

The Fire

by James Plank

The sermon emphasizes the need for the church to get on fire with the Holy Ghost, be real, care about this, and love people again.

Duration: 58:41

Scripture: Acts 2:38-46

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving and caring for people, regardless of their appearance or past mistakes. He highlights the urgency of reaching out to those who are on their way to hell, emphasizing that someone in the community may have just dropped into hell while they were sitting in the church. The preacher also criticizes the focus on policies and manuals in churches, stating that what is truly needed are live warm bodies. He calls for a return to old-fashioned values and courtesy, and emphasizes the need for believers to care about their movement, doctrines, and mission fields. The sermon concludes with a tribute to a Sunday school teacher who faithfully attended church services with a tear-stained face, and a lamentation over the lack of spiritual fire in the present hour.

Transcript

Good evening, good to have you here, good to have numbers of ministers that are friends of mine and the ones that I don't know I count you as a friend as soon as I get to know you. What an honor to have Brother States here at the camp. Just in the month of June the privilege of preaching at the Pilgrim Camp and Brother and Sister States were in the congregation and now since then Sister States has gone to a much better camp meeting in the sky and she's not staying in a little as nice as this campground is, as nice as these little cabins are, she's in a much better place tonight but our sympathy to Brother States and so good to have him here and then all of you delight to be here with you and to sense the presence of the Lord.

You know all the big wheels in our movement are trying to figure out what in the world to do about churches going out of business and church people fussing and splitting and whether we are dead or alive and whether we are a movement or not. I was humored at Hope Sound Camp this year when Brother Pierpoint had us all stand to sing I don't care what church you belong to and he said the way things are going we'll have to sing I don't care what split you belong to.

Well tonight I'm not a big wheel I feel most often like a spare tire in the trunk but I am going to try to be a little spark plug tonight I'm preaching to the church about the church it's not much of a sermon just a few homespun thoughts that God laid on my heart at the beginning of the summer to begin this part of the service I wish to read about the church in Acts chapter 2 Acts, the book of Acts is the guideline and standard for our churches today in talking about the church I know you will be surprised that I'm not turning to Rick Warren or Bill Hybels the guideline and standard shall forever be the written word of God Acts chapter 2 we're going to read a good portion of this story when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place and suddenly there

came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire and it sat upon each of them they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance and there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews devout men out of every nation under heaven and when this was noise abroad the multitude came together and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language they were all amazed and marveled saying one to another behold are not all these which speak Galileans now here we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born Parthians and Medes, Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea Cappadocia and Pontus in Asia, Perga

and Pamphylia in Egypt in the parts of Libya and Cyrene and strangers of Rome Jews and proselytes Cretes and Arabians we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God they were all amazed and were in doubt saying one to another what meaneth this others mocking said these men are full of new wine but Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice and said unto them ye men of Judea and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem be this known unto you and hearken to my words for these are not drunken as you suppose saying it is but the third hour of the day but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel and it shall come to pass in the last day saith God I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see

visions your old men shall dream dreams and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy now to verse 38 then Peter said unto them repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost for the promises unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call and with many other words did he testify and exhort saying save yourselves from this untoward generation then they that gladly received his word were baptized in the same day they were added unto them about 3,000 souls and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers and fear came

upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles and all that believed were together and had all things common and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need and they continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart praising God and having favor with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved shall we stand together those who are able for a word of prayer.

Brother Mark Cravens would you pray for us tonight please? Amen. Now before you sit down shake hands with somebody that does not attend your same church and be friendly about it. That looks good then you may sit down.

Amen that looks good I'm just checking to make sure everybody is shaking hands with somebody before I preach this message. Well let me tell you first of all we're going to have to get on fire in verse number two and says filled with the they were filled with the Holy Ghost in verse four verse 13 they thought they were drunk. Now ladies and gentlemen I'm not interested in wildfire or show or putting on an act but for years the holiness people have the fire.

You walked in the church and you could you could hear the fire and feel the fire from the basement below and the fire wasn't from the church kitchen because we didn't have church kitchens. The moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas were down there before the evening service praying the fire down. I'm not talking about whispered prayers I'm talking about groans and cries and shouts and you started the service and you knew there was some fire.

I know a bit about what I'm talking about as I was in my upper teen years they couldn't find anybody who wanted to teach the teen Sunday school class except a silver-haired older lady who said she was willing to do it and she stood before our teenage class some of those kids in deep rebellion and they gave her a hard time but she stood before that class each and every Sunday with the tears streaming down her face and she had prayed about the lesson and carried a burden for those kids and every Sunday night it was the same ritual just before service was to begin you could hear it as soon as you came in the church you could hear them downstairs praying and just before service began up the steps and down the middle aisle to the right up right up here on the second row that's where that's

where sister Webb would come and there'd be other ladies that would follow her and she would come with tears running down her face ready to begin the Sunday evening service and if you want to know why this evangelist is preaching on this night of Camargo camp is because of a Sunday school teacher who would come with a tear-stained face to most every service in that little church I had the privilege to preach at her funeral just a few months ago and my subject was the lady with the tear-stained face there wasn't much dead space or downtime in our services it was amen and praise the Lord and a testimony here and a shout of victory over there you didn't know what was going to happen next and what was going to break out on any given service there may have well have been some wildfire but

there sure wasn't as much wildfire as we have deadness in this hour there may have been some some things may have got out of hand but you couldn't deny the fact that the holiness people were marked by the fire and those of you who have seen the fire cannot settle for anything less now I'm not relax and breathe real deep because I'm not wanting to be critical tonight and I'm not hounding you this is a wonderful group of people and and I have no desire to browbeat you tonight I'm just saying that in this day we're going to have to get that fire back I don't want to leave the team and being critical of all the new things that are happening in our church world all of the praise teams and praise choruses but I can tell you what my problem is I do not want to leave the team at being critical

I've I've tried new things I'm not against new things but I can tell you what my problem is there's lots of innovation in worship today and I'm I'm not I'm not a person who wants to put a finger on people and and I'm not the I don't want to be the negative one but I can tell you what my problem is I have seen a degree of the fire my problem is is I've been to enough Holy Ghost fires that all the other substitutes that we are creating in the modern church world seems mighty cheap to me one of the things that happened in my young life was traveling in a Bible College quartet for four and a half years I needed some way to pay my school bill and they were hard up back in those days to find anybody and they stuck me in there and I remember traveling all across our movement one of the things

that was so precious is when you got into one of those services where the people came in tune with heaven and God would come and I remember going to a particular town and we pulled in there for breakfast or lunch to a restaurant and there was someone leaving the camp and they happened to be there and they said you know you may not even get to sing God is all over that place there's nothing happening except Alder service after Alder service and people making restitution and people walking in the light and people minding God and backsliders getting saved and young people getting saved I remember hearing Marshall Smart preach and he's the only evangelist that I remember in my lifetime preaching and and people running to the altar at the end of his messages people sobbing and crying under

conviction my problem is is I've seen a degree of the fire I remember an early morning camp prayer meeting the front of that tabernacle was full of people on fire praying as if there was no tomorrow and I an unsaved hypocritical rebellious worldly young man knelt off to the side and in that atmosphere of Holy Ghost fire I told God that if he would keep the conviction on me and if he would break my proud stubborn will I wanted what these people had more than anything else in the world my problem is that I've seen the fire some of our kids are growing up without any fire what girl is going to wear her hair long and wear dresses to the mall and have sleeves in the heat of August summer just because her church says she should and what boy is going to skip the movies and boy cop the football

stadium and steer clear of the rock music and be the only kid in town wearing long pants over summer break just because mom and dad believe it that way no girls going to do that and no boys going to do that but you let them see the fire you let them see the genuine presence of God on the scene and you let the glory fall and you let God come and you let that kid get under old-fashioned conviction and really pray through I want to tell you you'd be surprised you'd be surprised at how our kids would come along if they'd see the fire people are going to change their lives just because we have a certain name over our church door people are not going to change their lives to sit in a sour dull boring service weekend and week out but you let them see the fire I believe it with all of my heart

that's why I'm preaching I thought about singing a song tonight for you till I saw all these dignitaries and it's kind of has me have cold feet but I might sing it anyway when first I heard of some people who claimed that old-time religion was real I said I'll go down take a look at the crowd they're just weak-minded I feel I walked up the steps and I looked in the door the devil said don't you go in I said it won't hurt me to just step inside and sit as far back as I can but something got a hold of me something got a hold of me I went there to fight but I'll tell you that night God certainly got a hold of me about that time someone started to shout I said it's emotion that's all when they get down to pray I'll just get up and leave for I don't want to be seen here at all the people then

started to testify they said that they knew they were saved they raised up their hands praise the Lord out loud and I felt something hit me I say and something got a hold of me yes something got a hold of me I went there to fight but praise God that night God certainly got a hold of me yes something got a hold of me yes something got a hold of me I went there to fight but I'll tell you that night God certainly got a hold of me well I just believe we're gonna have to get the fire back not for the fire's sake we're gonna have to have a reality in our heart that causes us to pray and rejoice and worship as if we are a living people worshipping a living Christ we tell you secondly we're gonna have to be real verse 1 it said we're in one accord in one place verse 42 the word steadfastly there's

too many fakes running around the church too many people who don't have the real goods too many artificial posies in the posy patch your kids know how you talk about the pastor your kids know how you fight the school principal and the teachers your kids know your attitudes around the house and your temper your kids see how you drive a hard bargain and how you treat the waitress at the restaurant is everybody okay tonight don't bother with the old-fashioned way stuff if our old-fashioned way doesn't also mean old-fashioned courtesy old-fashioned honesty old-fashioned neighborly values old-fashioned common horse sense we're gonna have to be real number three we're gonna have to care about this versus 44 to 45 they sold their possessions and had all things common I feel like getting up on my

soapbox and asking does anybody care about our movement anymore our doctrines our distinctives our people aren't churches our mission fields our Bible colleges this isn't what feels good this isn't if it's all going my personal way this isn't about my little spoiled action or reaction this isn't what feels this isn't what's convenient for me this is about life or death for what we believe this is about life or death for God's kingdom on earth and we're going to have to start caring about this there's so many different things that I could mention and none of them are popular but I believe them from the bottom of my heart we're going to have to believe we're going to have to give God a chance with our children there's been a lot of discussion about enrollments that drop in Bible colleges

and how many Bible colleges we have I'm not in favor of closing any of our Bible colleges I travel the country enough to know that there are young people in all of our camp meetings young people in our churches our youth camps are full to the brim the problem is not that there's not enough young people for all of our Bible colleges the problem is is that we're not sending our kids to Bible college I want every parent in this room to honestly think about it I want you to think about the fact that God may want your children for his specific work I know that I know that God needs godly layman God God needs godly Sunday school teachers but but 65 children were in children's services here just the other day don't you think that a good many of those kids might be called to pulpits called to

mission fields there's some of our parents that are not even thinking in the direction of their children being in full-time Christian work we need to start caring about this we need to start caring about this enough to give somebody needs to give a million bucks to God's Bible school somebody needs to give a million bucks to to Hope Sound and Union Bible College and Pennview I'm kind of saddened about the number of our people who are dying and they've not given any of their money to the things that have mattered the most to them in their life kind of concerned about the fact that holiness people are dying and they haven't made preparation to be sure and give something to their local church that has meant so much to them across the years and to that camp meeting where they found God and to

those Bible colleges and those mission fields we've got to start caring about this again somebody needs to give again and care again and weep tears again and work again hunting isn't really what matters and home interiors isn't really what matters and horse racing and tractor pulling isn't what matters what matters is the kingdom what matters is you and the kingdom somebody has got to care again number four we're gonna have to love people again Pentecost was all about getting the message out it was speaking in languages it was in verse 41 3,000 souls added adding daily you know what we need in most of our churches live warm bodies we're more concerned about our policies and manuals than we are people we need to love people again who cares what they look like who cares how many times

they've been married who cares their people on their way to hell whom God loves and someone just dropped into hell in this community while we sit here tonight and I check the news every day back home

and someone in my town was killed in an accident yesterday another just dropped into hell what else can we what else can we do here we need to build a fence or do something new or write a new chapter in this thing we need people in our churches and we don't have to change a thing God isn't asking us God doesn't want us to change what we believe we don't have to change a thing nobody ever nobody knew ever asked me to change what we believe nobody knew asked us to change our rules keep preaching the truth keep our platforms clear and love people you don't have to change your contract with God

none to love people you're more concerned about lining them up than getting the men leave the lining up with God teach some good principles instead of is that knocking them over the head and love them you teach God's Word though they'll either get in or they'll get out and you will lose some and you will weep over some but you'll get some others and you'll rescue one here and you'll you'll you'll get one there and you'll make a difference for this home and that family not talking about compromise I'm talking about old-fashioned caring about people loving people baking cakes inviting for Sunday dinner need a helping hand card of appreciation free babysitting ride to church stuff you'd be surprised how many people in churches find it inconvenient to give a ride to church to anybody else had

a pastor friend I was talking to sometime ago and he had he had somebody that desperately need to be picked up for church so he asked one of his board members who goes right by their each and every Lord's Day if they could simply stop and pick them up and the board members said well to be honest you know we live such busy lives and that's the only quiet time that my wife and I have and we just kind of like to keep that quiet time to church we don't care that's what there's nothing wrong with nice cars I like nice cars but if your car is too nice to pick up some snotty nose kid for church your car is too nice I like nice homes I have a nice house but if your house is too nice to invite that young family over for Sunday dinner your home is too nice and your knickknacks are too valuable I'm

scared about it but I think part of the problem is that too many of us just don't care we have an attitude against the poor we have an attitude against the sinful we have an attitude against the criminal we have an attitude against the world and we need to pause on Friday night of camp meeting and recognize that but for the grace of God there am I we make fun of the two guys who live together the house over we make fun of the pierced ears and the dyed hair and the big tattoos that's what we do we make fun while they stumble into hell we need to love again we will love again when we meet the woman at the well and help the bleeding by the wayside and offer a hand to the blind silver and gold have I none but in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk we're gonna have to love again

number 5 we've got to stay on message our message is is found in verse 38 and 39 of the scripture that we read tonight Peter said repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost our message is holiness under the Lord be filled with the spirit blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God the way to heaven is the holy way and we must keep calling people to full salvation we must keep calling people to a pure heart holiness is our theme it's what sets us apart from every other church on the block and it is truly the Bible way John Wesley did not invent it no denomination has a copyright on it it's a message of hope it's a message of victory he breaks the power of canceled sin he sets the

captive free his blood can make the foulest clean his blood avails for me we believe that God requires a holy heart and we believe that what God requires he does provide it's the heartbeat of God the desire of God and if we will stay on message God will bless his people again God isn't gonna waste blessing and waste time and talent on a people who have other agendas politics and power and position and popularity

even things that sound spiritual I get the feeling that some of our people think that worldliness is the biggest issue facing the church but it's not staying on message is the biggest issue facing our church I know how you feel I feel that way sometimes I don't know how to say this tonight but there are a thousand little things that come up in this day and I don't know what to do

about there are always those hot-button issues that seem to captivate the holiness people I was a teenager when the conference debate lasted until after midnight over videos in more recent years conferences have wrangled over internet but since cell phones and computers and internet and videos are all merging we can't even figure out what to preach against now I believe good and noble people were at times fighting those wars people who see the drift and want to stop it and quite frankly I'm with you in the battle I'm with you in the battle against the world so sick of our people living just just enough in the door that they can look halfway holiness when they're in church but when you see him at the mall or you see him out and about it just it's a laughingstock to the world the world by

and large will respect our people when they are clean and decent and modest and careful but when we are half in half out it's a lot laughingstock to the world in our area we are blessed with numbers of Mennonite brothers and sisters and their precious brethren and Mennonite people and I have I have some of them in my church their churches are changing so swiftly and some of them have come into my church and to other churches throughout Pennsylvania and they they feel strongly about the covering and I wouldn't take that off for anything but in our area one of the things that's been so obvious is that they'll hang on to that covering but everything else seems to go and here they are with it with a with a prayer covering which I respect but then but then you know the the sleeves are

extremely short and the neckline is low and the slit skirts and everything about them is is immodest and they have that little covering you want to know our people are looking the same way our people are appearing the same way to the world just a few little things that make us look different and everything else is suggestive and marked and stamped by this world I'm with you in the fight against the drift and worldliness but I can tell you one thing we're not going to fight that battle by just preaching a bunch of sermons and by writing a bunch of new rules the only thing that's going to win that war is staying on message the message that Jesus saves from committed sins and cleans out the heart of inbred sin and sanctifies holy until all is on the altar surrendered and I promise you that

if we'll stay on message and people will get sanctified it will cure worldliness and cure imbalance among us and cure legalism and make us soul winners and end stupid divisions if we will stay on message there ought to be more sermons calling people to a decision on entire sanctification there ought to be series preached in our churches on calling people to a pure heart there ought to be more books written in modern English there ought to be fresh books from our ranks written on entire sanctification I appreciate Brinkle I appreciate all the old books I certainly do but there ought to be some things that are fresh for our young people right from 2007 that there is a work of grace that will cure you from falling in and out of sin there ought to be Bible studies and Sunday school lessons on

the subject of maintaining a holy heart people we need to stay on message it is not this generation that took holiness under the Lord off the wall it is not this generation that took holiness out of the hymnals are you my friends tonight or you've already turned me off is everybody okay because I'm going to step on one more sacred cow before I hurry along my favorite hymnal I don't think you have it here my favorite hymnal is the little red praise and worship hymnal brother Eisenhart that's that's what I've known all of my life and there's just nostalgia hooked up to it so as long as I pastor I'll probably always have the praise and worship

hymnal that little red Nazarene hymnal in the hymn book but then in the hymnal rack but then I got to thinking about that hymnal and looking for that

hymnal looking at that hymnal and I'm not trying to knock it tonight but I have to tell you that when you look at what that hymnal replaced it's no wonder we've lost the emphasis on the second work of grace that hymnal replaced hymnals in in our churches that hymnal replaced hymnals that had a whole section on the Holy Spirit a whole section on entire sanctification a whole section on holiness a whole section on purity and we threw away all those sections and all of my growing up years we had this nice hymn knowing it was good but most of them are gospel songs and just a loss of emphasis on the second definite work of grace my generation didn't do that I'm here to tell you that we need to start preaching about holiness again we need to start singing about holiness again we need to start we

need to put holiness on the Lord back up on our walls and be holy back up on our walls and we need to do it because it is written on our hearts anybody I've ever met who got entirely sanctified turned out to be an old-fashioned saint old young middle-aged we're gonna have to stay on message number six we're gonna have to take our turn you read in verse 17 it shall come to pass in the last days say of God I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams I'm thankful for every man and every woman of the past this is 2007 you are alive now I am alive now God knows all about it it's our turn not many are more conscious and appreciative of heritage than I as an American I love

history love our heritage understand a bit of the price paid so that I could be free someone from my family with a plank name has served in most every war in this nation since the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War my uncle was killed in Vietnam in January 1970 I was born in June and given his name the Vietnam Wall in Washington means something to our family when we visit my brother is scheduled to leave for Afghanistan in a few months my grandfather was one of the boys a point to hawk on D-Day in World War II and I stood with my grandfather on the beaches of Normandy just a couple of years ago looking across the English Channel where he is a young man crossed with many other young Americans to rescue a continent from Hitler I stood with my grandfather off Omaha Beach at the

cemetery where little white crosses mark the graves of other young men who did not make it up the cliffs that D-Day I think I understand heritage and I don't take too well to the burning of our flag and the desecration of our Pledge of Allegiance and the defaming of our American soldier boys especially from men and a woman who are running for president the United States I think I understand a little bit of our Christian heritage when I read of the Apostle Paul and Preacher Peter I read of holy men when I read of Martin Luther and John Wesley I read of holy men when I read of Francis Asbury and the circuit riders in this nation I read of holy men when I read of H Rob French RG Flexin and TM Anderson I read of holy men our heritage is full to the brim of men and women who were careful

conscientious Saints this is the 92nd Camargo camp those men and women built campgrounds like these and Bible colleges and mission fields and empires of holiness around the globe and I don't take too well to the destruction of that heritage in the name of progress and power we search the history books to see if Brzee's wife may have had a wedding ring and we search to see if some old Methodist might have smoked a pipe to see if we can bring them down to the level we have stooped to reminds me of ancient history now when Bill Clinton desecrated the Oval Office you remember those horrible days when he desecrated the Oval Office and then the liberal left news media in this nation began an onslaught over those weeks months and years to endeavor to write books about all of the other presidents

and how terrible they were in an effort to make Bill Clinton look normal I mean Abraham Lincoln supposedly cheated on his wife and Thomas Jefferson and all of the great names of history we began to see books and news articles trying to bring them down to Clinton's level I want you to know tonight I take this way by choice because I believe it is the right way laying every other book aside laying all prejudice aside laying my upbringing aside with all my heart I believe the holy way to be the right way I can go no other way and I must urge you to go that way one of the great ships of holiness I toured their world headquarters sometime ago my heart was stirred by the holiness under the Lord's sign on the large building but my heart was wrenched as a woman Episcopal priest gave us the tour

of that holiness headquarters in her pantsuit and she told us a little group of holiness preachers about the early meetings that marked the founding of that great holiness denomination and showed us a painting of the Saints shouting and the glory falling and she this Episcopal priest explaining to us with her jewel bedecked finger pointing at the likeness of holy men and holy women who knew what it was to pray heaven down I listened as she told me about Uncle Buddy Robinson we then visited a politically correct exhibit of women preachers it was purposely designed to be politically correct because that particular denomination had had a large group of women preachers and so they were highlighting that for this day of liberal feminist agenda but those old fashioned holiness women portrayed

in that particular exhibit those old yellowed photographs those plain old-fashioned holiness ladies with their hair neatly done knew nothing of Hillary Clinton or Nancy Pelosi they had no feminist agenda this Episcopal woman was pointing at their photographs and paintings and their artifacts but I knew who those women were they were old fashioned holiness ladies who given a life of singleness in most cases refused to sit around and pout that God had somehow left them out of his plan they were women who learned to start little missions and teamed up to work among the Native Americans and start homes for unwed mothers and evangelize from one end of this continent to the other and literally around the world I think I understand heritage it was a little Wesleyan Methodist church where my

grandfather on my mother's side was saved the only one in his family a Christian I drove by the church a few months ago it's an antique store now the old China and primitive furniture in that store relics much like the prayers and shouts that used to be heard there just the other week I drove to Jemison Valley I passed the spot where my father was saved the first in his family converted a little holiness home mission church planted in his community and a couple young people started to get saved and among them was my father then from there I went to Bible College where Hobe Sound was the turning point or under S.D.

Heron and Brother French and so many unnamed others my heritage the little church at Jemison Valley is gone and a new building has replaced it the largest part of the building is a gymnasium and the glory is long gone the fire is disappeared and you know something tonight everyone here has some story of days gone by and you've been around the block of life with its bumps and bruises we love the past and we try to forget struggles and we glory in the triumphs and we write our memoirs and say it can never be quite the same and if we're not careful I can preach a sermon like I'm preaching tonight and we can tell our young people in the way that we preach or in the way that we testify even in the way that we pray that things have changed so much that God can't work the same and people can never measure up I love heritage but it's our turn it's our turn for missions and it's our turn for Bible College and it's our turn for denominations and associations and it's our turn for IHC and it's our turn for our local churches in the months following September 11, 2001 I made several trips to New York City just to see the spot where all those people lost their lives just to be there just to remember one of the stories that has my attention was that of St.

Paul's Chapel you couldn't miss St. Paul's it was built in 1766 before the United States was born in modern times skyscrapers were built around St. Paul's hiding its little steeple and brick architecture below the tall and stately towers St. Paul's long ago became a historic place to visit St. Paul's was to visit Washington's pew where George Washington worshipped on his inauguration day and attended services at St. Paul's during the two years that New York City was the country's capital above his pew is an 18th century oil painting of the great seal of the United States adopted in 1782 directly across the chapel is the governor's pew which George Clinton the first governor of the state of New York used when he visited St.

Paul's among other notable historical figures who worshipped at St. Paul's across the years were Prince William later King William the fourth of England Lord Cornwallis who is most famous in this country for surrendering at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 Lord Howe who commanded the British forces in New York these men all worshipped there presidents Grover Cleveland Benjamin Harrison on one side of the chapel's exterior is an oak statue of St. Paul carved in the American primitive style below the east window is the monument to General Richard Montgomery who died at the Battle of Quebec during the American Revolutionary War St.

Paul's has been a historic spot for many years on September 11th 2001 our nation was attacked by terrorists they smashed planes into tower one and then tower two of the World Trade Center with property directly bordering little St. Paul's that day not one window was broken in St. Paul's the building was completely intact as the towers fell grown men raced for safety and they raced into the little church and found safety on its pews one man recounted his panic run briefcase in hand to the safety of St.

Paul's and as he trembled in fear at the sounds on the outside he suddenly remembered that this was the church his mother had brought him to as a child and he was ashamed to remember that he a grown man had not been here since St. Paul's of Trinity Church quickly had a new purpose George Washington's pew normally cordoned off from public use was the place where weary firefighters would sit and take off their boots and rest St. Paul's became a literal sanctuary the rest and refuge center for the workers and for eight months the rescue crews stopped at St.

Paul's for refreshment and rest and doctors tended to the wounds and musicians softly played instruments and firefighters and policemen stretched out on historical benches and ministers prayed and counseled the grief stricken and on the old cemetery fence people plastered posters in memory of those who had fallen a church that thought its claim to fame an important mission was when George Washington sat on its pew in 1789 was given new and greater reason for existence by a fresh crisis in 2001 people of the whole and heritage is important our past is precious history is to be cherished but for each of us in this tabernacle tonight it's our turn the crisis of this modern world calls for a fresh focus a renewed determination and undying effort that the lost and weary may find rest and refuge within our walls the little church where you labor may appear to have served its best purpose the best days are always talked about when you discuss your heritage and your anniversary sending and you read of great days that once were could we be a committee of one to not settle for history alone but to light the light and to help it to shine brighter because this is our day and it is our turn shall we stand together please

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23708.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-plank/the-fire/>

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