

Polish (8)

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon calls believers to make a decisive commitment to Christ and recognize the transformative power of God in their lives.

Duration: 1:15:33

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:37-38, Psalm 118:24, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:4, Romans 15:7, Ephesians 5:18, James 5:16

Topics: "Polish"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the reality of the fire of God in the believer's life. He shares a personal experience of burning his hand to illustrate the tangible nature of fire. The preacher warns against stopping at a certain chapter in the Bible, as it can lead to extremism or imbalance. He then discusses the story of a man who was saved from suicide by a simple gospel track, highlighting the power of God's intervention. The sermon also touches on the themes of spiritual depression, the divine factor, and the God who answers by fire.

Transcript

Life is not all sunshine, and I hope that you're praising the Lord in your heart. There's a great verse in the Old Testament, it says, this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice in it. There's a message that's really burning on my heart, that I want to share with you this morning.

Most mornings I have been given a subject, and asked to speak on it, which I don't mind doing. But this morning, I can preach on whatever I want. And I'm very happy about that, because this message is very much on my heart.

I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Kings, chapter 18. Today is Sunday, and I think there are some people here that I've not had the privilege of speaking to before today. How many have not been in one of our morning sessions? They've not heard me speak yet.

How many new people? And I would like to mention some books to those of you who are new people, because there may be a few of these books left. It's a little difficult displaying them in the rain. But I hope sooner or later you will get these three books.

So you can write the titles down. If you don't have any paper, you can write it on your hand. But we want you to remember these tremendous books.

Thirty-one years ago, through the preaching of Dr. Billy Graham, by the way, those of you who are here for the first time, all the messages from all of these mornings are available on cassette tape. So take those tapes and listen to them and share them with your friends. And I hope you will get this book on how to be born again.

When I went to that meeting thirty-one years ago, I had religion. I was the assistant to the pastor, president of the young people's fellowship. I had religion, but I didn't have Jesus Christ reigning and ruling in my heart.

And I thank God for the simplicity of the message of His servant, Billy Graham. He's a human being just like the rest of us. He makes mistakes just like the rest of us.

I want to again mention the book, Johnny. Many of you have already read this. Why not get a copy to give to a friend? And then we have been speaking about the subject of humility.

And we have a book called Humility by Andrew Murray. We have just in English produced a special edition of a hundred thousand of this great book. And then lastly a book by A.W. Tozer.

This man has been a great influence in many of our lives. What's that title? I have of course read this in English. God uses the printed page.

I actually wrote a book on the subject of God using the printed page. And I never cease to be amazed about how the Lord works through literature. Let me just tell one story.

A man was going door to door giving out just simple gospel tracts. And he went to a home. And he rang on the doorbell.

Finally after some time the man came. And he took that tract. About some weeks later the man went back to that same house.

The man welcomed him in. He said, come in I have something to tell you. And he took him to the upper room in the house.

This is a true story. He said when you rang on my doorbell I was standing on that box with a rope around my neck. And I was going to commit suicide.

There was nothing left in life for me. But you kept ringing on the bell. And out of curiosity I decided I'm going to go down and see who's at the door.

And he said I read your tract. It's held here by this box. And I gave my life to Jesus Christ and he cleansed me of my sin.

God uses even the simple gospel tract. In Argentina a man found the gospel of John in a tree. He was also on his way to commit suicide.

And he took this gospel from the tree. Someone else had obviously thrown it away. And he was converted to Jesus Christ.

Another man went into the toilet. And someone had left the gospel tract in the toilet. And he was sitting there reading this tract.

And he gave his heart to Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord for Christian literature. Let's take advantage of the literature here and get some of these gospels and prayerfully, carefully distribute them.

1 Kings chapter 18 If you're taking notes and so many of the young people are faithfully taking notes And a few of you have given me some prayer requests, which I will be praying over. And the communication feedback is still functioning, even in the rain. And if you want a title for this message And if you want to know what subject I will be talking about today I will give you two titles.

You can choose the one that you like. The first title, which I prefer, is The Divine Factor and The Human Factor. The other title is The God Who Answers by Fire.

So you can choose whatever title you want. I'd like us to read from verse 20 Through verse 25, first of all. We're going to read in different sections.

Elijah had this great burden. It was a very simple burden, but it was a great burden. He wanted to see God's people following God in obedience and reality.

But God's people had been wandering their own way. They had fallen into idolatry. They had fallen into many, many sins.

And there were many, many false prophets. So Elijah decided, under the inspiration of God, to challenge the false prophets. And he also challenged the people.

Some people ask, why do we have these kind of special meetings? What's the purpose of this? I believe there is a biblical basis for gathering in this way. About 50 different nations these 30 years. One of my favorite subjects is church history.

Even now, I'm in the middle of another book on church history, a brand new book. And whenever you see a great spiritual movement, for special occasions such as this, not just to meet one another, and that's wonderful, but to hear the voice of God together as a community of God's people. In India, where I lived for a number of years, I became friends with a man named Bhat Singh.

And he was a very unusual man. He's now 80 years of age. He's not very well.

But God used him to start many, many churches. And the whole movement that was indigenous to India, it was an Indian church movement. And thousands of people came to Christ.

Tens. Tens of thousands. Mainly in South India.

Tomorrow night, we're going to pray and talk about India. Tremendous difference between the North, which is very un-evangelized, and the South, where there are many Christians. And in that indigenous Indian church movement, they would have great gatherings just like this.

And God would so work in those meetings. Not just in bringing new people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but in bringing believers back to the place where they were totally committed to Christ. God has been speaking to us during these days through His Word, through His servants, through the music, through testimony.

These have been very special days for me. Normally, I have more people trying to see me on any one day than I can ever see. Normally, when I'm back in my office.

And all day, there are phone calls, there are telegrams, and many other things. And here, I'm away from all that. And I've been able to get extra time in God's Word, and in prayer, and in some spiritual reading.

My own heart has been filled as I've been listening to some messages on cassette tape. God has been speaking to me. And I know God has been speaking to you.

And here, we see Elijah trying to get God's people to listen. And trying to get them to make a decision. To make God the center of their life.

Look at verse 21, the key verse. Elijah came unto all the people, and he said, How long halt ye between two opinions, if the Lord be God? Follow Him. But if fail, then follow Him.

And the people answered, not a word. There comes a time when we may choose. There may be someone here who has been thinking about making a decision for Christ for a long time.

You've been weighing up the different arguments. There may be other people who know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. But you've been wandering away in your own selfish living, and in your own pursuits.

And you've been thinking about making a deeper commitment to Christ. You've been thinking about turning your back on sin, Satan himself, and surrendering afresh to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And this is a message for you.

These people, when they heard Elijah's challenge, there was suddenly a great silence. Perhaps because they were afraid. Afraid of giving themselves completely to God.

Others were afraid of the false prophets. They were powerful men. They were influential men.

They were very closely related to the present ruling government. And we know Ahab was a very evil king. So the people stood there in silence.

You know, there is a time to be silent. But there is a time not to be silent. And that's something we'll all wrestle with all of our lives.

Notice verse 24. Elijah challenged these false prophets because he wanted the people to see a great work of God. And he referred to God in a very interesting way there in verse 24.

He said, And the Lord, the God who answereth by fire. There's one of your titles. God who answers by fire.

A number of places in the Bible it speaks about fire in a spiritual way. Not just in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament.

And I am a very strong believer that we should not take Old Testament passages out of context and just use them to teach any old thing that pops into our head. Some false cults are very good at manipulating people through the misuse of Old Testament scriptures. The Old Testament is not all a great book of theology.

It is a book of history. It must be understood in its context. And we just cannot take a verse here and a verse there and say this is referring to 1986.

I was listening to a tape by a man who is sort of giving a prophecy. He thinks he's giving a prophecy. And he's taken some passage in Isaiah and he is saying this is actually referring to the church in 1986.

Now we might be able to learn something from that passage. We might be able to make a comparison. But we must be careful saying that the prophet Isaiah is speaking about the church in Poland or America in 1986.

And he is making the conclusion that as those people were worshiping an idol and it describes the idol that this is actually referring to television. And television is the idol referred to in the book of Isaiah. I don't even have a television.

And a television could become an idol in our lives. It could become an idol in themselves in the same way as something like Baal that they were worshiping in the Old Testament. Don't miss this.

When electricity was first used some Christians felt it was from the devil. When cars were first invented in America still would never go in a car. They are still using horses and carts.

I've seen some of the same horse and carts here in Poland. I don't know whether you have these same religious groups. But on Sunday they go to church in their horse and carts but they have just split in two groups because some were putting rubber tires on the carts.

These rubber tires Christians and the rubber tire Christians we are the wooden wheel group. We are the rubber tire group. Isn't it amazing how Christians get caught up on little things and get fighting over little things.

I hope you don't have this problem in Poland. We need a lot of wisdom as we study the Bible. The Old Testament will be confirmed in the New Testament.

I want you to look in the book of Hebrews. As we think of God who answers by fire we have a reference to this in the book of Hebrews. It says there in Hebrews chapter 12 the last verse the 29th verse what does it say? For our God is a consuming fire.

We know on the day of Pentecost the historical coming of the Holy Spirit upon the church there were cloven tongues of fire above the people. Some people try to reproduce they say we need another Pentecost. And I've talked to many of those people.

I say have you ever seen those cloven tongues of fire come? And they say no. I don't think we can reproduce Acts chapter 2. The historical coming of the Holy Spirit upon the church as the church was being born. Now the church is born and the Spirit of Christ you do not have Christ.

But surely the coming the will of God is for us to know the reality of God's fire in our hearts. You know if I spoke your language I would come much much more often. I think I would come every year.

And I find it difficult to speak through interpreter though this is an excellent interpreter. And I know that you have you have so many great men of God in Poland in one way you do not need any of us to come from other countries. And if I am able to give anything to you from God's word in 50 nations for 31 years God has given me so much.

I don't have anything in myself. In English which I would like to share with you I don't know if it makes any sense in Polish. But when we see a man really dedicated to Jesus Christ a man of prayer a man serving

Christ a man winning honors to Jesus Christ we often say that fellow that woman is on fire for Christ.

That doesn't mean they are literally burning and you must come there with a fire extinguisher. It means it means the love of God is burning. I would speak to Moses he spoke to him in a burning bush.

What an amazing story. I remember seeing that tremendous film on the life of Moses. The film people they can do amazing things.

When we are submitted to God when we are doing God's will we are on fire but we are not being destroyed. We are on fire for Christ but we are not burning. The symbol of fire is warmth.

Oh, Christians are hot. Do you know one of the great ministries in the church? I know many of you have this ministry. The ministry of hospitality.

A lot of people work here to feed to take care of us. That's the job I had when I went to college. Cleaning the toilets.

A very special privilege in the kingdom. And if it wasn't for the hard work of many, many people we would not be here. I traveled here from England in a bus that's 20 years old that has broken down many times.

The mechanics as usual they had to work on the bus which cost us less than the price of a car. Then we prayed. Jesus have mercy on us.

And God brought us here in that old bus safely. The work of the kingdom of God includes every Christian. There are no spectators in the kingdom of God.

Somebody said that the church in England was like a football game. There are a small group what is it 11 people out on the field in desperate need of rest. Surrounded by thousands of people in desperate need of work and exercise.

I don't know about your churches in Poland but in many countries I go to a few people are doing all the work and the rest of them are passengers sitting on Sunday morning and that's about all they ever do. If that situation ever comes on your Polish churches please write to me because you will need special prayer. You will need revival.

Every believer has a ministry. Every believer is a work spiritually speaking and is working in building the church and building the kingdom of God. Sometimes people say to me well why is it that so many people are just passengers just spectators.

Now in some cases of course it's because they may never have come to really know Jesus Christ personally. But in other cases it is because they have not come in their Christian life. The fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

We talked about D.L. Moody the other day his challenge to be filled again and again and again with the Holy Spirit. That is taken from the book of Ephesians chapter five where it says number one we should not be drunk with wine that's Ephesians 5.18 yeah but be filled with the Spirit. We cannot live the Christian lives like in our own strength.

Often I speak on the subject of personal revival. I think on Tuesday do I choose my subject on Tuesday? in my final message I'm going to speak about personal revival. The privilege of every believer and I am

very excited about that.

But these two subjects are very much linked because a man or a woman that is is a person filled with the Spirit of God. Now let's see what happened back there in Kings. They were crying out verse 28 they were beating their bodies blood was actually coming out of them.

They were religious fanatics but no answer came from heaven. And then we have the prayer of Elijah in verse 37 Read that. Hear me old man.

And then what happened? Verse 38 Read that. Then the fire of the Lord fell. This was a miracle.

It's not something God was just doing you know every week. Turned away from the Christian faith because the criticism was so great. If yesterday we spoke about accepting ourselves today we want to hear about accepting one another forgiving one another loving one another acknowledging our oneness in Jesus Christ.

Look at the way God expresses it verse 15 and 16. If the foot shall say because I am not the hand I am not of the body. Look at 16 read that.

If the ear shall say because I am not the eye I am not of the body. Sometimes I offend people because I say something that causes people to laugh. What a false concept of Christianity if we think we cannot laugh.

And this explanation of unity in many ways is quite funny. The ear saying to the nose I don't need you. The foot saying to the ear I don't need you.

And there is a time to cry. And it's good to cry many times, many times as well. We're all more complicated emotionally and mentally, psychologically.

We are more complicated than we are willing to admit at times. And sometimes in our churches when we think that we have some doctrinal problems, because these problems are more in the sphere of the psyche and psychology. So we all need one another.

You know there's another conference going on not far from here. And another OM leader, a close friend of mine is speaking at that conference. He's going to come and see us tomorrow.

Some of you know Brother Mickey Walker. He has five or six children. He has a big beard.

And his specialty is teaching people how to witness effectively for Jesus Christ. Now Mickey and I, we're very, very different from each other. But we have been laboring together of one heart and one mind for twenty years.

In our fellowship we have about three hundred leaders from twenty different nationalities. Men and women. All different denominations.

All different ideas. Those who believe in the small family. I'm a teacher of the small family teaching.

And Mickey Walker is the leader of the large family vision. We have those who believe in exercise program. I believe in the morning exercise program.

Everybody should be jogging for Jesus. We have others who are opposing the exercise program. All different ideas.

But hundreds of us have been working together for twenty to thirty years. On Sunday we actually go to different churches. We have the charismatic people.

Like to go where there's a little more zip, a little more noise, a little raising and jumping and praying. And we have the Lutherans and the Presbyterians. They prefer to pray with their hands in the front.

Some of God's people get infatuated with the miraculous. Do you have any of those in Poland? They want a miracle every day, a miracle. You know, God can do the miraculous.

But it is not his normal way of working. God is working through people. And our God is not just the God of the extraordinary who can answer by fire.

But he is the God of the ordinary who can bless you as you're washing the dishes in your kitchen. Often before I preach, and I preach in many big conventions, the leaders all rush to me. And they say, we want to lay hands on you.

You're the mighty anointing. You're preaching to a great crowd. Not that so many people lay hands on me.

My hand is getting flat. And so they pray that the preacher will have a mighty anointing. We believe that's important.

And sometimes I've said to those people, I say, I wonder if you'd pray for my wife. Oh, yeah, sure. What's she doing? She needs special prayer.

She's washing my socks. She's washing my dishes. She's cleaning up the mess.

Oh, how boring. You don't need the Holy Spirit for that. That's just the problem in our thinking today.

We think we need anointing of the Holy Spirit in the ministry, but we fail to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the daily walk of life. Billy washed the dishes in the kitchen. Have you heard that? The sign says, divine services held here three times each day.

God is the God of the ordinary. Here, of course, we see a spectacular event. The fire of God came down.

God was trying to wake up His people. God was bringing revival to His people. Read verse 39.

When all the people saw it, they fell down on their faces. And they said, the Lord is God, the Lord is God. And there was revival.

Now, a lot of people stop right there. Maybe they give an invitation to receive a blessing from God, to recommit your life, to repent and be filled with the Holy Spirit, to come back to Christ. God is working in different people in different ways.

In the evening meetings, there's an invitation for people to come forward. About 100 people have come to Christ here in this tent. Some maybe have recommitted their lives to Christ.

When I came to Jesus Christ, I was in a meeting like this, and I went forward. But many of the strongest Christians I know didn't go forward in the meeting. It happened in a church.

So I thank God for this great picture of this God who answers by fire. Since the day of my conversion, fire is very real. Speaking in man.

God bringing His love into our hearts. So we better not stop. Lead us into extremism or get us off balance.

Just a few verses. Look at verse 4. What happened? This is amazing. This man had seen miracles.

God had answered his prayers. And yet here we find it in spiritual depression. Have you ever had this experience? For six years, I prayed that God would give us a ship and that God would give us the people.

We needed 120 people to operate that ship. And when God gave us the ship, and I was traveling around the whole of Africa on the ship, just like Elijah, I started to get discouraged. I started to get depressed.

All the selfishness, the complications of getting the ship into ports, all the documents, the permissions, the tugboats. All these things. He wanted to die.

I wonder if there are some of you even a small. You may be a Christian leader. You may be a pastor.

Lord Jesus. To say, I quit. I don't want anything more to do with all this Christianity.

You need to read this chapter. You know, one of the things that's discouraged me the most when I've tried to serve the church, I'm doing with all my heart sin against God. And then I felt so miserable.

Ever had that experience? I was like Elijah under the tree. Then of course you get into self pity. Nobody loves me.

Nobody is caring for me. And we begin to doubt 50% of the young people that we count. Every hour we're praying and writing letters.

Many of them are doubting for them personally. I wonder if there's some of you. Love of God is never really grasped the center of your person.

Hurt in your culture there will be damaged emotions. Experience an ongoing experience of the love of God can heal man. Can't do now.

This is amazing. Another lightning bolt. Or send a very powerful preacher for revival.

Drop a spiritual bomb on this character. Do you ever get upset with God's people? This is a real problem. God's people.

And when I see them sleeping and I see them discouraged and I see them sort of going along in their Christian life I just want to drop and shake them or drop a spiritual bomb but that's not always God's way. What does God do for Elijah? First of all he puts him asleep. Sleep.

Read verse 5. And as he lay and slept under the Jennifer tree you know some of our spiritual problems are not spiritual problems. They're physical problems. We need more rest.

What happened then? Whoa! An angel! Surely this was going to be a heavy experience. But the angel just gently touched him didn't punch him in the nose Let's not go around punching God's people in our nose. And he said unto him Arise and preach! Is that what it says in your Bible? What does it say in the Polish Bible? Arise and eat.

I know that's what some of you want to do right now. Rise up and go eat. But just wait a few more minutes.

Read the next verse. Yeah. I thank God for that verse.

I have a tendency to be extreme. Tendency to be a little aesthetic. And there was a time in my life many years ago food that's just fuel you just have a water.

Get back to work. And in our ministry we gave very poor food sometimes. God taught us about the psychological effect of food.

The great variety of food that God has created. So this minister had a physical and then he went back to sleep again. He came the second time and touched him and said arise and eat because the journey is too great.

I would love to talk to you about my theology of limitations. All the time in our work we get dedicated Christians trying to do too much. They're working long hours.

They're not getting enough time in their home. They're not getting enough time with their wife or with their husband. They're working working working their eyes and pretty soon they have the nervous breakdown.

The famous nervous breakdown or the depression like Elijah. So what word do we find right here as we make this study? This is another message on spiritual balance. We need the fire of God.

We need total commitment to Jesus Christ. We need to see God doing great. We need to know how to rest.

How to know our limitations. Factor in our lives. Many years ago God began to teach me this.

I would not be here if it wasn't for this. People used to describe me as George Fire instead of George Verwer. They'd say George Fire has come to me.

And in the newspapers they wrote funny articles about me. That I needed spiritual balance. I could play with my own tennis.

A miracle in spiritual balance. Perhaps later on you can read the rest of that chapter. Because down in verse 11 God tries to speak again.

There comes a great wind. God is not in the wind. There comes a great earthquake.

Verse 12 A great fire. God was not in the fire. Isn't this amazing? It says in verse 12 there came a still small voice.

A still small voice. A little wind. A small wind.

God spoke to a very small thing. And God's voice came through that wind. Verse 13 And it was so when Elijah heard it he wrapped his face and his mantle went out and stood in the entrance of the cave and behold there came a voice unto him and said what dost thou hear Elijah? And then God, verse 15 showed him what to do.

We all want the will of God in our lives. We've had some strong messages here each night. And I believe the fire of God has come down upon some people.

In a few days we will go from this place. Some of us may never return. But God will go with us.

And he will continue to speak to us. Not always in the great meetings. Great music.

Powerful preaching. But in our homes. In our offices.

In our factories. At times when we're discouraged and we're confused under the juniper tree not even wanting to live. God will speak to us there.

He will never leave us or forsake us. It may be in prison. It may be in the bed of a hospital.

It may be at the funeral of one that we love. God will be there. And he will speak.

And he will take care of us. And he will love us. Let us trust him.

Let us cast our burden upon him. And let us walk together by faith as his people. Whether it be in the midst of a great Holy Spirit blessing.

Or in a time of struggle and discouragement. Let us trust him. Keep all of our faith in him.

That we may know the divine factor and the human factor. Let us pray. Just have a few moments of silent prayer.

We can just pray our own prayer. Maybe you need the fire of God to burn in a greater way in your heart. Maybe you need to distill small wind and just to hear the voice of God in that.

God knows your specific situation. He knows that you are a weak, limited human being. He will never ask you to do something and not provide the grace to do it.

Would you by faith draw upon that grace right now? Simple prayer of confession and brokenness before God. Ask him to fill you afresh with his Holy Spirit. That fire, that love, that reality may burn in your heart, be it in the pulpit or be it in the kitchen.

Just pray your own prayer. O God, you know each one of us. You know our hearts.

You know our needs. We thank you, O God, that you can answer by fire in our lives. But you can also minister to us through little things the rest, the sleep, the food, the small voice in the midst of our weakness and limitations.

You pour out your love upon us. O God, we love you this morning. We yield our lives to you to do your will, to serve and worship you all of our lives on the mountaintop and in the valley, through the fire and through the storm.

We will follow you in simple faith through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Amen.

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