliefs and practices and those definitions become our battle cry. That's where we draw the line in the sand and we say, "If you are not with us then you are against us," and few argue over the merits of Christ.

Take for instance baptism. You know, some say immersion which is completely under the water. Some Christians say sprinkling with water or even petals of flowers. Some say that baptism constitutes church membership – you can't be baptized unless you are willing to join

the church. Others say “Well no, you accept Christ then you are baptized, you want to join the church later, you can do that.” Others say “That’s how you accept Christ by being baptized.” Some say, “That’s how you get filled with the Holy Spirit.” Others say, “No, that’s a later experience.” Some say when you are baptized, you are baptized in the name of Jesus only because that’s all that is ever recorded in the Book of Acts. It never says anything about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, depending on what version of the Bible you want to be baptized by. And so some baptize in the name of the Trinity, and some when they baptize in the name of the trinity will baptize you three times; Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Some will do it backwards, some will do it forwards. Some will go one time in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Well who is right?

Well unfortunately, people fight over things like that. They destroy the Christian witness over things like that. I am not going to tell you what is right because the truth is this brothers and sisters. Please understand this. There are not two people in this room who could read a chapter of the Scriptures, any chapter, and come away with identical ideas of what it means. And I believe God has written the Bible that way on purpose. Because His emphasize is not that we figure every particular out, but that we learn to love people who see it differently than we do. And that is a severe test because without Christ in our heart, we cannot do that. We’ll be in each other’s faces. We’ll be arguing over nonsensical things. We’ll be making that our law if you will. We’ll be making that so important you can’t even be saved unless you’ve been doing it the way we do it.

There is another area, communion. This one is, you know in Christianity, some say, ‘real wine’. Others say, “No, only grape juice, and it better be Welch’s.” Some say ‘every week,’ others say ‘four times a year’. Some say ‘you have to be a baptized member to participate.’ Others say ‘it’s open to anyone.’ Some say ‘children should not be allowed unless they have been baptized,’ others say “Why? Let the children do that.” Some say ‘we need to wash each other’s feet’ some say, “Not me.” So, what’s right? I am not going to tell you. I am letting you know there are people who are convinced they know what is right. And you ask them, they will tell you. And if you go up against them, you will find there are teeth to their beliefs.

What about women in church? Some churches say ‘they can’t teach.’ Some say, ‘they can teach’ Some say ‘they can be a minister.’ Some say, ‘they can’t be a minister.’ Some say ‘they can be a minister but they can’t be ordained.’ Some say ‘they have to have long hair.’ Some say, ‘their hair can be any style they want.’ Some say ‘they have to wear dresses,’ some say ‘they have to wear slacks.’ And every one of these issues, people believe, they are supported by the Word of God. And so what happens in Christianity, we are not emphasizing a zeal for the Lord. We are emphasizing a zeal for the law, our customs and practices, traditions and the way we do things. And that just sets us in opposition to all the other Christians that are around us. And unfortunately even many Christians that are within our own denomination. Can you see how the devil just sits back and laughs? All the energy, all the effort trying to correct people, and the truth is we don’t want to add Jesus to a list. Nor do we want to add a list to Jesus. But what we want to do is have Christ in the heart. And when Christ is in the heart, things are going to happen.

Here is how Paul sought to deal with the mess that he was part of in Jerusalem. Please turn to the Book of Ephesians. Paul writes this after he is arrested and after he is imprisoned. Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9. This is pretty declarative. He says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." And that my friends, is a powerful passage. Go to chapter 4. If you really want some interesting reading today, read all of chapter 2. And you'll discover he is doing everything he can to pull the Gentile and the Jew together in the name of Jesus. And to take that wall away because Jesus was the sacrifice.

Here we come to chapter 4. He says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called..." I will tell you brothers and sisters, when Jesus is in the heart, there is a desire to walk worthy. That's what happens. If Jesus is not in the heart, there may be a desire to walk anyway that may appear to be good and religious but it will not be walking worthy. We go on. "...walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness..." that is humbly. It is kindly. It really is a reflection of Micah chapter 6. "He has shown you oh man what is good. And what the Lord requires of you, but to do justly, love mercy..." and what? "Walk humbly with God, walk humbly with God!" He goes on to say, "... with all lowliness and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

So here we have religious people in our assembly, in our denomination, people in our extended families all around, and we have a tendency to not seek a bond of peace which comes in Christ. We have a tendency to say, "This is what we do, you must be doing it wrong." I am fascinated by this whole topic. I've been meditating on this all week long. I just discovered something. Now I am a Sabbath keeper and I keep the Sabbath because I believe it's right. And I've run to a lot of people who go to church on Sunday. Do you know why they keep it? They believe it's right. And when you believe something is right that has a moral quality to it. So when they turn around and accuse me of being a legalist because I am doing something that I think is right, lo and behold, are they not doing the same thing?

And we are arguing about that type of stuff instead of Christ. We could be fellowshiping with one another in Christ. We could be growing together in Christ. When the time comes, He will open the eyes. He will open the ears, He will open the hearts. Whatever the issues are in the last days, He will make clear. His people will rise to the top. Why? Because they are on the solid bedrock and that solid bedrock is this: Jesus Christ in the heart, God's love in the heart because Jesus is there, and then love for one another. You won't go wrong. You will not go wrong! You may not have the right day; you may not know that grandma is in the grave. You may not have the right diet all that stuff. But if you have Jesus Christ in your heart and the love of God in your heart, and love to one another, you are going to heaven. And that's where I want to go. How about you?

Now, this is an important question that I am going to ask you. How many of you think that a marriage; we have two people who are seeking to glorify God by being humble, by loving one another. Because they are going to have differences, but they are seeking a bond of peace in the name of Christ. How many of you think if they are sincere enough in that that couple will

ever divorce? They never will. They never will! But I can guarantee you that fifty percent of the marriages that don't do that are going to divorce. I can guarantee that right now.

We are talking brothers and sisters about life. We are talking about life in our homes; we are talking about our hearts. Jesus wants to heal. He wants to heal the marriages, He wants to heal the homes, He wants to heal broken churches, He wants to heal extended families. He will do that but we have to center on Christ, not on these peripheral things. Just this morning after I preached at one of the services, somebody came up to me. They said last night they were in the home of an individual, and that individual has a sister who is not part of our denomination, and this man was just praying because his sister was ill. And the prayer was this, "Oh God please, let her keep the Sabbath at least once." And this fellow said to him, "What good is that? Pray that she'll accept Christ. She can keep the Sabbath for eternity. She needs a Savior."

Now brothers and sisters I have another question for you. When your family looks at you, when your friends look at you, when you look at you, would you say that everyone could answer, you have a zeal for the Lord or would they say you have a zeal for the law? You are religious but you are not connected with God. There is no power, there is no victory. If that's what you would say, then I want to ask you to invite Jesus into your heart. If you already have in the past, I am going to ask you to strengthen your experience in Christ. So today, if you would like to say, "Lord, I want to have a zeal for the Lord" please stand.

"Loving Father in Heaven, we give ourselves to you. Gladly we give ourselves to you. Save us Lord. We need a Savior. Thank you that you've provided that Savior in Jesus Christ; please Jesus come into our hearts, save us from sin, save us from religion, save us from ourselves, save us Lord. Give us love for You and love for one another. And give us abundant peace, we pray in Jesus name, Amen."