

Fire! More Fire!! Much Fire!!!

by Ian Paisley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of facing persecution and trials for righteousness' sake, and trusting in God's power and love to emerge stronger and more refined.

Duration: 32:31

Scripture: Isaiah 26:9, Isaiah 43:1-7, Isaiah 43:18-21, Malachi 3:1-6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:29

Topics: "Persevering Faith", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of walking through the fire and not being consumed by it. He warns against the temptations of sinful passion and the corruption in the world through lust. The preacher also highlights the need for perseverance in the Christian journey, as many start well but end disastrously. He references Isaiah 43:2, which assures believers that they will not be burned or consumed by the flames. The sermon also touches on the topic of persecution for righteousness' sake and the importance of the church maintaining its message without toning it down.

Transcript

Lift up the authorized version of the Holy Scriptures that you'll find in front of you. And turn over with me to the Old Testament, to the book of the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah's prophecy, chapter forty-three, and it's at page seven to nine of that Bible that you've taken out of the pew.

Page seven to nine, Isaiah chapter forty-three. And we're reading from verse one to verse seven, and then from verse eighteen to verse twenty-one. Taking your time from me, let's not murmur it, but read it out loudly and clearly.

But now saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Sheba for thee.

Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee. Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not, for I am with thee.

I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back. Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.

Every one that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory. I have formed him, yea, I have made him. And then verse 18, Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth. Shall ye not know it, I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field shall honor me, the dragons of the isles, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give strength to my people, my chosen.

This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise. Ending our reading at that verse 21, and God will stamp it with his approval. Fire, much fire, more fire.

Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 2, When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. The great earthquake in the Indian Ocean has brought to the whole world in a staggering manner, the uncertainty of this life, and the certainty of death. We are going down the valley, one by one, with our faces towards the setting of life's sun.

Down the valley where the mournful cypress grows, where the scream of death in silence onward flows. We are going down the valley, we are going down the valley, we are going down the valley, one by one. As someone has so well said, the daily mercies of living are not valued until they are lost.

And those blessed preservations of life are not esteemed until they are withdrawn. Going through the fiercest of fires is a presentation of the awful affliction that God's people will have in this uncertain world of ours. Light now, then darkness in a few moments of time.

Soft, beautiful sands now, then the drowning waters in a moment of time. Safety from fire now, then suddenly the raging inferno burning to a cinder. Peace now, then without warning, death.

The tranquility of quietness now, then the torment of the furnace in the twinkling of an eye. The fire represents the awful destruction, an overwhelming power of sudden life-ending trouble. What is more frightening than the flame? What is more destructive than the flaming tempest? And that's the days in which we have been living.

If you look at my text, you will find it highlights three things. It highlights, first of all, the dangerous pathway when thou walkest through the fire. Let's look at that first of all.

The children of man don't walk an easy road. The easy road is not for us in this world. The primrose pathway, as it is called, is foreign.

But humanity every day has an experience that is bitter. It is full of uncertainty. Life because of sin is uncertain.

But it is true of all men. That is especially true of the people of God. As long as there has been a church on earth, as long as there has been believers on earth, the fire has been kindled against them.

The pathway to heaven has always been beset with flames. The church started in the fire. The church of Jesus Christ walks in the fire.

The church of Jesus Christ is beset at all times with the fire. We all walk this dangerous flaming pathway. Abel was the first believer that walked this way.

He was murdered by his religious brother. Remember, Abel died a martyr to belief in the blood of Christ. Cain threw him, for Cain was a Unitarian and said, I will not have the blood.

Abel said, I have nothing else to offer God but the blood that He has commanded. And so he passed through the fire. Noah, the preacher of righteousness, walked the trail of fire when his own son committed a rape in that tent.

Think of it. Abraham knew the fire highway and suffered by the ungodly behavior of Lot, his brother's son whom he had taken and had been a father to him. Isaac, his son, the son of Abraham, his young feet, also walked the cinder path when he was continually mocked by his half-brother Ishmael.

And the battle between Isaac and Ishmael still rages in the Middle East. Jacob was born in the furnace. He suffered at the hand of Esau the apostate, a notable flamethrower.

David walked the same road. Saul hunted him into death row until David cried, There is but a step between me and death. Right through the rule of the judges and the reign of the kings of Israel, the church passed through the fire.

The burning furnace of persecution kept its heat. Daniel knew its flame and his colleagues literally knew what it was to be thrown into the burning, fiery furnace. The temper of the flame did not lessen, but it rather increased.

And what of the church at the day of Pentecost? Shortly after, Stephen is showered by stones to his awful death. James, a brother of John, is butchered by the sword of Herod. Paul is persecuted all his days and then is finally decapitated.

They were tempted. They were sawn asunder. They were burned.

They were hacked to death. They were boiled. They were tormented.

They were left to die in stark nakedness and hunger. The true church has never been persecuted by the false church of Rome, and ever it shall be, for that is what the book says. Jesus Christ said, the world hates you.

It hated me before it hated you. We are aliens in this earth. This is not our home.

The world hates the people of God. The world is vicious in its hatred of the people of God. And it is always when the church stands true to God that the world will hate it the most.

Mr. Spurgeon said, it has fared well with the church when the church has been persecuted and her pathway has been through the fire. Her feet have then been shod with iron and with brass. She ought not to tread on paths screwed with flowers.

That is not the proper place for Christ's church. Christ redeemed the world with agonies, and the church must reach the world by the example of her anguish. First of all, the blood of Christ, Spurgeon said, was shed meritoriously.

But after that, the blood of the church was shed testimonially to declare to the world that God's people were on the side of the crucified Savior. Passing through the fire that the church extends its influence. This is the way the church grows.

There is no loss in the army of Christ when our best preachers are persecuted and hounded by the world. There is no loss to the kingdom of Christ when our mightiest evangelists are put to death. They are not lost to the church.

Their blood is well shed and gloriously well spent. It is vying victory. It procures crowns for the blessed Son of God.

It is, after all, accomplishing higher results by dying than it could be by living. It is under the heaviest fire of artillery that loyal Christians, brave Christians, true Christians are discouraged, are encouraged, and encourage the church. When one hero falls from his ashes, other heroes arise.

The post of danger is the post of honor. Therefore, fresh aspirants will be found ready to lead the brigade of Christ in the battle against the enemy. Moreover, my friends, let the path of fire be always a path of terror.

It is also a path of progress. Melancholy as it is to mark the ruins of a terrible conflagration. While the dying embers smolder, there is plans to set back the edifice that has been burned.

And when it arises from the ashes, it is a bigger and better and a more glorious structure. No doubt the sufferings of the church of Jesus Christ in the future will bring forth a glory in the church that will prepare the church for that great day when the bride has adorned herself and made herself ready to be received to the marriage supper with her beloved. If you look secondly at my text, you will not only find in my text the dangerous pathway, but you will find the devouring flame.

We are in peril of this devouring flame. God teaches his people by terrible acts of chastening and discipline. When his judgments are on the earth, then his people learn righteousness.

Isaiah 26 verse 9. This is real fire that this text is talking about. It doth burn into the inmost souls and minds and hearts and beings of man and woman. This is not just poetical language, it is eternal truth.

Persecution for righteousness' sake is real fire. The martyrs knew that. They really burned.

There are many demons in Christ's church today. Demons forsook Paul because he loved the world. There are those that long that Christ's church should tone down its message and become a respectable institution.

Never, I say, the church must not tone down its message and be respectable. When a church is popular with the world, it ceases to be popular with God. When we are slandered as we are, does it really matter? When newspapers write lies about us, should we be disturbed? If I am right with my God, nothing matters.

What an old journalist with his cigarette in his mouth and stinking of liquor and his hand on a stub of an old pencil writes about me, does not affect me at all. We can bear that. We can endure that.

Take down a copy of Fox's book of martyrs. Read what the martyrs stood against in the savagery of the Pope's inquisition and you will know you suffer nothing. They counted not their lives dear unto themselves.

The path of sorrow and that path alone for the true church of Christ leads to the land where sorrow is unknown. This is the way we have to walk in it. Through tribulation we must enter the kingdom.

Why does God put us in the fire? Would you open your Bible at the last book of the Old Testament and you will get the answer. Malachi's prophecy, chapter 3, verses 1 to 6. We do well to mark this with a gold pen in our Bibles. This is a word for us, the third chapter of Malachi.

Behold I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in. Behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment. And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against the false wearers and against those that oppress the hireling and his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside this stranger from his right and fear not me.

Saith the Lord, for I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not. We had this filthy program corrupting people last night upon our television.

Eight thousand expletives from the lips of so-called the Lord Jesus Christ and Mary and Joseph. It makes me tremble to think of the wrath of God that will be poured out on such blasphemy. I never was as happy as I was last night when I stood on the steps of the BBC and let our protest singing, I'm not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend his cause.

And to him the honor of his word, the glory of his cross. Some of our singing was flat, but thank God the devil was flattened and the powers of darkness were flattened. As we stood outside the camp, laughed at no doubt, but praise God inside our hearts were aglow with the privilege to stand up for Jesus as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

This fire, please notice, is not to consume us, it is to conserve us, to make us better. Fire burns, none are safe, the palace and its royalty fall as does the hobble and its penniless. We must all walk through the fire, the youth that's caught up in the fires of sinful passion.

We must awaken and we must cry to these young people, Fire, fire, through Christ you can escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Multitudes are perishing around us. Temptation is taking an horrendous toll among the world today.

How many have put their hands to the plow and quickly they became a giver up before half the furrow was plowed, let alone the whole field that they were to plow. God's wife is not a solitary exception. Hundreds of thousands are like her.

They begin well, they end disastrously, lost souls in hell. Never look at disasters with complacency. These are real fires, they can torment and devour.

If you enter these fires, you will find they are real. Their forked tongue will drink up your blood and consume it entirely. You need a far stronger will than your own to face the fires of the temptations of this evil world.

Alas, you will perish eternally if you depend on your own wit and your own wisdom. And your own strength. Only Christ can deliver you from the flame.

Finally, would you look with me at the text again and you will get the double insurance. Those shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. Here is insurance for the outward man, thou shalt not be burned.

Here is insurance for the inward man, the flame shall not kindle upon you. You cannot burn if you are a child of God. You are like those three Hebrew children.

They would not bend, they would not break, and they could not burn. In fact, they tied them up and when they got into the furnace, they were free. And they walked amidst the flame.

You are incombustible. This flame cannot hurt you. This is the climax and it is preceded by the miracle that you will walk in the flame and you will not be burned.

Old Job spoke well, didn't he? When he said, there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down that it will sprout again. That the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old and the earth and the stalk thereof die in the ground.

Yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. Do you know this? The church can never lose anything. Listen to these words.

All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come. All are yours and ye are Christ's. And Christ the church can never lose anything.

And the church never loses one of its members. Even in the darkest day, every true born saint of God will make it to heaven. Not the one missing.

Not one. Even in the darkest days of the fiercest persecution of the church of Jesus Christ, the numbers of the church multiply. Hus, Wycliffe, then a hundred years came Hus.

And then a hundred years after Hus came Luther. A hundred years exactly between all their ministries. But what happened? The church multiplied.

Quakers, Methodists, Bible Christians, Covenanters, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists and many more. There's not even the smell of fire among them. As they fought the good fight, finished the course and kept the theist.

The people of God cannot be put into reverse. They cannot fall and be lost. The word of God endures forever.

And so do the people of God. Whosoever believes in Christ hath everlasting life. And shall not perish but is passed from death unto life.

I lifted an old hymn book that I read continually. And they have these lines in it. The world can neither give nor take.

Nor can they comprehend the peace of God which Christ has made. The peace that knows no end. The burning bush was not consumed while God remained there.

The three when Jesus made the fourth found fire as soft as air. God's furnace doth and Zion's stand. But Zion's God sits by as the refiner views the gold with an observant eye.

His thoughts are high, His love is wise. His wounds a cure intend. And though He does not always smile, He loves His people to the end.

His love is constant as the sun, though clouds come off between. And could our faith but pierce those clouds that might be always seen. Yes, I shall ever, ever sing.

And thou forever shine. I have Thine own dear pledge for this. Lord, Thou art ever mine.

And in the safety of the kneel-piercing hand, we can go forward. For no man can pluck us out of the Saviour's hand. Let us bow our heads.

Lord, we thank Thee for Thy good and gracious work. And we pray that You'll strengthen us to do battle with the forces of hell. To stand fast in the hottest fire.

And to be this good soldier of Jesus Christ that Thou dost want us to be. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And everybody say, Amen.

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