

Fire

by Michael L. Brown

The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for the outpouring of the Spirit and the purifying power of fire in revival.

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Description

In this video, the speaker emphasizes the importance of leadership and the impact it has on others. He highlights the principle that leadership is not just about teaching and instructing, but also about setting an example and being a role model. The speaker shares a personal encounter with a humble and hungry leader who had experienced tremendous growth in his church. He also mentions a powerful message he heard from a pastor who had a significant influence on him. The video concludes with the speaker recounting a supernatural experience he had in the presence of God.

Transcript

We love you, and we praise you, and we exalt you. Lord, I thank you so much for the outpouring of your spirit. I thank you so much, Lord, for this team of leaders and workers, Lord, with a heart for you.

I thank you so much for this assembled congregation of your servants, Father, hungry for you. I pray, God, that you would visit us with fire. I pray that you would speak to us with clarity.

I pray that your word would come forth in such a way that we would never forget, as long as we live, the truth of your scripture, the truth of your word. Visit us, change us today. Let your fire fall.

In the name of Jesus, amen. You can be seated. And I want you to turn with me to three passages.

Daniel 7, Malachi 3, and Matthew 3. Daniel 7, then Malachi 3, and then Matthew 3. If you want a title for this morning's message, it is one word. It's a word you often hear around here. It's a word you often hear as we pray for people.

The word is fire. One night after the service was over, I was out in the parking lot. Some young people came around my car and they said, would you pray for us? I said, sure, I'd be happy to pray.

And we're out there in the parking lot. It's probably past midnight. And I went to pray for them, just like I always do in here.

And I started to yell, fire! Fire! Then it hit me, probably not the smartest thing to do at 1230 at night, outside. I was waiting for the fire engine. Fire! Daniel 7, a vision of the throne of God.

Verses 9 and 10. As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow.

The hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.

Thousands upon thousands attended him. Ten thousand times, ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Malachi chapter 3, verse 1. See, I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly, the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Isn't it interesting? They're praying for visitation. They're praying for God to come. They're praying for the outpouring of the Spirit.

They're praying for God to come down and touch his people. And the prophet says he's coming, but who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.

He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in days gone by, as in former years. And then a further word of judgment in verse 5. And now we go to Matthew chapter 3. The words of John the Baptist.

As you're turning that last book over from Malachi to Matthew, let me tell you that if you want revival, you must have fire. If you want revival, you must have divine fire. Many books that are written on the subject of revival have the title fire in them.

A recent book dealing with the history of revival around the world is called Revival Fire. A recent book coming out about revival in South America is called Latin America in Flames. A book I wrote, From Holy Laughter to Holy Fire.

That's how people often speak of it. You'll understand why. You'll understand what it means in a little while.

Matthew 3. John the Baptist is warning religious hypocrites. Verse 10. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

I baptize you with water for repentance, but after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Three verses. Fire, fire, fire. Verse 10, verse 11, verse 12.

It is possible that we become so used to biblical terminology and biblical pictures that we don't really stop and think about the picture itself. We hear about fire. We hear about God being a consuming fire.

We hear about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. We hear about God coming as a refiner's fire. And we forget that that is frightening imagery.

You're driving down the road and suddenly you see a crowd of people running and cars pulling over. What is it? There's a big fire. Everybody's coming to look at the fire.

If you hear of people being burned in a fire, there's hardly anything more terrifying than that. Sometimes if I hear of someone, there's a terrible fire and someone's been severely burned over 80% of their body, I just think to myself, Lord, if they're saved, take them home. Because the agony of what's ahead of them, the destructive power of fire, the disfigurement.

Fire. You tell little kids, don't play with fire. There's that fascination, but it's frightening to get near it.

Fires can blaze out of control. I remember a few years ago seeing a USA Today headline. There it is in color on the front of the newspaper.

There's a picture of fire coming up behind the beautiful community in Southern California. And this fire is just eating everything in its path. It's a devouring fire.

It can't be stopped. And there it says, nothing to stop the fire. All the money in the world can't stop that fire from spreading.

And before you know it, those homes that could have taken months and months and months and months to build and be worth a couple million dollars, pooh, they're gone. Just ashes. Fire.

I make reference to this many times, but we trivialize this. We cheapen the image. We don't understand what it really means.

We sing that wonderful song. It's a beautiful song that I love. Take me past the outer court, through the holy place.

It's that call to come into the holiest of all, to see the Lord face to face. And we sing that song, and whenever I sing it, even though it says, take me in by the blood of the Lamb, and I mention this all the time, but whenever I sing that song, I say, oh God, have mercy on us as we sing it, because we don't know what we're singing. We get to that one part in our blissful, charismatic worship.

Steve always refers to, you know, the holy posture, you know, with the head cocked just right. And there we sing those words with that lovely smile on our faces. Take the coal.

Touch my lips. Here I stand. Take the coal.

Touch my lips. Summer's coming. Sing that at a few barbecues, friend.

Come up with some reality. Go over while they're cooking up those steaks and those burgers and that chicken, and go stand there. Hey, take that coal.

Touch my lips. Here I stand. I'm talking about a coal from the altars of God.

Not just some barbecue. Isaiah's standing there overwhelmed, overcome by the presence of God. And Isaiah 6, woe is me.

I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips. He's completely defiled.

No problem. One of the seraphs is going to come with a coal from the altars of God and touch it to his lips. Oh Lord, call me into prophetic ministry.

Read Isaiah 6. Lord, I feel called to pastor instead. Let me tell you, you're going to do a work for God. He's going to take the coal and touch it to your lips.

I first want you to recognize, though, when we talk about God being a consuming fire, coming as a refiner's fire, it's more than just words. In fact, it's more intense than literal fire. The temperature gets hotter.

The purification, deeper. The judgment, more intense. Fire draws people.

Fire draws crowds. Leonard Ravenhill always used to say, fire is the most attractive thing in the universe. You never have to advertise a fire.

You never have to advertise a revival. When John Wesley was asked how he drew the crowds, he said, I set myself on fire and people come to watch me burn. I want you to consider that God in the Old and the New Testament reveals Himself as a devouring fire, a consuming fire.

I love Him as my Father. I don't know the meaning of condemnation in my own life. I live carefree, anxiety-free.

Plenty of pressures, plenty of burdens, plenty of things to carry, plenty of weights, but I know the love of my Father for me. I know what it is to fall short. I know what it is to repent on my face and say, oh God, I never want to disappoint You in the slightest, with an attitude, with conduct, with word, in any way.

We've all been through that. I know what it is to strive with all my might to please Him, to live absolutely stretched out, day and night, to do the will of God until I drop, but I know what it is to rest in Him. He's my loving, gracious, heavenly Father.

He only wants to do good for me. Whatever He puts me through is for His glory and for my good in Him. I know His gentleness.

I know His kindness. I know Him as my shepherd. I know what it is to lie down in green pastures besides still waters.

I also know that that loving Father is an all-consuming fire. When He revealed Himself to Abram in Genesis 15, you can look up the references later, Genesis 15, 17, God comes and passes between the covenantal pieces of sacrifice, and how does He come? As a smoking fire pot and a blazing torch. He comes down on Mount Sinai.

Exodus, the 19th chapter, how does He come down? Verse 18, as a consuming fire. Exodus 24, 17, the Israelites. It says to the Israelites, the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire.

How does He get Moses' attention in Exodus 3? There it is, a fire burning in a bush. Gets his attention. Throughout the Scriptures, you get to Hebrews, the 12th chapter, and the 29th verse, the New Testament.

What does it say? For our God is a consuming fire. Quoting the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 4, 24, He's a jealous God. A devouring fire.

And the thing that is so interesting about this, when you talk about God as a devouring fire, when you talk about God visiting a church in revival fire, remember, you cannot contain a devouring, consuming fire. And if you want to have revival, you're going to have to have it on God's terms and God's way. You can't put it in a little package.

You can't turn it on and turn it off. You can't put it in your denomination only or in your church setting only. You've got to have the fire sweep through.

And you never know what's going to get burned up when the fire falls. Oh, it's one thing to pray for blessing. It's one thing to pray for anointing.

It's one thing to pray for souls. It's one thing to pray for joy. It's one thing to pray for deliverance.

It's one thing to pray for healing. And these are all things that God brings and God does in the midst of His people. But just remember, when you're praying for God to pour out His Spirit, for God to bring blessing, for God to bring refreshing, you're also praying God send fire.

You say, well, we didn't put that part in when we prayed, but God puts it in when He comes. That is the God who visits His church. Your agenda might just get burned up.

Your pride may just get burned up. Fire burns up flesh. And one sign that revival has not happened is when you see a lot of people strutting around, when you see a lot of superstars.

That's an evidence to me that revival fire is not there because when the fire falls, it burns that junk and trash up. Every one of us should be able to say, God, send your fire in my ministry. Whatever is born of you will endure the flames.

And whatever is born of flesh, let it go up now. I'd rather that it goes up now than it goes up when I stand before God in judgment. I'd rather suffer loss now when I can do something about it than suffer loss then.

I'd rather be embarrassed here than be embarrassed there. If you're in television ministry, radio ministry, media ministry, if you're an author, if you have a school, if you have a church, if you're traveling, if you're on the mission field, say, oh God, send your fire. You say, but that sounds destructive.

It is only destructive to that which is built by man. If it's a human kingdom building, let it go up and smoke. If it's done to the exaltation of flesh and blood, let it burn.

God himself is a devouring fire. God's word is like fire. Think of it.

Some of you may primarily be called to teach. When I'm in a school setting, I'm primarily in a teaching mode. When I do our day sessions for leaders, it's half teaching, half preaching.

When I go out and travel, it's always in a preaching mode. I understand the different modes. I understand sometimes you're teaching.

You say, let's just open up the word. And there are various interpretations of this word. And here's how I think the Lord wants me to bring this out to apply it.

And you're teaching. But let me tell you something. There's got to be a word burning in your heart, no matter who you are, no matter what your calling is.

It can't just be some mamby-pamby. I'd like to share some thoughts today. Are you called? Does the word burn in your heart? Are there things that you would die rather than change? Because it's the word.

Jeremiah hears from heaven in Jeremiah 23, a word to the false prophets. They're borrowing their messages one from another. Everybody's stealing words one from another, but they're not hearing from God.

They're not getting a fresh word from heaven. This written word is not coming alive by the Spirit of God. And they're not in tune to continue to have that life flow from God to their own lives.

And God says, look, you've got your message, you've got your message. He said, but my word, Jeremiah 23, 29. He says, Is it my word like fire? Says the Lord.

And like a hammer that smashes the rock in pieces. Jeremiah said, look, it's too much. All these judgment prophecies, I've got to hold back.

I'm going against the other prophets. I'm going against the priests. I'm going against the princes.

I'm going against my own people. It's too much, too much resistance. Always negative, negative, negative messages.

They won't hear, they won't repent so they can hear something positive. And he said, I decided I was going to quit. No more.

I decided I'm not going to speak in his name anymore. And let me tell you, if you've ever had to bring a broken hearted message, you've been through that. If you've ever had a warning of judgment, you've been through that.

If you've ever had to get up and preach repentance over and over and over and over, you've been through that. You just want to shut up. He says, but I couldn't.

Why? Because his word was like fire. Shut up in my bones. I tried to hold it back, but I couldn't.

I can do no other. Listen, not everyone is called into, quote, prophetic ministry. And most of what we call prophetic ministry to me is just peripheral frill stuff.

The person called into prophetic ministry is on fire on the inside. They can do no other but confront a sinning society and a sleeping church. But let me say this, the church as a whole, all the people of God, ministers as a whole, we are called to be a prophetic people.

And I ask you, is God in your heart like a consuming, devouring fire? Is his word in your heart like a consuming, devouring fire? Jeremiah 5.14, because the people mock, God says, then your words are going to be like fire and the people the chaff it consumes. There should be a wilting, withering effect of the word of God coming out. We see it here night in, night out.

We see people come in with resistance, with pride, with opposition. This just happened last week, I don't know if I got to tell you yet, Steve. There's a kid out there during the service.

I happened to notice him because he's sitting next to one of our students. And I see the student just kind of smiling at him as he's standing there, stiff, reserved, wanted nothing to do with God. He was a pastor's kid, backslidden, on drugs, flirting with Satanism.

What was he doing in the revival? That's what makes it revival. God brings him from around the country like that. Unsaved, hostile, stand on line 12 hours to come in and hear a repentance message.

And then they'll say, I don't know what I'm doing here. Then those famous words, I don't know, my parents are in the ministry, my parents are believers. Now we know what you're doing here.

They've been praying. Before the message, Steve says, say this prayer with me. Speak to my heart.

And I watch. I never, ever open my eyes to look around. Because I'm praying that God will speak to me.

But this one time, I decided to look at this kid as I said the prayer to see if he would pray. In the beginning, he doesn't pray. And then I just see him kind of gritting his teeth and just mumbling the words.

Just like that. And then I lose sight of him at the altar. I can't see him.

I don't know. Did he come forward? What happened? Two days later, I talked to the folks that knew him. They said, you wouldn't believe what happened.

This kid was hostile. It was just last minute he ended up coming. Because his brother's coming to the school of ministry in the fall.

And he came. They said, listen, he was up at that altar. He repented.

He has been turned around. He desperately wants to get baptized before he goes back. He came in the other night at two in the morning crying.

Saying, I'm just so hungry. He said, everything from my life, the drugs, it's all gone. He said, how do I get filled with God now? That's what I want.

The word on fire. Not just human opinions. Not just human ideas.

But that word comes and it melts resistance. That word comes and it convicts. And it burns and people go out of here.

And their whole perspective has changed. They've been self-centered. Many of you have figured out a comfortable way to be in ministry through the years.

Comfortable way to kind of have your cake and eat it too. Serve the church. But also have a nice comfortable lifestyle.

And I don't mean that you all have to live on the street. Or live in poverty. Somehow you get in a meeting where God's moving and the fire comes back.

And you're not looking anymore at how you can save your life. You're looking at how you can see God come down at any cost and any consequence. You're not calculating, well if I do this, this will happen.

If I do this, that will happen. And you're saying, God, I don't care what happens. I just have to have you.

Fire. One thing that's interesting though about fire. And the word of God.

Everyone is going to be touched by the fire. Friends, if you escape the fire of hell, you will find the fire of heaven. Listen to what the word says.

We read from Matthew the third chapter. Verse 10, the trees that don't bear fruit are thrown into the fire. Cut down and thrown into the fire.

Verse 12, Jesus is going to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. You say, that's just judgment. That's just hell fire.

That was verse 10. That was verse 12. What about verse 11? He's going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

As best as I understand that passage and what's being said, it's not two separate baptisms, the Holy Spirit and fire. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a baptism in fire. It's a baptism in purity.

It's a baptism in refining. It's a baptism in holy heat for the work of God. And on Pentecost, what happens? Tongues of fire come down.

You want the glory, friend? You're going to have to have the fire. There was a friend of mine, a pastor in New Jersey, who made a comment that stuck with me. He was talking about John chapter 15.

And in John 15, Jesus says every branch in him, he's the vine, and every branch in him that doesn't bear fruit, he cuts it off, throws into the fire. Cuts it off. But every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes.

Cuts it back. And my friend said to me, Mike, in the kingdom, everything gets the knife. Everything gets the knife.

Either cut off or cut back. Either destructive fire or pruning fire. In the kingdom, everybody gets the fire.

You know what it says in Isaiah 33? It's an amazing passage. Verse 14 of Isaiah 33. The godless, the sinners in Zion are terrified.

The hypocrites are terrified. This is in God's household in Zion. What do they say? Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who can live with everlasting burnings? They're not talking about hell.

They're talking about who can live with God. You want God? There's going to be purification, friend. One of the first things revival's going to bring to you, either before it comes or as it comes, is the refiner's fire.

As you begin to seek God for revival, God will show you that you're not in the least bit hungry. God will show you that a thousand other things are more important to you than revival. God will say to you, do you really want revival then what about this and what about this and what about the fear of man and what about leisure and what about this and what about that and what about this pet scent and what about this and what about reputation and what about finances and he'll strip you bare.

You say, well why does he do that? Because when revival comes you're going to lose all that anyway. Jesus said this after warning about hellfire in Mark chapter 9. He says, everyone, everyone will be salted with fire. Every sacrifice will be salted with fire.

God's fire comes down and he's holy. You can't just talk about send the power without having the power of a holy God. A fresh touch of the Spirit means a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit.

Not the happy spirit, but the Holy Spirit. I've said this before, but you can go to some of our churches and hear some of our messages and think he's the hollow spirit. Or flip on television and watch some of our big preachers and thank God for the good preachers on television and radio that are glorifying Jesus in a way that's pleasing to him.

And it's not our job to just sit and figure out who's who and what's what and judge by outward appearances. Our job is to pray. And if there's something sinned, to speak up and act.

Or you can watch some of our folks and think it's not the Holy Spirit, but the Hollywood spirit. Friends, when he comes, he comes as the Holy Spirit. Can I just say something? The passage is going to be very deep, very profound, very tough to follow.

If they have a problem, maybe you can follow me, Steve, and explain it. Okay. Everybody get this.

Everybody. It's important. He's very holy.

He's very holy. Was that clear? Clear? Yeah. He's frighteningly holy.

Just think of holy fire. Think of all the junk that the fire burns out. Think of all the stuff that it purges out.

Talk to Aaron about the holiness of the fire of God. Leviticus 9. After eight days of separation for the priesthood, Aaron and his four sons are going to be ordained priests of God Most High. Out of all the people on the earth, only Aaron and his family have been separated.

Oh, I'm in the ministry. Oh, I'm called. Oh, God has entrusted me with his work.

Friends, there's a responsibility. Aaron and his sons, they're all prepared. They finish all the preparation.

They go through the ceremony of ordination. They have their seven-day waiting period. They finish the ceremony.

They present their sacrifices. It's happened. What a glorious day.

Aaron and Moses go out and bless the people, the end of Leviticus 9, and fire comes out of the presence of God. I used to think of fire coming down to consume the sacrifices, but it's literally in Hebrew, fire came out probably from the tabernacle. Think of it, God's blazing presence in the tabernacle.

Fire comes out. And it eats up the sacrifices offered in obedience and according to God's standard, and the people fall on their faces and shout. If I were there, I would have fallen on my face and shouted.

Same thing that they did in 1 Kings chapter 18 when Elijah gives his proposal, let the God who answers by fire be God. That should be a prayer every pastor, every leader, every missionary evangelist, every minister of the gospel prays, let the God who answers by fire be God. May not be much left after you pray that prayer, but at least you know that God is there.

The fire comes down from heaven in 1 Kings 18, eats the sacrifices, devours the wood, licks up the water, eats the rocks and the dirt. The people all fall face down. The Lord, Yahweh, He is God.

Yahweh, He is God. Everybody's caught up back there in Leviticus, the ninth chapter. So exciting, man, this is awesome.

There's no break in the Hebrew, the narrative continues, it's all the same day. His two oldest sons, Nadav and Abihu, may be caught up in the excitement of the moment or perhaps drunk based on later legislation that God gives. Whatever it is, they get so caught up, they offer some unauthorized fire.

Unauthorized incense contrary to God's command. Just moments before, the fire comes out of the sanctuary and devours Aaron's sacrifices. Now, poof, moments later, the fire comes out of the sanctuary and devours Aaron's sons.

Look at what God tells Aaron. Leviticus, tenth chapter. Listen to the word of explanation.

Verse three, I'll just read it. Moses said to Aaron, this is what the Lord spoke of when He said, among those who approach Me, I will show Myself holy. In the sight of all the people, I will be honored.

Leviticus, tenth three. Lord, I want you to show Yourself holy by consuming Your sacrifices, not me. See, God comes in revival.

He comes not just to destroy that which is built by flesh and to burn out the sin and the pride and the competition and the envy and the jealousy and the self-will from the church. He comes not only to burn away the complacency and the lackadaisical attitude and the low standards. He comes not only to burn those things up, but He comes to refine and to purify the righteous and the godly.

Malachi 3, He comes as a refiner. He comes as a launderer's soap, a fuller's soap. We go over to India, minister there.

Every year, we used to go for about a month each year. Because of revival, obviously, we can't break away for that time. But we just took a team of over 50 of our students to India.

I broke away for one week, the only time that I'll break away from the revival like that, with the blessing of the other brothers to do it. The team stayed after there with our missions director. We've been in India, and sometimes, you know, you bring a, if I'm there for a week, I can bring enough changes of clothes to last me a week.

But otherwise, you've got to get them cleaned while you're there. And there's a group, it was actually a cast at one point, they're called Dobies. And they're the ones that clean your clothes.

And I'll, you know, and you'll give them stacks like this high. You know, the whole team, all the clothes, and they'll be back there the next morning, maybe it's like \$2 for everything. All folded, all nice.

The only problem is you'll notice sometimes that the buttons are broken off of your shirt. Things are just a little damaged. We were in a city called Guntur one time, and out the back window of the place we were staying, I saw the Dobies working.

They'll work by some body of water, some river or stream. If they can't have that, they'll have these basins of water. And I watched them clean my clothes or somebody's clothes.

Early in the morning till dusk, they're out there working in the hot sun. And they'd take your clothes, and first they'd put them in the water, and they'd squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze. And then they'd take those things and beat them on the rock.

Boom, boom. God send revival. God refine me, purify me.

All right, boom, boom, boom. Stretched out, squeezed, and boom, beaten again. And then hung out to dry in the sun.

It's going to come like a refiner's fire, like a fuller's soap. Listen to what Smith Wigglesworth said. And let me tell you this one thing.

Listen to me. God reminded me of this the other night during the service. Just as surely as God knows how to deliver the godly from temptation, He also knows how to test us.

He knew the very thing that would expose Peter's pride and self-confidence. Peter probably could have taken on an army with swords. Deny Jesus.

I won't deny Him. With Jesus and His disciples, Peter might have been the first one to lay down his life and to go fight for the Lord. But now with Jesus betrayed, now with him being mocked and interrogated, now with all that security gone, now with everybody else fleeing, just a little servant girl.

Weren't you there with her? No, no, no. Intimidated by a little servant girl. God knows how to get at the motives of your heart.

And one thing about revival, it brings flesh to the surface. I told you something about the Holy Spirit that was very deep and very profound. That He is very holy.

Let me tell you something equally deep, equally profound. The flesh is very ugly. You'd be amazed what comes to the surface when revival fire falls.

Man, maybe attitudes you thought you had buried years ago, no, they were just dormant. Maybe you hadn't wrestled with the pride issue for so long because you were the head honcho and everybody looked at you. So you just walked in pride without even knowing it.

You didn't need the attention because you had the attention. Now revival fire comes and God says, I want the attention. All this pride rises up.

Lord, I had no idea that was there. You're getting up to preach and the Spirit speaks to you right in the middle of a message. Are you performing? Where did that come from? Refiner's fire.

Somebody lashes out at you. They're trying to split the church and next thing you know an anger rises and wrong words. Where did that come from? Fire is bringing it all up to the surface.

Steve worked in a refinery. He could tell this firsthand. But you know, you'd put all the silver in the refiner's fire and it looks pretty pure.

It looks pretty good until it hits that fire and then a little while later all the muck, all the junk comes up to the surface to be skimmed away. God will test your motives. God will test your heart.

God will test your hunger not to hurt you but to help you. Not to destroy you but to make you more like Jesus. 1988, I was preparing for ministry in Israel.

It was the 40th anniversary of the State of Israel. It was Shavuot, Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks. It was the largest gathering of Jewish believers in Israel in modern history.

And just by a providential choice from God I was asked to bring the keynote message. It shouldn't have been me. And God laid it on my heart to fast, do a water fast for three weeks to get ready for the fire to fall.

And even when we got to Israel there had been fires that had broken out all over the land. It was just a natural reminder to me that God's fire was going to fall in that meeting. People say, well what happened? Did the fire fall? You better believe it, it fell right on me.

Right on me. Five months of purging and purifying God put me through. Things I had never been through.

Since I was first saved when I was 18 and I started to preach, I loved to preach the word. I could literally be sitting in church right in the front row in the church I was saved in. And two minutes before the message the pastor would say, Mike, you preach.

Man, just, and God's spirit would be there. Now I'd be on my way to preach somewhere and I'd say, oh God, no, I don't have anything to say. What am I going to do when I get there? And I'd arrive and they'd say, listen brother, we have brought you in because our church needs a prophetic word from the Lord.

Come on, come on. I don't even hear God, what do I do? Oh no. And I would die a thousand deaths just before getting up to preach.

Five months of purifying. I remember one night going to lay hands on people. I may have shared this at a leaders conference before, I don't remember.

But going to lay hands on people. We had people who were terminally ill and with serious incurable illnesses and I was just about to lay hands on them. I'm just getting down to pray for them.

And this thought out of the blue comes through my mind, why are you doing this? Do you want to look like a big man of God? Where did that come from? Everything was just being purged and purified. Purged and purified. Listen to what Smith Wigglesworth said.

You know, you hear about his ministry, you hear about him raising the dead. You know, you hear about him going into a funeral parlor and there's a casket. And he takes the woman out of the casket and throws her against the wall.

Walk! Throws her against the wall. Walk! Falls again. Walk! And suddenly, I was in the presence of God, I was with Jesus, I was enjoying the beauties of heaven and I heard this gruff voice saying, Walk! Walk! You know, he goes to the meeting to testify that night of what God did.

You say, oh, I'd like an anointing like Wigglesworth. Listen to what he said. If you were to be really reconstructed, it will be a hard time.

Not in a singing meeting. But when you think there is no hope for you. You ever play with a rubber band with a kid, you know, when you're a kid maybe you did it and you hold that thing back and you shoot it out but you don't want to hold it back too far because it's going to break.

And then your friend pulls his even further back and shoots it further. Well, man, I can pull that back. Before you know it, you're pulling it two, three, four times what you thought you could have pulled it.

You know, just God stretches us. Get some of the self-dependence out. Get some of the ambition out.

Get some of the fear of man out. He begins to stretch us. Get some of the vindictiveness out.

Get some of the cautiousness out. Get some of the folly out, whatever it is. And he stretches us.

Lord, if you stretch me one more drop, I'm going to burst, I'm going to break. He knows he's going to stretch you about another mile. But see, the good thing is when he's done, just when you're finally at breaking point, because that's what he's waiting for, breaking point.

Some of us are harder to kill than others, you know. Just when we're in break, boom, and then he shoots us off. And in one day you'll see God do more than you saw in ten years.

You'll see more fruit, you'll see more results, but you've got to go through the fire. I was on my way to Australia a couple of weeks ago, literally for a short trip. I traveled 56-plus hours round trip, and I was in Australia for 48 hours.

Then I was home for 36 hours and then flew to England, and two days later was home. Good thing was I didn't have time for jet lag and my body had no idea what time it was. I always say when you go to Australia for two days, you lose a day going, you pick up a day coming back, so you pass yourself in midair when you do it.

So I was on my way to Australia, and I'm sitting on the plane, and there's one seat next to me open, and I see a distinguished black man come walking past, just caught my eye, I mean, well-dressed, with a smile. You knew his connection was late. He's just running to get on that plane, but he stood out.

Just smiles, walked by, and even though he passed me, I thought, he's supposed to be sitting in that seat, isn't he? Next thing he comes back here, that's the seat where both tall men, we begin talking. What an outstanding man, saved for five years, but just humble like a baby, so hungry for the Word. And he was talking about the church that he was in, a thriving church that had gone from nothing to 10,000 almost overnight, and God had raised up his pastor.

In fact, I heard the man preach one time, just heard part of his message once, by audio or video, and I remember a couple of things, the way that the thing looked, it was actually something that I saw. The way it looked threw me a little bit, because there seemed to be a tremendous amount of the man, but I wasn't going to judge that, that's God's business. But man, it was a great word, it was a great word.

And he said, yeah, he's young, he's this and that, and then he began talking, he said, the only fear I have, he's so young, and he's come so far so quickly. He said, I've just been concerned for him, and I really pray for him. I said, well, that's the very thing he needs, people praying for him, just like that.

I said, but let me tell you, I said, from what I can tell, from what you're telling me, his love for the Lord and God's calling and anointing on his life has brought him where he is, but if he's going to reach maximum effectiveness, he's going to go through some fire. He's going to be purged. Every last bit of strut that could be in him is going to be cut out if he's going to touch the world.

Listen to Wigglesworth here. If you're to be really reconstructed, it will be a hard time, not in a singing meeting, but when you think there is no hope for you. Try by fire.

God purges, takes the dross away, and brings forth pure gold. Only melted gold is minted. You say, well, how did Wigglesworth get where he was? He had extraordinary compassion for the sick.

He said, if you're going to be used in healing, you must have long-suffering and compassion. Listen to what he says. Before God could bring me to this place, he broke me a thousand times.

Kind of a feel-good message. You've noticed the messages you heard from Tuesday night to both yesterday morning to last night, they're kind of feel-good messages, like, Pastor, go out and do it. Just go out and have a revolt.

You can do it. Sis boom bah, rah, rah, rah. What do you hear about? War.

Breaking. Fire. And glory.

Before God could bring me to this place, he broke me a thousand times. I have wept. I have groaned.

I have travailed many a night until God broke me. Seems to me that until God has mowed you down, you never can have this long-suffering for others. Remember that, men and women of God.

Until God has mowed you down, you can never have this long-suffering for others. There have been times when I have been pressed through circumstances and it seemed as if a dozen railroad engines were going over me, but I have found that the hardest things are just lifting places into the grace of God. I had read those words.

I had known those words, and when God put me through that five-month purging in 88, as painful as it was on the flesh, I remember when I would go to pray, and I loved to get on my knees and pray. When I'd go to pray, I was conscious as if I was getting on my knees and putting my head through a guillotine. That's exactly how I felt.

Every time I hit my knees, it meant more death to the flesh. But I knew what God was doing. I understood it was a divine trial, a divine purging.

I remember writing down in my notes, I'd look at the lives of Finney and the lives of Wigglesworth and other men and women God had used, people in revival, people in the power of God, and I was completely embarrassed by my own life. I remember writing down, God, I'm not hungry, I'm starving. But see, God's creating within us a capacity for more of God.

How much room is there in you for the visitation of God? How much room is there in, quote, your ministry, your church, for the visitation of God? To the degree of hunger, to that degree God can fill. That's why many people who were most mightily used in healing are the ones who saw their families suffer and die and lost loved ones or at the verge of death themselves. They developed such a compassion for the sick and such a hatred for the destructive powers of sickness and brought them to a place where they said, God, touch the sick through me, whatever it takes.

Why did John Hyde win the loss the way he did? Because he prayed, give me souls or I die, and he meant it. He would pray through the night many times and fast for a month, just for souls. Why did Whitefield shake a generation? It's estimated that during Whitefield's life, every American heard him preach face to

face at least once.

Think of it. They said of Whitefield, when the population of a city was 12,000, he could draw 14,000 to his meeting. But what did he pray? Give me souls or take my soul.

What's the answer to the standard question about revival? Why is it we have no revival? The answer is this, because we're willing to live without it. You know, there had been things burning in my heart for years to write. And then I knew God had called me to write and I had no release.

And I went through that purging in 88. And then early 89, I just came to this point, just for several days of despair, where I saw the suffering in the world and I said, there is no hope. There is no answer.

And God was just softening my heart for deeper things he was going to do. And then as 89 went on, suddenly the floodgates burst and God allowed me to pour my heart out and writing things that had burned in me for years suddenly burst. Connected me with key men that I was to work with and that were to have an impact on my life.

I'll tell you two things. On the one hand, it makes you think twice before you go on another long fast. Because you don't know what flesh God is going to bring to the surface this time.

You don't know what junk he's going to bring. I'm not talking about habitual, willful sin. I'm talking about impurities of life and character that most of us wouldn't even notice but that God sees.

But I'll tell you the other thing, I blessed God for every degree of purging and fire. And I said, Lord, send more. Send more.

Fire refines. God knows how to test. He knows the right Sunday to visit your church to see if he's really welcome.

He counsels the Laodiceans, buy of me gold refined in the fire. You want a cheap fix? You're in the wrong place, friends. You just want to get zapped and go out of here, change? You're in the wrong place.

Let that zapping zap you from the inside out. Let that zapping keep you shaking before God for days to come. I'm talking about your insides trembling.

If you shake outwardly, that's just fine, but that's not the issue. Let it be that you have such an encounter with God that your whole worldview turns upside down. Like Bob Rogers talked about.

Whole world changed after one encounter with God. And here's a man who was serious with God for decades. I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire.

Say, Lord, I don't just want something cheap. I just don't want a little excitement. One of the real curses in the contemporary renewal movement has been that the church has continued to focus inward instead of outward.

That God starts moving and instead of remembering why we were praying for revival, we were praying for revival because our city was going to hell. We were praying for revival because our nation was lost without God. We were praying for revival because people were bound in sin and sickness and unable to get free.

We were praying for God to come down. He begins to sweep in. Next thing we start to concentrate on the blessing, on the manifestation, on the new thing.

And we lose sight of why He was coming. And then we just end up having blessing meetings and manifestation meetings. I tell you, it's a reproach.

I was over in England a couple of weeks ago, as I mentioned. And it just struck me so plainly because the church I was in was with me heart for heart for this. But, you know, you go to some circles and it's just have another drink meeting, have another drink meeting.

That's absolutely immoral when the world is going to hell around you and you just want to have another spiritual drink and have another spiritual high and have another spiritual blessing. And get prayed for by another... I was prayed for in Brownsville. You've been prayed for in Brownsville.

No, but I've been prayed for in this place and this place and this place. Is it better in Brownsville? Oh, it's a little different. Oh, I'm going to go there.

That's what we used to do in our drug days. Get prayed for everywhere. Get prayed for a million times, but let it be so you go and die for this world.

So you go and pour yourself out so God touches you to touch others. Not just some cheap fix, some cheap blessing. We will pray for you joyfully until we drop.

If we know that you're going to go out and pour it out on a dying world. And go out and pour it out in holiness and go out and pour it out in repentance. And go out and pour it out in ministry to those in need.

We'll pray for you until we wear the hair off your head. Some of you say, no thanks, it's already warm. We'll pray for you anyway.

But let it be as God comes. Not just some cheap thing, not just some cheap thrill in the latest fad. Let it be I had a fresh encounter with God.

And out of that encounter I've gone out to shake my world. I said before that a devouring fire can't be contained. I wrote a prayer called Prayer for a Nice Revival that I sometimes refer to.

You know the kind of prayers that God will not answer. God, send your glory. Oh God, send your power.

Just keep it to an hour. No sir. Oh God, come and quench this longing of our soul.

And hear our one request, just leave us in control. You don't negotiate with fire, you don't argue with fire. Fire falls.

Devouring fire. Refining fire. If you want the glory, you're going to have to have it, friend.

Tabernacle of Moses, Exodus 40, read it at the end. The glory of the Lord comes down. The cloud and the fire.

Dedication of Solomon's Temple. Read about that in 2 Chronicles, the 7th chapter. Fire comes and consumes those sacrifices.

Fire at Pentecost. Baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. You get to heaven, Revelation 4. Lamps burning before the throne of God.

But for the pure and holy, it's fine. Judgment day for the righteous. Our works will be tried by fire.

It's unavoidable. The more fire you have here, the more at home you'll be at fire in there. Let me say this last thing about fire.

Simple principle. Somehow, these truths come up strongly in me at our leadership conferences. Every week, we do sessions for leaders.

We have hundreds of leaders coming through the revival. Every week. But these weeks in particular, when we have more leaders, and when we're all focused on ministering to the leaders, it seems certain things rise in my heart over and over and over again.

Hear me. It's an irreversible law of the kingdom. An irreversible law of the kingdom.

Everything produces after itself. Orange trees don't have apples. Cows don't give birth to monkeys.

We beget who we are. Leadership is not just listen to me, learn from me, but follow me. Watch my pattern.

Listen to me. Fire begets fire. Just as superficiality begets superficiality.

Performance orientation begets performance orientation. Coldness begets coldness. Tears beget tears.

There's no mystery why there are tears at this altar. When you hear tears and see tears in intercessory prayer, and see and hear tears in a broken heart in the preaching, of course there are tears at the altar. Of course a pastor goes back to his church and breaks down crying.

Tears beget tears. Fire begets fire. Listen to me.

I'm almost done here. Hebrews 1-7. Taking a word of the Psalms and putting an interesting twist on it.

God makes His ministers flames of fire. Ezekiel 8, a passage I love. There's an angelic being and the prophet sees him and he said he's like fire.

He stretches out a hand and it looks like fire. He's like electrum, like burning, glowing metal. Why? Why is the angel of the Lord totally ablaze, totally on fire? I say because he came out of the presence of the God who is fire.

I have been accused many times. There's a brother here who told me he got up really upset after I prayed for him one time and said to his wife, he slugged me in the stomach. Doubled over, fell to the ground.

His wife said as he got near you, you fell to the ground. And then he got hit with that same burden later on. I got in the habit in the revival of putting my hand when I prayed for brothers, putting my hand on their chest or on their stomach.

And just believing such as I have, I give you Lord that burden, let it burn in their heart. Lord that passion, let it burn. Paul said in Romans 12-11 to the Romans that they should be fervent in spirit.

The image is literally boiling in spirit. That's normal. Don't put out the spirit's fire.

That's normal. The fire of God in your churches, the fire of God in your pulpits, because the fire of God is in your heart. And as I'll pray for people, and pray for men and women, but I'll often just touch my hand to the stomach of a brother or put my hand on his heart and just say, fire! I'm asking God, Lord, let your fire fall, the fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire.

Lord, let it be refining fire. Lord, let it be a fresh burden. Let it be a fresh passion.

Let it be a fresh anointing. Let it be a fresh intensity. And often you may just see, and if you don't believe me, watch.

The anointing of God flows through all the people. Different ways, through the prayer workers, through all of us on the platform. The same anointing flowing in different ways.

And we've all had the same experience. You just reach over, you can barely touch someone. I'll reach over the pew and just get the back of my finger on some brother's heart.

And all of a sudden, he flips and flies over the pew onto his back and lays out there. We see it happen all the time. What is it? Fire.

The anointing of God's Spirit. Fire begets fire. And I'll tell you the prayer in my own life, I want to be ablaze.

I've seen God move. I've seen wonderful things. It's been the greatest privilege of my life to be involved in the revival here.

To work with these brothers and sisters here. To be involved in the school. But I'll tell you, I feel like I barely scratched the surface of what God could do through my life.

I feel sometimes I don't even know what it is to go after God. You say, but your schedule. All your schedules, yes they're intense, but there's something more.

There's something that cries out. First time when Steve preached on that theme of legacy. Some of the same examples, some other examples.

But he preached on that same theme as he preached on a little differently last night. And something ignited in me. We just sat down next to each other just in tears.

There's more. I want to be a threat to the devil. I want to see God get out of me the absolute maximum that's possible from a human life.

I know when I stand before him, I know when I see Jesus, I'm going to wish I could have done more. I'm going to wish I could have served him in a more wholehearted way. You say, brother, where's the sin and purity in my life? I'm going after God as best as I know how, but there's something in me, a dimension I want to shift into.

I want to be a blaze. I want to be a torch for God. Jesus said of John the Baptist, he was a lamp that burned brightly.

I want to be highly combustible. I want to be the moment the Spirit of God comes near me, flames erupt. The moment I touch someone else, flames erupt.

Sin is touched and flames erupt. Let me close with this. Listen to the prayer of Jim Elliot.

Steve made reference to him last night, martyred by the Auca Indians with Nate Saint and others. Amy Carmichael had prayed a prayer, make me thy fuel flame of God. Jim Elliot expanded on it.

God makes his ministers a flame of fire. Am I ignitable? God, deliver me from the dread asbestos of other things. Saturate me with the oil of thy Spirit that I may be a flame.

Make me thy fuel flame of God. Wigglesworth said, oh, if God has his way, we should be like torches purifying the very atmosphere wherever we go, moving back the forces of wickedness. We sang the William Booth song, Send the Fire.

When we sing it, that's a song dear to many of us, but I'll see Nancy look at me, my wife. She'll just glance at me and just mouth to me, they're singing your song. I mean, that's a theme song for many of us, Send the Fire.

Hear words from another hymn. Oh, that in me the sacred fire might now begin to glow. Burn up the dross of base desire and make the mountains flow.

To make my weak heart strong and brave, to live a dying world to save. Oh, see me on thy altar, lay my life, my all this very day. To crown the offering now I pray, send the fire.

Would you stand to your feet with me? We're just going to do this. And God is going to hear our hearts. I did this in 1982.

Scholarship had become an idol to me instead of a tool, but I thought I was right on course. And I said, God, I lay it on the altar. And everything that is not of you, burn up.

I'm going to ask us to ask God a simple prayer. A fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. Whatever the cost, whatever the consequence.

Close your eyes and raise your voices with me to God. Father, this day I cry out to you. Whatever the cost, whatever the consequence.

Lord, in my life, in the lives of the leaders here. Lord, in the lives of all those in the revival. The lives of all those that have come here.

God, send fire. Burn up that which is born of flesh. Burn up that which is sinful.

Burn up that which will not pass the test on that day. That only that which is born from heaven will last. Send holy revival fire.

Refining fire. Purifying fire. Send a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire.

Fire. Fire. Raise your voice and cry out for fire.

Fire. Fire. Fire.

Fire. Fire. Fire.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Pray this prayer with me.

Pray this prayer with me. Heavenly Father. Here I am.

A sacrifice. On your altar. I hold nothing back from you.

Hold nothing back from me. Send the fire. Set me ablaze.

Burn up the dross. Burn up the flesh. Make me a flame of fire.

Use me to set my world ablaze. In Jesus name. Amen.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

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