

Is Not Your Word a Fire?

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon calls for a return to preaching God's word with fire and authenticity to combat spiritual apathy and false teachings in the church.

Duration: 45:30

Scripture: Jeremiah 20:9, Jeremiah 23:29, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 3:11, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for fire in preaching and ministry, highlighting the importance of God's anointing and power to bring transformation. It addresses the longing for genuine spiritual fire, not emotionalism, to ignite hearts, purify lives, and lead to true revival. The speaker urges pastors and ministers to seek God's fire in their preaching, emphasizing the impact of a word anointed by the Holy Spirit to penetrate hearts and bring about lasting change.

Transcript

Good afternoon, everyone. Greetings from New York City, and Pastor Jonathan Falwell was such a blessing to us in that meeting, that visit he referred to, and I really count it an honor that you would have me here today to try to be an encouragement. I was listening carefully to Dr. Kanner's remarks, and I'd like to follow up on those from a slightly different aspect.

Those of us who are called into the ministry, there are two main things we have to think about, aren't there? Number one is, are we called? Without a calling, the ministry is probably the most lonely, depressing occupation you can think of, because we can't do it, as he mentioned, in ourselves. We have to be responding to a call from the Lord, and thank God for that call. How many are happy today that God put you in the ministry? Lift up your hand.

Can we put our hands together and just thank God that we're in the ministry of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ? But it's obvious that it's more than just a calling. You could be in the right place, have the calling of God on your life, but if you're not doing it the right way, it's like when you play basketball, you've got to not only be in the right place at the right time, you've got to be doing it effectively and efficiently. And that's what I want to talk about.

I want to talk about the missing element in so much of our ministry in our churches, which then leads to frustration, because we're not seeing the fruit that we should see, that we want to see, that God would be

glorified through. And then what we do is we wonder, where did I go wrong, what did I do? And I'd like to also point this out without being controversial, is what happens is that people then, when they're frustrated and they don't see folks finding Christ as their savior, they don't see their church exemplifying the kind of things that we see in the New Testament church, they then start going down some very, to me, frustrating side roads. They, instead of digging in the Bible and instead of seeking the Lord, they try to find new paradigms that they can follow.

Well, what I'm doing doesn't work, it's not working the way I want, I feel frustrated, so where are things happening? Where are there a lot of people going to church? Let me copy that guy, and then they tried that for a couple of years, nah, that didn't work out either. So then I'm gonna try this new thing, and that's, from my observation, traveling around the country and around the world, even this year, I've been a lot of places overseas and around the country, talking to pastors, who just like, what in the world do I do next? What do I do? Well, I'd like to point you to some verses here that I think can help us. If you'd like to follow with me in Jeremiah, we're gonna go to Jeremiah, and we're gonna read the 23rd chapter of Jeremiah, from the 23rd chapter.

Let's look at verse 15. Therefore, this is what, Jeremiah 23, verse 15, therefore, this is what the Lord Almighty says concerning the prophets. I will make them eat bitter food and drink poison water because from the prophets of Jerusalem, ungodliness has spread throughout the land.

This is what the Lord Almighty says. Do not listen to what the prophets or the preachers are prophesying to you. They fill you with false hopes.

They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise me, the Lord says, you will have peace. And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts, they say, no harm will come to you.

But which of them has stood in the counsel of the Lord to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? Verse 25, same chapter. I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, I had a dream.

I had a dream. How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. Now, let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream.

Now listen carefully here. Let the prophet who has a dream, claims to have a dream, tell his dream. But let the one who has my word speak it faithfully, for what has straw to do with grain, declares the Lord, is not my word like a fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces.

You know, I try to always be reading through. It's a good habit, isn't it, for all of us to avoid reading the Bible just to find sermon material, which is a terrible way to read the Bible, and not honoring to God and not good for our souls. I try to be reading through an Old Testament book and through a New Testament book at the same time, beside what other places and things I'm reading that drive me to the Bible.

So I've been studying for the last few weeks the book of Jeremiah. And my goodness, do I have a new appreciation of what a prophet was and what Jeremiah did for God. How'd you like to be called in the ministry and have God tell you, now I'm gonna put my word in your mouth, and you be faithful over

decades.

You be faithful to speak my word. And by the way, Jeremiah, before you begin, no one will listen to you. Not a soul, hardly, will listen to you.

But that's okay, you be faithful. And boy, you read the book of Jeremiah, it's like the perils of Pauline. He's everywhere, he's in jail, he's hated, he's despised.

There's plots to kill him. He's thrown in an empty cistern, but he's faithful to God. He has his struggles.

He talks to God sometimes. What have you done? Have you deceived me? I don't know what to do next. But one of the heartbreaking things in Jeremiah's life was the false prophets.

Let's be honest about this. In Jeremiah's day, the false prophets had the biggest crowds. The true prophet could hardly get folks together.

In Jeremiah's day, the thing that was so heavy on his heart was the false prophets told the people what they wanted to hear, and the people naturally flocked. And when he would start to prophesy the true word of the Lord, the people said, would you get this guy to shut up? Could somebody take care of this guy? We don't wanna hear this anymore. And they would sometimes run to the king and say, can't you eliminate this guy? He's telling us stuff we don't wanna hear.

But it just so happened that it was the true word of the Lord. So in all of his trials and of all of his, you know, he's called the weeping prophet because he saw what was gonna happen to the southern kingdom. He saw it coming as sure as the night follows day, but the people were blind.

And part of the blindness came from listening to these false prophets. Now these false prophets, notice, didn't come saying, I'm a false prophet, worship five gods. No, they didn't.

They spoke about God. They reminded the people what God had done, taking them out of Egypt. False prophets and false preaching is much more subtle than like some strange cult where things are really just crazy from the get-go.

Now these prophets mentioned Jehovah. They talked about God. They mentioned what he'd done in the past, but they weren't lined up with what God was saying to his people at that moment.

Can I just say this? I think the greatest challenge of pastoring a church is to find out what is the letter Jesus has written to your church. We know from the book of Revelation that Jesus wrote seven letters to seven churches. You cannot take those letters and switch them around.

They won't fit. Laodicea was different than Ephesus. Thyatira was different than Pergamum, but Jesus looked at every church like he looks at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, looks at Thomas Road, he looks at your church, and he sees with eyes of fire, and he knows where we're strong, and he knows where we're weak, and he has an analysis like when you go to a doctor.

He knows what we need, and I would say to all of us today, if we wanna be more effective, we gotta get along with God as the messenger of the church, as the pastor of your church. God, where are we strong? Where are we weak? What are you saying to my church now? Yes, always systematic Bible teaching. Yes, always preaching the gospel, but what is structurally wrong in your church? Like one church, you have a woman named Jezebel who teaches these terrible things.

To another church, you lost your first love. To another church, it's not that you don't come to the building, but you're neither hot nor cold, but you're lukewarm, and even though I love you, I have to vomit you out of my mouth. What's the word? I constantly try to go to God and say, God, where is the Brooklyn Tabernacle recipient of your grace? Where are we doing okay? And God, where are we failing you? So that lead me what to preach on, and we're how to lead the people into prayer, but we wanna be stronger.

How many are with me? Say amen. Now, only God can tell you that. You can't get that at any conference, including this one.

Only God alone with you can show you the temperature of your church. What is the temperature of your church? I don't care what your peers say. I don't care what your denomination says.

That's totally irrelevant. At the end of the day, we're all gonna appear at the judgment seat of Christ, and give an account of the quality of the work Carol and I have done with the other leadership. Not the quantity.

Not how many hours we put in. The quality of the work. Well, the quality based on what? Based on the word of God.

So now, the Lord is speaking through Jeremiah, and he says to these false prophets, these prophets of Jerusalem, who by the way, and I would venture to say that this is true right now in America. A lot of the ungodliness is starting with the preachers. Just like the prophets then spread ungodliness.

It's not the secular humanists and the evil folks. They're supposed to be evil. It says that in the book.

But when the salt is not salt, and the light is not light, then all hell is gonna break loose. Because there's no standard raised up against what evil folks are supposed to be doing. You don't ever see Jesus, you know, lamenting to the people, what are they doing in Rome? Nero says he's God, and he's a degenerate.

Do you never see any hand wringing? Any place in the New Testament, what's going on in the Roman Empire? And those people claim to be God. Some of them were transsexuals, and the Bible never indicates any lamenting, but Jesus is walking among the church, the seven golden lampstands, because that's his business. God'll judge those outside the church.

Our business is just let the church be the church. Come on, do I get a witness here? If we're doing what we're supposed to be doing, we're not gonna turn our towns upside down? Brooklyn won't be changed if all the churches in Brooklyn are doing what God wants us to do? I don't care who's in the White House. I don't care what laws they pass.

They didn't have any good laws back in those days. They still turned the world upside down. Let the church be the church, come on.

Let's put our hands together. Let the church be the church. A lot of this fussing about what's going on in the government is just a clever way to evade what we're nervous about about our own congregations, in my judgment.

So this is an interesting word now. God says to Jeremiah, these false prophets who are wrecking and ruining everything, they speak supposedly for me. Now, the application of this, let the Holy Spirit give it to you if you think there's some application for the day we live in.

And here's their deal. Their scam is this. I have a dream.

Follow your dream. Not thus saith the Lord. I have a dream.

They're making up their own visions. It's not coming from me. They don't stand in my presence.

They don't wait before me and find out what I'm saying. They just go out of their own mind and they start speaking stuff they think up. They're so confident of their intellect and how bright they are, they're making up stuff they're clever.

Israel was dying from cleverness. People with their dreams, preaching it and the people like to hear it. But then the prophet says, God speaks to him and he says, okay, let those phony guys, by the way, who had all the large crowds.

Crowds are not a sign that you have God's approval. Always remember that. I'm not trying to justify no soul winning and I have a church with only 80 in it and I wanna justify it by saying, well, anyone has a lot of people, they're not doing God's work.

I'm not saying that, but numbers do not validate a ministry. There's all kinds of phony people now, of huge followings. You just turn on some of the Christian television, it's enough to make you sick.

And they got people writing checks all over the whole country for them. And they're not even close, but because of the biblical illiteracy among the people, they don't know the genuine from the false because only through knowing God's word are we gonna know what's true. Amen? Now, so now listen to this word for us.

So let them tell their dreams. But let the one who has the true word of God, who has stood in my presence and waited upon me, let him speak. Because what does straw have to do with grain? When we're not speaking the true word of God, which has been anointed by the Holy Spirit, our sermons can be like straw.

You know what straw is, light and worthless. What a challenge to me. When I get up this Sunday, am I gonna preach straw? Am I gonna preach grain? The prophets are prophesying, they're glib.

They're saying clever things. They're giving their dreams. But God says in my sight, it's straw.

But the ones who truly has the word of God, there's weight to it, grain. There's food to it. You can't eat straw, you can eat grain.

There's food to it, and there's weight to it. Oh, brothers and sisters, don't we need to pray, God, give my words weight. Like it says of Samuel, and none of his words fell to the ground.

The Lord was with Samuel, and when he spoke, there was a weight. Have you ever been around a man or a woman of God, who when they speak or testify exhort, it has weight to it. Something penetrates your heart.

That guy's not just clever and saying something smart, that there's weight to that. And then God says this, is my word not a hammer, and is it not like fire? You know, a hammer breaks up hard things. Now, what I'm about to say now, the last thing I wanna leave with you is that we should now start to be bulls in China shop, because some of us have had experiences with that growing up, where people just harangued folks and yelled at them, screamed at them, and did it like some pseudo-prophet holiness preaching.

They could be bigoted as all get out and prejudice, but they were talking about holiness, and women should be dressing like this, and this is so terrible. And yet they were full of hate, and prejudice, and sectarianism. I'm not talking about that.

I'm not talking about beating people down. People don't need to be beat down. They need to be encouraged.

But, is not my word like fire? General Booth started the Salvation Army back in the 19th century. And you read, everyone should have one biography or some book about the history of the Salvation Army. It will really inspire you.

And he, along with his wife, who was a better preacher than he was, they went into the east end of London with the Salvationists and making noise, and they went to the people that no one else wanted in their churches. On all the churches, you had to pay for a seat in a pew. You had to rent a pew, and everybody was sophisticated and nice.

And in England, the church had really backslid. And they couldn't find their place in any group, it seemed. So they just went out and did what God told them.

And now they're reaching prostitutes and drunkards and all of that. Well, Mrs. Booth seemed like the general would have times sometimes when his nerves would go bad and he would fall probably under depression, so bad that he couldn't go out and fulfill his obligations. So Mrs. Booth would go.

And Spurgeon appreciated her, and a lot of other of those great preachers of that era. Well, at the end of her life, she died way before the general. At the end of her life, because she had a hunger after God, read, there's a series of books, you can get her sermons.

Man, they'll put you on your knees. They will put you on your knees. She said toward the end of her life, I'm going to churches all over Great Britain, and I'm just searching.

And what I'm looking for, I can't find it. I'm looking for burning words. I'm looking for something that will penetrate my heart and break me, that will light my fire.

There's oratory, there's cleverness, there's eloquence, there's the Polish phrase, there's all of that stuff. But she says, what I'm looking for is what Jeremiah said, the true preacher is supposed to have, fire. Didn't John the Baptist say, I baptize you with water, but the one who comes after me, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Fire. You know what fire does, it penetrates. Someone can be backslidden, someone can be covering up a double life, but when the word comes with fire, it goes right through.

You can argue, they can hide from you, but when God sends his word with fire attached to it, it cuts right through, people get saved. What is revival? All these revivals that we talk about, what is revival through the great awakening, the second great awakening, the great prayer revival on Fulton Street in New York, the Welsh revival, China inland mission, what is it? God is sending fire to be attached to his word, because the word alone is not enough. The word has to be preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

If the word was enough and strict doctrine was enough, straight doctrine, we would have changed the world a long time ago. What's missing is the word with fire, not emotionalism, not worked up frenzy, not the guy you see on TV throwing the microphone cord around and being flamboyant and getting up in

everyone's grill and saying inappropriate things. That's not fire, that's just culture.

And right now we're dying from religious culture in too many places, Baptist culture, charismatic culture, Presbyterian culture, evangelical culture, and people are living lives away from God and they need a word with fire. They don't need some tradition. Tradition won't change them.

Fire will change them. Jesus Christ will change them. Do I get a witness here? The Lord Jesus Christ through his word anointed by fire.

Is my word not fire? How much fire element is in your church that breaks, that searches out sin? That cuts away things that are dishonoring to God? I'm not talking again about a quiet with a tear in your voice, that's just culture again. I'm not talking about loud and screaming, that's just culture. Fire is not loud, fire is not quiet, it's fire.

You know it by its fruit. I've often wondered, as I get near to closing here, I've often wondered what that verse means. I still haven't come to a total conclusion on it, but to me it flies in the face of almost 98% of all the books on preaching that I have seen on the market this flies in the face of it.

Paul in describing his preaching says, my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words. What do you mean? You're preaching, you're boasting that your preaching was not with wise and persuasive words? That's the whole training, why most people go to seminary, is to know how to speak wise and persuasive words. And Paul is saying, no, when I came to you, I did not come with wise and persuasive words.

I wasn't like one of these Greek orators with the clever phrase and the perfect logic. He says, my preaching was not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power. What kind of preaching was that? What kind of preaching was that brothers and sisters? Forget what you've seen growing up.

I wanna forget what I've seen growing up. Maybe it's none of it is God's ideal of preaching. Paul says, when I came to you, I didn't come with wise and persuasive words.

I wasn't trying to figure out how to win you over by argument, but my preaching was with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. Now, that cannot mean that at any moment he stopped and he said, bring that blind person up here, I'll heal him. Bring that lame person up, I'll heal him.

There's no indication he did that. He could do miracles upon demand. But what was that? My preaching was not with wise and persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

When I preached last Sunday, was there a demonstration of the Spirit's power? What did that mean? What was that anointing? Maybe it had a lot to do with this sense of fire, that I didn't give you a mere intellectual word. I wasn't clever, I wasn't cute, but when I spoke to you, you knew God is speaking through that man. He's speaking God's word and God has anointed it with fire.

Last Saturday, I was, in fact, last weekend, Carol and I were invited, my wife and I were invited to do something we've never done before. As you know, neither of us were prepared for either music or the ministry through Bible school or seminary or her training. She can't read or write music.

But she was asked to be the baccalaureate speaker at Gordon College up in Massachusetts. And I was asked the next day to speak at the commencement. Gordon College was started by that outstanding Baptist pastor from the 1880s and 90s who was a dear friend of Moody by the name of A.J. Gordon.

You should try to find some of his books. He has a little pamphlet called The Two-Fold Life that will really touch you, I believe, and help you. It has me.

Well, A.J. Gordon started a school just like Moody started, a training school for people to go out in the street and evangelize. And he was all just prayer, gospel, spirit, let's get on with it. And now Gordon College is this school up there in Massachusetts.

My wife did a great job on Friday and I was the commencement speaker. And I found in my library a book that I bought a long time ago at a used bookstore and it was the biography of A.J. Gordon written by his son. And although I knew a lot about Gordon, I had never read this biography.

So I took it with me when we flew up to Boston. And I was reading it all during the day while Carol was preparing with her gown. And wow, that was so, so different for her and she did so well.

And Gordon has this interesting illustration. Now you gotta go back, it's 1890. It's not very modernized like what we're used to.

And he says, the story is told that in, we're gonna send you, the Russian government would send people in exile to that northern part. What's that called? Somebody help me? Siberia, thank you. And it's so cold in Siberia that he says at that time that when people had water delivered to their house, it came in huge chunks of ice because there was no way they could fight off the cold.

I'm talking minus 20, minus 30, real temperature. So you deliver the water to someone's house and you give them a chunk of ice. And A.J. Gordon says, isn't that way a lot of our churches are? It's H₂O, absolutely water.

Here, have a drink. Frozen, dead, unpalatable, no sense of fire that would melt the heart and make the word of God palatable for people. Is it H₂O? Yeah, listen, I'm preaching, brother, only the word of God.

My doctrine is according to scripture. Yeah, but is it ice or is it water? Is it living water? Is it a big, huge slab of something that's not helping the people? We need fire. Well, let me close.

How do you get fire? How do we get fire element in our preaching in our churches? By the way, everything will be tested on the day of Christ by fire. So we better have fire in our ministry and see God burn off all that's not good because in the end, Carol and I are gonna be tested by fire. Pastor Fo and his wife gonna be tested by fire.

Everything about this place and your church, my church, gonna be tested by fire. And for some ministers, there's gonna be great loss. They'll be saved, but as by fire, but they're gonna lose everything because it couldn't take the test of fire.

Now, three chapters earlier, Jeremiah is arguing with God and he's saying, God, what you're doing to me, this is not fair. You put your hand on me and then you tell me to go out and speak, what? To be ridiculed, to be mocked, to face opposition. This is not fun.

But then he says this. But when I said to myself, I'm paraphrasing, you can look it up later yourself. Jeremiah 20 says, but when I said to myself, I won't speak anymore, your word is like fire in my bone.

I can't keep it in. You know how fire preaching is born by us alone with God on our knees or in a quiet place or walking somewhere where he takes the written word and he so applies it to our heart and he lights it with the Holy Spirit. And now it's not my sermon for Sunday, my three points and conclusions so I can get through.

It's like a fire burning in me. Not harsh to fight with the people and bury them with condemnation, but a living fiery word. I want that more.

I'd rather preach the next three months with fire in my sermons and then let me die than to preach the next 10 years and just have insipid sermons that people go home and say, wasn't that good? Funny, clever, wasn't that funny? I want people to go home and say, I don't remember that minister's name, but boy, God talked to me today. How many are with me? Lift your hand. How many are with me? Lift your hand.

I want, you know, in those old Baptist camp meetings at A.J. Gordon's time, that's how they would talk. They would test at the conferences. You know the camp meetings they used to have all over America, especially down south here? They used to have camp meetings and they used to write these wonderful, insightful sentences and one of them that they wrote was this.

You can always tell when someone preaches a word that they got from God, that God made alive, because a blind person can tell the difference between a quarter and a silver dollar. That doesn't make much noise. But they say any blind person, sightless person, they can know, oh no, that's not a nickel, that's not a dime, that's a silver dollar.

It has a ring to it when God's anointed it. And they said another thing, when people go home talking about the preacher, then the whole conference was a failure. If you go home talking about the preacher, but when you go home saying, oh honey, isn't God good? Did God not speak to us? Do we not wanna go and now live more for Jesus Christ? Then you know the conference was good.

Don't you want that in your church? Don't you want people going home not talking about, oh the choir this and the worship was so, you know, everything just so organized? Who cares about organization if there's no fire? And if there's fire, I don't care if everything is just so perfect because people are attracted by fire. He'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. One last thing, and it sounds self-defeating, doesn't it? No preacher, no conference, no anybody can give you fire.

That you can only get from God. God gives fire. And don't you imitate anyone because the way God's fire will be on you will be the way he uses you.

Don't copy any other pastor in the world. I struggled with that. Please, if this word is for somebody before I close here, maybe it'll help somebody here.

When I went in the ministry, I struggled for the first year, it was so terrible. My sermons were so bad, I fell asleep while I was preaching and that's not good. That's usually not a good sign when you go out yourself.

And what I struggled with the most was because I wasn't trained, I wasn't the son of a famous preacher, I wasn't gifted like Pastor Folo is here. I couldn't believe that God, I don't have a good voice, I'm not a Polish speaker, I could not believe that God could use me speaking conversationally. I thought I had to be a

preacher.

Ooh, was that bad. What do you mean trying to be a preacher? You know, we all have a picture of what a preacher should be. But if you try to be a preacher, you'll never have the fire on you.

God can only use you in your own personality. Just be yourself and want the fire. Because here's the best part, God wants to put the fire on us more than we want the fire.

God that looks down and doesn't say, no, I won't give you that fire. Is that what a good father would do? No, oh, by the way, I just gotta say one thing, I didn't announce it today, what's wrong with me? Have I lost my mind here? I got the best news. I want you to know about it.

I have a new grandson. No, but listen, listen, not like that. My daughter Susan heads up our BT Kids program.

And her husband is Brian Petrie from West Virginia. He's one of my associates. They have a 13 year old boy and a 10 year old girl.

My two grandchildren from them. But for a long time, they wanted to adopt a child who would not make it unless they took the child in that no one wanted. And number two, they prayed a child that wouldn't hear about Jesus, most likely.

So seven weeks ago, they flew with their family, their two children, the four of them flew. And Carol and I went on a Friday morning to JFK and we're waiting and they came through immigration from Ethiopia with my new five month old grandson now. His name was Bushra, which means good news.

Born in Southern Ethiopia, mother died giving birth. Father had four others, could have left him by the roadside Southern Ethiopia, Muslim area, Nowheresville town, Podunk, Ethiopia, could have left him there. Got on a bus and went eight hours to the orphanage to give him.

And that was the child that it turned out came, matched Susie's number. So I have, I'm so in love with him. He's so sweet.

And he's gonna be tall. His father's six foot three. He's already 28 inches long.

He's five months old. I'm gonna teach him to cross over and shake and bake people when he's just in the fifth grade. I'm gonna have him dribbling both hands.

So you watch, just remember that name, Levi Petri. No, he's gonna be what God wants him to be. But I'm so thankful.

Just like only God could provide that baby for them. And you pray for him, he's a special, seems to me to be marked by God for something. Only God can give you and me fire.

Now you remember what I'm talking about now. I'm not talking about emotionalism. Don't write me off and don't let the enemy say, oh, he's talking about stylistically.

I'm not talking about style. I don't care how you preach. I don't care how you do church, but fire is fire.

And if there's no fire, we're missing it. Because fire cuts, fire spreads, fire penetrates, fire gives light. Ooh, fire, I want fire.

Don't say, no, my denomination went into fire. If you're a man of God, you didn't have to have fire. And that's terrible that some denominations are so anti-Holy Spirit that if you mention fire or something like that, no, we don't believe in that, just preach the word.

It's dead without the fire of the Holy Spirit. Dead, totally dead. Come on, can we put our hands to that? Only God gives fire and life.

As somebody plays, as somebody plays, let's bow our heads. Every pastor here, every pastor's wife, everyone who ever stands in front of people or ministers to children, I don't know who all is here. You're such a great audience.

Thank you for letting me come here. But if you are just hungry, Pastor Jim Simla, I want fire just like you do. And I'm not preaching down to you.

I'm preaching my own cry and my own heart. God could do more in the next year in the Brooklyn Tabernacle than he's done in all the years Carol and I have done it. Why not? Why not? When fire comes, you don't know what's gonna happen.

Fire burns out junk. It purifies gifts so that people can really be used by God. If you're here and you're hungry for fire and you wanna just have a final prayer with me here to end the conference, get out of your seat here and come on, run up here.

Let's get this thing on right now. I'm gonna tell God we're gonna have fire. We want fire in our churches.

Not emotionalism, not fanaticism. Please know my heart on this. I dread that, I hate that.

But I don't want dead orthodoxy. I want the word anointed by fire. Fire starting prayer meetings.

Fire producing pure love for all people. Fire for my word. Is not my word like fire, God said? Jeremiah said, when I said I would be quiet, your word was in me like a fire in my bones.

I couldn't keep it in. A sense of divine urgency. Come on up.

We praise you, Lord. First of all, God, I wanna thank you for all the people who are here in the conference and I wanna thank you for the leadership of the conference and I just thank you that I could be here, that you got me here safely. And Lord, my brothers and sisters that are standing in front of me, they are in this with me together.

There are no denominations to you. You only have one body. There's only one Lord, one faith and I thank you that we're in this together.

And I'm rooting for them and I hope they're rooting for me and right now we're coming to the throne of grace and we're not asking for bigger cars or to be famous or to write books. We're asking for fire. Did you not promise that you would send fire? Lord, didn't you say that you would baptize in the Holy Spirit and with fire? That there would be a penetration power, a cleansing power, a sanctifying power, igniting people to live for you.

Lord, we confess to you that our sermons without your fire are horrible. They're horrible. No matter what other people think are clever and what other people applaud, we long for fire, Lord.

We want fire in our churches. The fire of the Holy Spirit, not the fire of self-starting emotionalism, not foolishness, not excesses, but according to your word, we ask for fire at the throne of grace. Fire when we preach, a fire in our hearts so that when we preach, we're not trying to affect something, but the thing is burning in us because you set it on fire.

And when we deliver it, we will trust your Holy Spirit to take your precious word and let it be like an arrow of fire into people's hearts. And Lord, many times in our congregation, we've tried to see sanctification and people live more like Christ by picking out this and picking out that. Oh God, just send a fire and let the fire burn up everything that's not of you.

Just burn out sin and selfishness and pride and prejudice, self-seeking, and let there be a new way of preaching for all of us. None of us are too old that we can't see improvement in the way we minister your word, Lord. And we ask you to forgive us for settling for sermons when we could have a word of fire, Lord.

We ask you to forgive us that we've never paid attention to 1 Corinthians 2, for my preaching was not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. I do not know what that exactly means, but give it to us, Lord. Let there be some demonstration of your power that when we speak, we're gonna speak as an oracle of God.

And yes, there's a place for humor, there's a place for illustration, but oh God, send the fire right now. Send the fire right now. Let it start in our hearts, purify us.

And Lord, it's Wednesday, and God willing, we'll all be back in our pulpits by Sunday. And now I'm praying specifically, Lord. I've come to, you said, therefore come boldly to the throne of grace so that we might receive, come with confidence that we might receive mercy, which we ask for, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And grace to help us in our time of need. We need more grace in our ministry. We're not gonna quit.

We're not giving up, but we're gonna do it a new way with more fire from heaven. And I know you wanna do it. We're not gonna copy anyone else.

We're not gonna try to be anyone else. It is what it is. I am who I am.

But Lord, you can take anything, and if you light it on fire, it can do great things. I want all the brothers here in front of me who have stepped out of their seats. Everybody stand in the room, please.

But all the brothers who are in the front here, would you just turn, and someone's gonna lead us in a song, but could you just turn and get one prayer partner and pray out loud? One go first, the other one will then go next. Every lady, find a lady, face her, joint hands in front. Come on, even if you don't know the person, come on, we're brothers and sisters in Christ.

And then pray for the other person's ministry, and he'll pray for you. Sister, pray for the other person. And would you please pray and ask God to give you fire when you pray? But pray.

Come on, pray. You'll seek for me and you'll find me when you seek for me with all your heart. Let's turn it into a house of prayer right now.

Then they'll lead us in singing.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/XxXJChF897I.mp4>
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