

ZEAL

People often ask me, "Pastor, how do you keep your zeal for God? How do you stay energised and focused - week in and week out?" In response to this question I would like to borrow a saying that Elijah uttered in 1 Kings 19:14: ***"I have been very zealous for the Lord."*** A key to the extraordinary life of Elijah may very well be found in this simple statement, and these two words probably explain Elijah's behaviour - "very zealous". We all need to aspire to this! Elijah's zealousness is related to the Lord being given His rightful place. That is what Elijah typified, and undoubtedly it's what is meant by the "zeal of the Lord." When people ask me what it is to be very zealous for God, I immediately think of how passionate "for the Lord" Elijah was! This remarkable man was absolutely separated from his own interests, from any personal agenda. He had completely surrendered to God's will for his life. This was an utter attachment to the Lord, not for personal interests, but for God's interests alone. If you want to experience the miraculous and see the supernatural power of God at work in your life, you too must be zealous for God!

There is something else that Elijah said which we should take note of: ***"As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word"*** (1 Kings 17:1). "Before whom I stand..." Those four words speak volumes and they opened the door to the miracle that followed. But, we find out what lay behind such words in James 5:17: ***"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months."*** Here we are allowed to see into the prayer chamber of Elijah, to see what was behind this great declaration that closed the heavens. The first thing we notice is that Elijah "prayed fervently." Then we realise that he was not asking for a blessing for himself. No! He was sold out for the interests of God! It was not for Elijah's own good but for God's satisfaction that he prayed fervently. And because of that he was brought into active co-operation, fellowship and oneness with God. That is why he could boldly declare, "Before whom I stand!" That is why he could close the heavens for three and a half years!

This man's passion (zeal) wasn't reserved for active duty alone but also for his prayer time with God. Consequently, he was able to stand in God's presence and speak out words that God Almighty would watch over to perform. If you want to stand with the Lord, and have the Lord standing with you; if you want to know that intimacy of fellowship in which the two are as one, so that you can confidently declare, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand..." then the only way is to be zealous in everything you do for Him. Remember, Elijah was a man with a nature like ours! Therefore, you can have no excuses, and the results will be truly astounding! Think about this... When you are zealous for God, in service and in prayer, He honours you by releasing His miracle working power – hallelujah!