

Prayer List

Gene
Judy
The Williams' Family
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

www.pinolechurchofchrist.com

Vol. 14, No. 10 - December 16, 2012

New Testament Enthusiasm

Jerry Fite

THE CHRISTIAN LIVES WITH EXUBERANCE AND INTENSITY. He serves his Lord with a "fervent spirit" (Romans 12:11). Luke-warmness disgusts his God. A Christian is not to merely do good works, he is to be "zealous of good works." He is not to simply love his brethren, he is to love them "fervently." These commands apply to all, not only to those with bubbling personalities. Enthusiasm is not merely a feeling, it is a decision.

Our word enthusiasm comes from a Greek term which literally means "god-insideness." By means of the gospel, God entered and encouraged first century hearts. Redemption from sin was ardent news to souls condemned in darkness. Now, death could honestly be described as "gain." Divine revelation was the substance of his passion, not misguided emotion. No gimmickry was needed to excite the Christian, for he enjoyed salvation in Christ.

The Christian is enthusiastic every time he considers the attributes of the God who saved him. God did not need anything from man, for He created all things. With the Hebrew

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This Week's Question:

What king is remembered as placing a "heavy yoke" of taxation on Israel?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Zimri - Numbers 25:6-14

Published by the church of Christ which meets at 755 Pinole Valley Road, Pinole, CA 94564, Phone (510) 724-1994, (Mailing address: church of Christ, P.O. Box 453, Pinole, CA 94564)

writer we marvel at the Creator, and with glowing appreciation we ponder, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” In his rebellion man did not deserve a second chance, but in Christ he had it. Like Paul, we see ourselves as sinners, and break out in praise because our Savior is none other than “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God” (1 Timothy 1:15–17).

Men tend to become disinterested and lethargic toward their work when there are no more goals to reach. Also, enthusiasm dies when hope is gone. These two barriers to zeal in the Kingdom are avoided in the one hope of heaven. Throughout the Christian’s life, the goal of heaven is always standing before him. He is constantly aware that a better life is awaiting his coming. With the resurrection of Christ, the Christian’s spirits are raised because he knows that his hope is living and his inheritance is certain. Instead of being messengers of despair, trials and tribulations become stepping-stones to a stronger claim on heaven.

Since the gospel is for all men, and meets a need that we all have, the Christian is eager to share it wherever he goes. Every person he sees is a soul that needs saving. Yes, he is well aware that not everyone will accept the Christ. But he finds open doors because he concentrates on opportunities instead of being demoralized by adversaries (1 Corinthians 16:9). What salesman would not eagerly jump at the chance to sell a product that was designed for everyone in town? What true humanitarian would withhold information that he knew his fellow man could not “live without?” The gospel is the proven cure. Each person is a potential recipient. The Christian is excited by the limitless possibilities for eternal good.

The Christian does not lose his enthusiasm when setbacks occur. When he sins, he knows that true repentance and prayer immediately brings a new beginning. When he fails to

convert sinners, and sees some of his fellow-servants fall away, the Christian remembers that there are limits to his responsibilities. He is not God, so he cannot change the seed. He is to spread the seed. He is to be an inviting light, not an interrogation-lamp forcing confessions. Paul knew that by giving himself and the gospel of Christ to others, he stood approved before God. Regardless of how others responded to the Good News, Paul knew that he was a “sweet savor” unto God.

Enthusiasm feeds upon itself. Whether Christians are worshipping together or living thousands of miles apart, their zeal can produce enthusiasm in one another. Paul, in the matter of giving, used the zeal of the Christians in Achaia to stir up eagerness in the hearts of the Macedonians (2 Corinthians 9:2). Enthusiasm can be productive in other areas of service as well. In one hour, a peppy song leader and a prepared teacher can relieve a headache that medicine could not accomplish in four hours. Enthusiastic singing, zealous teaching, and fervent prayers can turn scriptural songs, lessons, and prayers into edifying experiences. The Christian is not afraid to show his zeal, because he knows that his brother needs it.

The gospel is all one needs to create and sustain New Testament enthusiasm. By meditating upon its message and applying its principles, we can win souls to Christ, breathe life into dying churches, and turn worlds upside down. And that is exciting. (From *Christianity Magazine*, April 1984, Volume 1 Number 4)