

# Fuel Without Ignition

by Fred Tomlinson

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*This sermon delves into the importance of stirring up the gift of God within us, emphasizing the need for divine empowerment to fulfill our calling amidst opposition and challenges. Drawing from the relationship between Paul and Timothy, it highlights the necessity of receiving the power from on high, not relying on human resources alone. The message underscores the transformative impact of experiencing the Holy Spirit's ignition in our lives, leading to a radical change and a burning passion for God's fullness.*

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 1:6, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:18, Luke 11:13, Romans 12:11, Galatians 5:16, Psalm 51:10, John 14:26, Acts 2:4, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit", "Fulfilling Our Divine Calling"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Now for those of you watching on the internet, this ministry has been part of a Zoom meeting hosted by the Mackenzie Christian Fellowship in British Columbia, Canada, and this is a weekly event for us, and I'm continuing a study in 2nd Timothy. I'm calling it Gleaning in 2nd Timothy. By that I mean I'm not going through verse by verse, we're not trying to extract every detail from the epistle, but simply reading through it and listening to the Holy Spirit and seeking to sense where he has a particular word for us in these sessions from this epistle.

So that's what we're doing. Today I am looking into the first chapter of 2nd Timothy. If you have your Bible and you want to turn there with me, please do.

It's just one verse today, and I'm looking at the sixth verse where the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. The setting here, as most of you know very well, is that the aged Apostle Paul is in prison. He's in prison in Rome for the second time.

He was discharged and released the first time. His imprisonment at that point, recorded at the end of the Book of Acts, was different because he was incarcerated in what is called in the text his own hired house, although he was chained, we understand, to Roman soldiers. But this time he's in a very different kind of cell and the suggestions made that it was a hole in the ground and a filthy foul dreadful place that he was being kept.

And he knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that the only way that he was going to be released from that room where he was being kept would be in the company of the man who would be his executioner. He knew that without any question this time. And so he is corresponding here with Timothy.

He refers to him as his own son in the faith. Very likely Paul was about 30 years older than Timothy and he had known him from now many years. We've looked on an earlier occasion at how they met and so on.

But clearly the Apostle Paul recognized Timothy as one of the men who had the call of God upon him and understood and was experiencing the revelation of the truth that he, Paul, was carrying. Paul would speak about the revelation of truth, the revelation of the new covenant, the revelation of the gospel of God, as he would refer to it. It was not something he had learned from someone.

He didn't read it in a book. He didn't listen to someone on YouTube, of course. But he also says, I didn't go to Jerusalem.

I didn't discuss it with the apostles up in Jerusalem. He says this at the beginning of the book of Galatians and he says that I received it from God sovereignly, directly, and it was a treasure beyond estimate. He received it from God and he carried it and he ministered it and he was experiencing it.

But now the time had come for him to say farewell to this world, to say farewell to this beloved younger man, Timothy. And it was time for him to pass on the baton to him. And that's really what's going on in this epistle.

Paul had been a pacemaker. He had set the pace and what a pace he had set. And so in writing now to Timothy, to the younger man, he is not going through some kind of pep talk with him.

He's not sort of just boosting his courage or something. He will, in the rest of the epistle, be passing on counsel to him. He will be speaking to him about personal discipline.

He will be speaking to him about the direction of his life and of his ministry. But he was under no illusions concerning the opposition that Timothy would face in the course of his ministry. He knew that all hell would be against him because he was carrying the most demonically opposed message in the whole of the world.

And Paul knew that this was going to be a very challenging road that he was going to walk. And he would know that if things were limited just to natural human resources, there would be no way at all in which this precious man would be able to continue and fulfill the ministry that was being discharged to his responsibility and no way in which he could fulfill this heavenly calling that was upon his life. He needed to be empowered.

He needed something greater, something far greater, something supernatural to endure him, to enable him for this great challenge that he was going to face once the apostle had finally left. You know, what I'm talking about here concerning Timothy is equally true for every one of you who are listening to me, every

one of you who claims to be a Christian believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is true for everyone.

Humanly speaking, it is impossible to live the Christian life, let alone be a minister of God. We so desperately need this divine enabling which comes from God alone. And so that's what's going on here.

Paul is writing to Timothy under these kinds of circumstances. And he is, in this verse, reminding him of an event that took place a lot earlier, years earlier. Clearly, it was at that moment when, for the first time, Paul was going to take Timothy with him on his second ministry, missionary journey, to be his associate minister.

And so Paul is reminding Timothy of what took place on that occasion. And evidently, and this is recorded also in the first epistle to Timothy, the apostle Paul laid his hands on him and prayed for him. The laying on of Paul's hands was powerfully symbolic.

Clearly, at that time, the younger man Timothy had adopted a posture of complete submission to God. The apostle lays his hands upon him and prays and invokes God in prayer that he would do for Timothy what no other man could do for Timothy. And that was to impart to him something transcendent.

And we mustn't underestimate this in any way at all. This was not some kind of booster shot for Timothy's lack of self-confidence or to somehow boost up his natural talents or to aid him in some way, to be more disciplined in his use of time or more disciplined in other areas of his life. It was nothing like that.

This was a gift from God, an endowment from God that he was going to receive and did receive back then on that occasion. And the apostle is reminding him of this occasion. It's timely, it's important that he should be in clear possession in his mind of the supernatural, transcendent thing that happened back at that time.

And he was encouraging Timothy to stir that up, stir it up in your memory, in your life. Remember that this is the only way that you can fulfill this divine and holy calling with which you are called. This would not be something that can be explained humanly or naturally.

It was transcendent. You know, we ask ourselves, well, what was it exactly? How should we think about this? Well, I think it's important to watch how a few other translations treat this verse. The NIV translation speaks about this gift and he has Paul saying to Timothy, fan into flame the gift which you received when I laid my hands on you.

Or Holloman, in his translation, he says keep the gift ablaze. But then it's the Amplified translation that's of particular interest to me where it describes this statement this way. It says concerning this gift, this gracious gift, and it was a gift of grace.

It was a charis. It was a gift of grace, a gift of God to him. And then the Amplified translation continues and says that inner fire, that special endowment with which you were endowed.

Amen. This divine factor, this power from on high. And Paul is basically saying to Timothy, you remember you received that on that occasion.

And whatever you do, Timothy, be very, very careful that you never lose sight of this. Don't ever imagine that you are being left to your own resources to somehow manage to live this life and carry this ministry in the light of all of this demonic opposition that you're going to face and the distortions of the truth that so many men are going to seek to impose upon it in the days ahead. And the same is true for today as we

think of ourselves at this point in time.

It's as though the Lord is saying to each of us, to you as you're listening to me speaking here, words rather like the words that the Lord spoke to Elijah those many years ago when he said to him under certain circumstances, Elijah, this journey is too great for you. And I think if we were able to hear what the Lord is saying to us today, we'd hear the Lord saying something very much like that to us today. This journey is too great for you to do alone, to do under your own power, to operate under your own esteem.

You know, it's interesting in the book of Acts, where the Lord Jesus is speaking to the disciples prior to him leaving them. He says in chapter one, in verse eight, he says, you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. But what's really interesting to me is just before that, we're told, I'm glancing at verse four, they were assembled together and the Lord Jesus commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you've heard from me already.

He goes on to say, for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he, Jesus said to them, it is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in his own power, but you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me. You shall be witnesses unto me in these various places mentioned.

It's interesting that the disciples gathered together with Jesus on that occasion in spite of just the amazing, I mean, mind stunning things that had happened in terms of the resurrection of Christ and his appearance. And he's here with them talking to them after what they had seen take place at Calvary 50 days earlier. And he's talking to them and they really didn't get what Jesus was saying.

Don't depart from Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high. What a statement from Jesus to them. But they say, Lord, by the way, will you restore the kingdom to Israel again at this time? And Jesus, if I may paraphrase slightly what he's saying, he said, nevermind about that then.

There's something else that's more important, something that is of primary importance, crucially important. And that is that you should receive this power from on high. Amen.

And I think if I'm not mistaken, that very much the same kind of thing is happening today. We've got a cacophony of voices of preachers of every flavor, preaching and teaching. And some are giving their impressive series on end time prophecies.

And others are trying to tell us what they believe God is really doing at this particular point in time. And someone else is saying, well, I am a Bible expositor. Someone else is saying, well, I've got degrees in theology.

But I firmly believe that if we could just be quiet enough and listen carefully, we would hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us. And they would be saying to each one of us today very much what Jesus was saying to the disciples on that occasion. Those things may have a place and be important, but here's something that is crucially important for now for you.

Amen. You need to receive this power from on high. You need to receive this empowering life of God.

Amen. I think this is a message that needs to be sounded out far and wide in these days. You know, we don't need clever minds to try to show us whether the USA is mentioned in the book of Revelation or whether it's not mentioned in the prophecies there and so on.

I think leaders in so many cases and congregants, as the result may be, have lost sight of the fact that the Christian life is humanly impossible to live. That merely giving mental assent to Bible doctrines and listening to every preacher we can find on YouTube and filling our heads with knowledge and information alone is rather like gathering together a woodpile. A woodpile that needs divine ignition.

Amen. And this divine ignition, it won't make us into big successes. Very likely it'll do quite the opposite, but I'll tell you what it will do.

It'll make you clean on the inside. It'll give you a clean, pure heart. It will set you free from your slavery to sin and your slavery to self and it'll be power to enable you to become a holy man of God or a holy woman of God.

Amen. And without this holy ignition, all you have is a pile of doctrine. A pile of doctrine with no fire.

Amen. You know, many years ago, a 26-year-old American man whose name was Billy Graham was in Wales in the UK. He, by a twist of circumstances, while being there as a member of the, involved with the Youth for Christ movement and with some of his colleagues, but here's the twist of circumstances.

He went into another meeting, a meeting where another 26-year-old man was preaching. His name was Stephen Alford and he listened to him preaching. And he spoke to the preacher, he spoke to Stephen after the meeting and he said, he said, I just want to ask you one question.

He says, why didn't you give an invitation? Because he said, I would have been the first one to come forward. He said, because you have spoken of something that I don't have and I want that fullness of the Holy Spirit in my life too. You know, years later, Graham explained to a man called John Pollock, who was to become his official biographer.

Graham said, I was seeking for more of God in my life. I felt that though this was a man who could help me. He had a dynamic, he had a thrill, he had an exhilaration about him that I wanted to capture.

Those two men met again sometime later and they were together for two days. And on the second day, they kneeled together to pray. And Stephen Alford would say of that particular point, of that particular moment, he said, it was like all heaven broke loose.

In that dreary little room, it was like Jacob laying hold of God and crying, Lord, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And when they paused from praying for a while, Billy Graham said to Alford, my heart is so flooded with the Holy Spirit. And they were both so overcome with joy that they laughed together and they wept and Billy began walking back and forth and shouting, I have it, I am filled, I am filled.

This is the turning point in my life. That was the moment of ignition for Billy Graham. You know, I'm not a Billy Graham, of course.

But in my early years, I was raised in the Plymouth Brethren. And I was subjected to good teaching and tremendous encouragement to read and study and even memorize passages of scripture. I gathered a huge pile of combustible material.

But one day that I shall never, ever forget, in an old rundown house in Liverpool, England, ignition took place in my life. And I became another man. In every possible way, my life was transformed.

And the direction of my life, the focus of my life, the values in my life, everything changed radically on that occasion. What about you? You know, this is not charisma that I'm talking about. But I'm asking you, do you share that same burning passion that was in Billy Graham that he spoke of when he first met Stephen Alford? I'm wondering whether you have that in your life.

Are you saying deep within, I must have that fullness of the spirit of life in me also? You know, what you need to do, if this is your heart, is to get before God alone. I don't know who you're with or what's going on in your immediate circumstances as you listen to me. But let me encourage you strongly, if you're sensing the same passion, the same longing to really know God and his fullness in your heart, if you're longing for that ignition of the Holy Spirit in your life, let me encourage you to get alone with God at a very early moment.

Be sure to do it quickly or soon so that you don't lose the challenge of the Spirit of God in this moment. But get alone and fall before him, whether you do that physically or not, that's not the immediate issue, but fall before him without reservation, without reserve, without qualifications. Fall before him, fall upon his altar.

That altar is always the cross of Christ. Fall there, surrender yourself to him completely and rest assured that certainly as you do that, this holy fire will fall upon you. Make this your prayer.

It's a part of a hymn that's very precious to so many of us. Breathe on me, breath of God, till I am wholly thine, until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine. I pray to God that you will find and experience this very, very thing in your life also and don't settle for anything less.

This is not merely believing doctrine. We need doctrine and we must believe it. It's not merely believing it, it's receiving the life, it's receiving the Spirit of God, it's receiving the enabling power of God to live as a godly man or a godly woman and to be able to be a minister of this priceless truth called the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God bless you. Please consider leaving a comment. I read them all.

I appreciate them. I read them prayerfully and thank God for those that are positively able to relate to what I've been sharing and are hungry for God as I continue to be. Amen.

If you want to do this, just check out our website as well, which is very easy to remember. It's just [mckenziefellowship.com](http://mckenziefellowship.com). God bless you. Amen.

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