

Calling Down Fire ■ An Awful Weapon in the Hand of God

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to rekindle the fire of God in their hearts, calling for a revival of passion, boldness, and commitment to God. It challenges Christians to step out in faith, speak the truth with love, and take a stand against ungodly agendas in society. The message highlights the historical examples of bold and anointed individuals who shook nations with their faith and passion, urging listeners to seek a re-enlistment in God's army and to be filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Revelation 11:17, Revelation 19:11, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Acts 1:8, Jeremiah 23:29, Matthew 3:11, James 4:8, Psalm 51:10, Luke 15:20

Topics: "Revival", "Boldness in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

and I couldn't decide on which one to use, so I said, hey, let's do a subtitle. And I actually turned it into an article that will be going out on the national media this week. I think you have it if we passed it out, I believe.

Now, calling down fire, we're in Revelation 11 now, right? Revelation 11, he's going to actually, we're gonna talk about calling down fire. And then I love a quote that Robert Murray McShaney said back in the 1700s, I believe, maybe early 1800s. He said, a holy minister or even a holy person is an awful weapon in the hands of God.

And it reminds us that that's really how we're gonna confront our culture these days. It's not gonna be by politics, although it has an importance from time to time. It's not gonna be about protesting, although that can be important.

It's not about not going to target, amen? Even though that can be, you know, I know it's hard, but we do these things, but the bottom line is to really affect and change our nation, we're gonna need to be filled with the fire of God. And a holy person is an awful weapon in the hands of God. I have found that that's how God works, is through holy vessels with the fire of God's Spirit.

You don't have to be perfect to sign up for this mission, but you have to be committed. The fully surrendered life is so important. But let me explain the title to you just for a minute.

Just as the world needs to hear about salvation through Christ, Christians also need to be motivated and encouraged to go deeper. Now, this is one of the things that separate me. Some people say, you know, you've got a calling of an evangelist, which I do, I feel that, but I also feel called to wake up the church.

And it's hard to, you know, it's kind of hard to straddle that line, because you're, you know, why don't you do this more often? Why don't you do this more often? I don't know, I'm just trying to be faithful to what God's called me to do. I'm not Billy Graham. It's not always gonna be about salvation.

It's also going to be to wake up the church and to wake up the woke. And so that's why this is so important. Sometimes we need to be encouraged to go deeper.

That's when I started to go deeper, is when, actually old books, authors over a hundred years ago, I would read them and I'd go, oh, that still happens today? On revival and reading on Spurgeon's life and Wesley and Whitfield and the reformers and people like John Wycliffe or John Huss or William Tyndale, the Tyndale Publishing, those men, 1200s, 1300s, 1400s, were actually, two of the ones I just mentioned were burned at the stake. Burned, killed. Have you ever been set on fire? Even a little bit? And they said, we can't, we can't, we can't, we can't.

All they did was often was put the Bible in the tongue of the common person. And I read them and I get on fire and how revival broke out and how people, and that's why I talk about fasting because often prayer and fasting would prompt a lot of these spiritual awakenings from God. We have as much of God as we want.

Is our powerless due to prayerlessness? And I read this this week and I wanna tie it in. The Bible talks about rejoicing with the wife of your youth. And men, this is a good message for you too, this little rabbit trail.

And it says to always be enraptured with her love. And also how that can relate to pursuing Christ, that word enraptured, if you look it up in the Hebrew language, it means to be inflamed, to be excited about, to be aroused, to be kindled, to set ablaze, to be fired up. Now I know when I say that, people say, oh my goodness, I don't have that.

And see, there's something in the Bible where we can't go by feelings, we have to go by what God's Word says and you have to stir yourself up to these things. Because it goes on to say, why should you be enraptured by an immoral woman? And I thought instantly, being raptured and being enraptured by Christ and the things of God, or we can be led astray by the morality and the things of the world. And isn't that the battle of the Christian? I was also reading, I think yesterday in Proverbs where it talks about the simple man, he walks by the house of the adulteress.

And it says he lacks understanding, he lacks wisdom. And that says he walks by the house, wrong place. At night, wrong time.

And it says she entices him. She lures him in, lures him away from that right path. And that's the battle that Christians face today.

So be encouraged, yes, the proof that there's a battle also proves that there is something very important that we're fighting for. And I wanted to encourage you to read it, *Fire Upon the Altar*. It's a book, Gene Easley, nobody really even heard of him, I hadn't.

It's an older book. *Fire Upon the Altar*. And this morning at morning worship, I don't know if you know, but we open the church at 6 a.m. And we just put worship on.

You can bring a little light, you can read the words, you can come to the altar, then we go into prayer at 7.30. But I came across this. He said, when there is no communion with God, our lives are spent in darkness. We see nothing, we hear nothing, we have no answers.

Spiritual death sets in. Anybody been there? But at that place of prayer, God has promised to meet us. And there we will be given the answers.

He said, a Sunday morning blaze won't suffice. There must be fire upon the altar continually. The spiritual battle in which the Christian is engaged is fierce, it is no game.

Satan is intent upon destroying the presence of Christ from our lives. There are no vacations from spiritual warfare. That is why the fire must be kept burning.

And of course, what he's talking about, maybe not a lot of you know, but in the Old Testament, how important it is, the altar, right? Did you know that God actually lit the fire for the sacrifices? It came down from heaven, He lit it. And then what did He say? Now you keep it going. And it's that balance of God's sovereignty.

Yet I have a responsibility. And the fire of God is so important. And we're gonna talk about that in Revelation 11, one through three.

If you wanna get caught up, you can go back and hear the other messages. And John said he was given a read as he's taken up into this vision of heaven and seeing things that he writes down that quite honestly are hard to kind of put together. It's not like opening the first Corinthians and oh, this makes sense.

It's like allegory and simile and metaphor. And some things literal and some things aren't. And a lot of commentaries are divided on exactly what was happening.

But he said, I was given a read like a measuring rod. So he has this, how they would, they didn't have a Stanley tape measure back then. Everyone know that? It was probably like, you know, one, two, my dad used to do this a lot.

That's about six feet, right? But they would have a standard and usually, you know, from here to here or a rod where they would measure things. And he was given this rod and the angel said, the angel actually stood and he said to this, he told John to take action. He said, rise and measure the temple of God, measure the altar and those who worship there.

And as we talked about before, this altar was a place of death that ultimately gave life. And that's why we encourage people to come to the altar. It's not like there's some special power there or there's a, you know, some anointing there and you're good.

But it's a place of death that gives life. God, I am dying to self. I can't figure out this problem.

I need your help. I'm going to humble myself and seek you and ask for direction. And I actually just threw this in, how to know God's will.

From last week, I was able to get to it. But the best way to know God's will, you see it? Three words. Let's wake up.

Thanksgiving service. The best way to know God's will is to remove self-will. They compete against each other.

I was texting Ray. Thank God for our Usher team. 12 guys here yesterday getting the sanctuary ready.

And thank all of you guys for doing that. And of course, Luke and Sarah and John, the whole team is just amazing. You guys think I lead the church.

I don't. I just come and say what needs to be said. And a whole group of people help the church keep going.

But anyway, I'm like, hey, we need to get some 12-foot ladders and just stick them up right here. I saw this analogy on Instagram. And you put one foot on each ladder, right? And it's like, I want the world, but I also want God.

And I'm not gonna go, I can't climb either. So I have to let go of the world and hold onto this ladder and know God's will. And that is, he had to take action here.

He said, do this, take action. So how to know God's will? If you're having a hard time knowing God's will, remove self, self-will, self-will. Self-opinion, self-righteous.

I'm a self-made man. Self, self, self, self, self. Now, it doesn't mean you'll instantly have the key or the knowledge.

Now, oh, now I know completely what God's will is. But now at least you're lined up correctly. Hey, Lord, I don't know about this job.

I don't know about this move. I don't know about this situation, but I'm giving up my will, my fear. Hello? My discouragement, my doubt, and I'm just giving that up and whatever your will is in this area, I will follow.

But the angel said, but leave out the court. So don't measure the court, which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for 42 months.

And I will give power to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth. In other words, they're clothed in brokenness. They're clothed in the anointing of God.

And looking at the different commentaries, it really all depends on what your view is of the end times. If you're an all-millennial, pre-millennial, post-millennial, they all view that differently. Because Jesus, you know, His ministry was 3 1/2 years, so they'll kind of tie that in.

Or Titus conquering Jerusalem, you know, about that time. Or it's something coming up in the future, right? And of course, you could tie in Daniel with the 3 1/2 year period, the tribulation, the Antichrist

supposedly will make a covenant. And those things are hard for me because it's not real clear.

You have to kind of pull in some things. And all we know is we'll see. We'll see.

We'll know in the future whose view is right. And if you get caught up on these different views and it sidetracks you from following Christ, you will get off track. And I will give power to My two witnesses.

Who are these witnesses? Well, that's another interesting debate. Commentaries are divided as well. I will give power to My two witnesses and they will prophesy 1,260 days.

Now, it's interesting. He's going to seal up these witnesses. What does seal mean? It means a protection.

There's a protection there. And then treading the holy city, Daniel 7.25. I knew I had it there somewhere. He talks about those who speak against the Most High.

And they will oppress His holy people and they will try to change and set times and laws. So many think that is coming up in the future where a leader is going to try to set, change things. And isn't that pretty possible now? I mean, AI to me is a little alarming.

Just a little. Have you heard of deep fakes? Deep fakes. They can take a person's face and their voice and make them do things that they're really not doing.

Especially for stealing their information. Different things we see. Laws and things that could be changing here in the future.

The holy people, Daniel said, will be delivered into the hands for a time, times, and half a time. So Daniel, many say that this is that portion where the 42 months and what's going to happen here in the future. And Jesus even talked about it in Luke.

And they will fall by the edge of the sword and they will be led captive into all nations and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Now again, just in case you haven't been here, that could be something coming up. Some people tie it into what happened in Jerusalem when a lot of this actually did happen in 70 AD under Titus.

They were, this exact thing happened. But is the time of the Gentiles fulfilled at that point? Probably not. So you could see how this could be a future event.

But these two witnesses, they will proclaim God's word. I will give my two witnesses and they will prophesy. Now this is interesting.

These two witnesses, they're not gonna teach. The word is specific, especially if you look it up in the Greek. And what does the Greek language mean? What's the tense of it? What's the thrust of it? It is to proclaim God's truth.

It's to prophesy. And often, people don't like to hear it. Correct? The prophets prophesied.

Were they popular? No. No. Look at it today.

Look at bold Christians today. Those are the ones being persecuted the most. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube.

But thank God, he raises up a rumble for every YouTube. And Elon Musk, I don't know where he's at spiritually, but I'm glad he bought Twitter because things were going in a very, I don't know if you realize how censored we were becoming. It's amazing God just does things like this, in my opinion.

But those who prophesy, those who speak God's Word truthfully and boldly are not popular. The world doesn't like them. Carnal Christians sure don't like them.

The prideful and the arrogant Pharisee disdain them. And so these two witnesses are going to prophesy. I'm pretty sure it's not going to be a seeker-sensitive message.

It's probably gonna be like what Jesus, when He came on the scene in John the Baptist. Repent. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Repentance. Repent, you stiff-necked people. Repent, you've drifted from God.

Turn back to Him. They're not gonna be popular, but they are going to be powerful. And then Revelation keeps going to 11.

Chapter 11, verse 4. Actually tells us who the witnesses are. And we can get a lot more controversial on the different topics. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands.

What in the world are you talking about? So the two witnesses are two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. Now stop there for a minute. Remember what I told you that first bullet point? To really understand Revelation, and I haven't fully exhausted this, there's so many cross-references to the Old Testament.

To really understand Revelation, you've gotta understand Old Testament imagery and language. Because John pulls in a lot from the Old Testament. Jesus riding clouds.

Is He riding a cloud? Is it like a black rain cloud? No. Go to the Old Testament, judgment. The clouds, the darkness, the wrath of God.

It's not an actual little cloud up there. And so you can look at all these in Zachariah 4.3, 4.11, 4.14, they talk about actually the olive trees and what the lampstands mean. And so He said they are representative of olive trees and lampstands standing before God.

And if anyone wants to harm them, I love this part, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. God doesn't play.

That'd have been another good sermon title, huh? God don't play. They have the power to shut heaven so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy. And they have power over waters to turn them to blood and to strike the earth with all the plagues as often as they desire.

So most of you just reading this go, oh, I've heard this before. I've heard this in the Old Testament. Who was able to do things like this? Moses and Elisha? Exact same things.

So that's why many think if there are two witnesses on the scene that they would be Moses and Elisha. Barnes commentary, one of the ones I use from time to time. I try to use different ones.

I don't just use all commentaries that are pre-tribulation, dispositional, what most people believe. I don't use just all millennial. I like to, what are these great men of God saying? As the olive tree furnished oil for the lamps, the two trees here would seem probably properly to denote ministers.

And no doubt the candlesticks or lampbearers are churches. Now, not sure I agree with that, but interesting nonetheless. And a lot of times too, you have to understand as I learned years ago, there's exceptions to this, but often a commentary like this one won't talk about the supernatural because they already don't agree with the supernatural.

The gifts have ceased. They're not for us today. So it's kind of hard to say that this is actual, something supernatural happening because they don't believe that.

So commentaries are also bent on what the author believes. Many of you, if you read the English standard version of the Bible, how many of you have that? I tease Luke sometimes and I call it the elect standard version because when they go to translate certain words, they'll have a Calvinistic bent to them. And so as you read, it's more like a Calvinist wrote it or others, the NIV will have more like an Armenian.

And so that's the thing with translations and commentary, you have to remember, they're people just like us. And it's hard to sift through all of that and find out exactly what God is saying. That's why many times I just ask God.

And then I go to the commentaries to make sure I'm not, I'm so glad I have many times, I'm like, oh, I didn't take that into consideration. You know, many of the commentators spent their whole life on studying the Bible. But because, for example, if they're against the supernatural, one thing that's always was so funny to me is remember J. Vernon McGee? Bible bus, just boring and monotone, but I love to listen.

You know, it just didn't fire me up, like Chuck, you know, just kind of, but it was so, I just want to keep listening because it's so, so informational. And even I think MacArthur does this in his study Bible, if I'm not mistaken. But when they get to the part about, and Jesus breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit.

Both of them said they didn't receive the Holy Spirit, it was more of a pledge of what would happen days, weeks later in the day of Pentecost. Like, well, that doesn't sound like a pledge to me. That sounds like they receive the Holy Spirit.

But because they don't believe in a baptism of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural, they're all kind of got to make that, got to get a twist, not twist, but kind of got to, yeah, I kind of got to say that, no, no, no, they don't have the Holy Spirit yet. They're going to get the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And when I read it, you can look at the verb tenses, it appears that Jesus said receive the Holy Spirit, but they had not yet been endued with power by the Holy Spirit.

So the Holy Spirit was in them, but not upon them until the day of Pentecost. And again, you have to be careful with who you read because they have prejudices. So do I, right? I can kind of, you know, have something go a certain way, but that's why I like to try to just balance and what's the balance? And it's funny, it ticks people off sometimes when I don't support their view.

It's like, well, you don't have full assurance that that is the right view. Well, no, but, so what's wrong with showing people both views? So anyway, Matthew Poole said this about the two witnesses. Here is a plain allusion to the stories of Moses and Elisha.

I agree, calling for fire from heaven, but God show it that the victory of his ministers under the gospel shall be by a miraculous fire called down from heaven. But, actually he said, will not be called. So he's saying there's not actual fire being called down, but it's actually fire coming out of their mouths because they're preaching the word of God.

Did, well, I think I have it here actually. We're gonna get to it. I won't get to it yet.

Jeremiah said though, God told Jeremiah, I will make words in your mouth fire and the people would and you will devour them with the word of God. So like, that's a good point, but let's go back one screen. Sorry about that.

Sorry, I jumped ahead. John MacArthur, what he said about the two witnesses, and I was actually surprised and would agree with him. Two witnesses are two people who supernaturally do signs and wonders.

So if I could ask him this, I'd say this, signs and wonders in the New Testament, but no signs and wonders today, but signs and wonders come back. Wait a minute, wait a minute. Tricks are for kids.

Come on. I'm just being transparent. And that's something I've struggled with.

So as we continue to read in Revelation, I would see this view by MacArthur seems to be the most plausible answer, in my opinion. You can look, it looks like there's possibly two witnesses doing supernatural things. Remember, even the disciples wanted to call down fire.

And Jesus said, the power to shut heaven. So they also have the power to shut heaven. Barnes' commentary, this would properly refer to some miraculous power, but still, it may be used to denote merely that they would be able to clothe the power of causing blessings to be withheld from the people.

Possibly. But the pulpit commentary, I like what it said. I'm just gonna read the end of it.

It says, it is doubtful whether the meaning should be pressed further than this. In other words, we don't know. We don't know.

It says that the whole verse is descriptive of powers entrusted to Moses and Elijah, but it's intended to convey the idea that the power which supported them would also support the witnesses. In other words, but don't get into too many debates on this. Here's what we do know.

Practical application, amen. Fire heats. Fire heats, fire purifies, fire reveals, fire consumes, fire devours, and fire decimates.

Maybe I'm assuming you know what I'm talking about, but some of those might be new or listening later. I've talked about this so much before, I don't want to go into a lot of detail, but the fire of God is not a good thing if you're not a believer. Hello? I know I'm kind of making this fire positive, but there's very negative fire.

Ask Sodom and Gomorrah. Ask where Jesus said where the worm does not die and they're not quenched and the fire doesn't go out and Gehenna and hell and Sheol and these places that, and when I get to hell and heaven, I'll talk about the holding place and the hell later. There's different words described, but the bottom line is the fire is often paralleling judgment.

But when it comes to the fire for the believer, oh, thank God for the fire of God. I don't know about you, but that's what purifies. That's what revives.

That's what goes in deep and you have the fire of God in your heart. Have you ever felt that? You know, it's just, oh, it's just, ah, like Jeremiah. His word is in my heart.

Like that fire, it's burning. John the Baptist said, Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Now, in some Bibles, it might say, ~~and with fire~~, meaning the majority text.

Some manuscripts don't have that in there, that one little, God allowed it, and I'm gonna preach it. And so many believers don't have the fire. Do they? They're cold, they're callous.

And my whole point in these types of sermons is to awaken what is already inside of you. Fire quenches carnality, or carnality will quench your fire. It's your choice.

True? Truth is a spiritual sword that cuts deep into the depravity of the heart. The world enjoys the pleasantries of Scripture, but set your words ablaze with the fire of God, and even friends will become enemies. Oh, I have lots of memories.

I was just coming back to the Lord, seeking Him. Morgan was as well. We met, and we all had friends, right? But as the fire is burning in our hearts, now it wasn't burning in everybody else's heart.

So how we wanted to spend our time was not quite how they wanted to spend their time, right? Up to midnight, watching Halloween reruns, drinking the 12-pack. Christians. And when I say, I don't really wanna do, oh, Mr. Holier than thou.

I don't really wanna watch that. I don't wanna do those things. I mean, the flesh wants you, but there's this fire now.

There's this fire, and if I do those things, I quench that fire. And a lot of friendships would just fall off, and fall off, and fall off. I go, Lord, what's wrong with me? What's wrong with me? But we see it all the time.

When you're on fire for God. My aunt comes here sometimes. I have to remind her.

Many years ago, she goes, oh, Shane's just in a phase. 23 years ago. I've got friends.

He's in Havasu now. He invites me there. He goes, we won't drink.

I'm like, I know you won't drink, but I don't wanna go. Why am I gonna go get in your boat on Havasu? What, other than witness, why don't you come to California, right? But I wanna remind his wife. Didn't you say 23 years ago, this was just a passing fad? I won't, but I might send this to him to listen to, but isn't that true? Your friendships get a little more narrow.

Why are we gonna go watch that movie and it just doesn't resonate? Oh, you Jesus freak. A friend of mine that used to come here. I'll never forget the day.

God was changing me, and it takes time. You need to not get so judgmental, people. I mean, that first year, I was like on fire for God.

I'm like going to church, I'm praising God, I'm getting baptized, and then I'm drunk the next weekend. Come on, let's be honest. It's a struggle.

And we're going to Laughlin, he's got the jet skis, and I'm just there, I'm miserable. Sitting on the river. And I said, I can't do this anymore.

And he was not happy. Never saw him again. Maybe run into him now and then.

He came here for a little while. Years went by. But that's what happens.

That fire of God, not everybody likes it. Your family doesn't like it. You ever go, why haven't I heard from them in a while? I don't know.

Now, you don't want to be weird, right? And overly religious and quoting the Bible and just slamming them, but just who you are sometimes is going to be repulsive. Right, if you're on fire with God, you're just not, they're not going to want to be around you because it's very convicting. Spouses have to deal with this, and I feel really bad for that.

We get that a lot. One spouse is on fire, the other's not. That's challenging.

And that's why I wrote this this week. The world enjoys the pleasantries of Scripture, but set your world ablaze with the fire of God, and even friends will become enemies. What was that guy's name in New York? Carl Lentz.

Or T.D. Jakes, or they'll go on Oprah. I'm like, well, I could go on Oprah if I said those things. Right, just so, oh, just so.

I remember they asked Carl Lentz, what about abortion? Oh, Oprah, that's not my job. Or Joel Stein, I mean, that's not my job. I don't know, I just love people, and that's an own personal choice, and oh, I'm so glad you said that because I, you know, again, we don't know.

Who are we to say, give me a break? That's cowardly. That's capitulation. But see, when you talk about the pleasantries of Scripture, no alarms go off.

No fire bells, fire alarms, like that guy and pulled the fire alarm, that little sneaky guy in Washington, right? Got a little slap on the hand. But it's the fire that consumes. It's the fire.

Reading, I'm reading a book on circuit riders, Methodist circuit riders that started in England, came into America, and did you know there's something called the Wesleyan or the Methodist revolts, 1720s, 1730s in England, where ministers in churches, I think the Church of England, it was all under George, King George III, it was the Church of England, and Methodists came out of that. They would actually persecute the Methodists. They would burn their fires and kick them out of town because they had the fire of God.

Yes, it will bring the most persecution, but it will bring the most freedom. You live with the fire of God, the anointing of God, the power of God, the unction of God. It is the only hope for our nation without a shadow of a doubt.

It is it. So Jeremiah said, behold, I will make my words, God told Jeremiah this, I'm gonna make my words in thy mouth fire, and the people will be wood, and it will devour them. Sometimes you've gotta ruffle the feathers to bring out the best.

Go just for a day, go to a marine boot camp, and watch how loving and nice and gentle they are. Have you ever thought about that? Why is marine boot camp not very nice and gentle? Because they're building

soldiers. Me and Morgan love to go down to, sometimes when we get a chance, Coronado and sip on our sparkling water, and oh, look at those Navy SEAL guys.

We're having fun, but they're preparing for battle. I'm gaining weight, they're getting in shape. I'm getting soft, they're getting tough.

The condition of our church today is from soft preaching, without a shadow of a doubt. No, no, no, I have no question in my mind, because I see it everywhere I go. Thank God for the great churches that are out there.

We have a lot in our valley. But overall, we're catering to people what they want to hear. What they want to hear.

It's almost like when I used to help people with health and fitness and weight loss, they'd come and saw it all the time. Hey, I need to lose 100 pounds. Hey, just Chick-fil-A's good, McDonald's is okay, donuts, Krispy Kreme, don't worry about any of that.

Am I gonna help them? Exercise, that's old school. Here's what you need to do. Wear this belt for 30 minutes every day and just let it shake you.

And buy this glider. All you need is two minutes a day. Gimmicks, self-pitches with no truth.

You need to tell them it's gonna be tough, it's gonna be a hard year, but we can get you there. We gotta cut this out, we gotta do this, you gotta start getting up earlier, get to bed better, get off of this. And you discipline the body to have them change.

Same thing when it comes to following Christ. We have to hear the hard things in order to change. "Is not My word like a fire?" God says." His word is like a, this is so interesting, I don't know why we don't realize this.

God Himself, God, not somebody saying it, God said, I'm gonna make your words fire, and then He goes on to say, My word is like a fire, and it's like a hammer which shatters a rock. I'm gonna tell you something I've never said before. I don't believe in preaching.

But this verse has been a great comfort for me over the last 13 years. Because it helps me understand why not everyone stays here. Yeah, I guess it's funny, I didn't think of a joke, but just being honest, just being honest.

This is why a lot of people leave this church. The word of God devours, it convicts, and they don't wanna hear it. And I try my hardest, I try my hardest to stay humble, to be broken.

I've reached out, hey, I apologize if you took that wrong, but this is what God's word, and try to stay humble, try to not say it out of arrogance, try to not say it, but just let the word of God come alive. And when you do that, God's word are gonna become like fire and the people are like wood and it devours them. You think everyone likes that? At least a half dozen people I know of, at least last three years left, because I was harassing, I was saying come to 6 a.m., worship too much.

Like you're gonna leave a church over that? I think there's some deeper issues going on. Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, it's called conviction. And I'm just being transparent, it's a very hard calling, because I'm a people pleaser.

Personal criticism hurts more deeply than it should. Because I was a people pleaser, and when I came back to the Lord, He said, I'm ripping that out of you. And so I understand that, oh, what I say, not a lot of people are going to like, it's my calling.

It's my calling. And if I run from that, I'm miserable. I am miserable if I run from that calling.

I have a pastor, a friend of mine, we might get together, and he doesn't have that calling. And one day, you know, I was talking about this, and I said, we have, he said, no, we have the same calling. I said, no, we have the same title, pastor, but we have a much, much different calling.

And there's nothing I can do about it, because God put the fire in there for a specific purpose. But this verse has been my go-to many times. First, of course, I have to check my heart.

Like, is that angry, is that arrogant, is that mean-spirited, then that's not good. But if it's simply saying, hey, guys, you need to find yourself at this altar at 6 a.m. and give God your problems, that's too convicting. Well, you have a problem, I don't, because that shouldn't convict a person.

That's just the truth. Now, is it hard to get here? Absolutely, or prayer meetings. Why are the prayer meetings not many people? We can have evening prayer meeting, no many people.

There goes your morning excuse. See, it doesn't matter, it's the fire. And when you try to light that fire, and when I try to light that fire, those people who say, ah, that's exactly what I need, thank you, Lord, oh, they're so blessed by it.

But those who don't want that fire, they shoot the messenger. They shoot the messenger. And I get shot a lot.

But this verse has been very helpful for me, because I don't think, I don't know of any other, and I'm not just saying this, I don't know of any other church, we hear from people on radio, ladies flying from Hawaii to get baptized next weekend, and Arizona, it's amazing how many people are getting lit with the fire of God. So what's going on? A receptive heart, an unreceptive heart. That's the difference.

But I can relate, because in my 20s, I would hate me. I would not want to, I tell my mom, if you invite me to this church, I'm never coming back again. That guy, that guy, he's convicting me too much.

I don't like conviction. Correct, when you live in carnality, do you like conviction? No way. It's not until you get to a spot of repentance that it begins to make sense.

Jeremiah 23, I love this one too, is not my word like a fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that shatters a rock in pieces. Robert Murray McShaney, a holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. I want to give you three examples before I get to some brief practical application.

Have you heard of Justin Martyr? Justin Martyr. I think we even have a picture. He was brutally killed, just look at him and think of him, he was brutally killed in 165 AD because he was unwilling to worship gods of Rome as well as the emperor.

It is said that the fire that burned in him was greater than the persecution that befell him. Next we have an ordinary man. We can put him up as well.

Savonarola. Savonarola, just a normal man, read all about him. He was able to set Italy ablaze with conviction.

Scholars said that it was his fiery, dramatic preaching that set the town on fire. And then number three, one of my favorites, one of my favorites, they called him the thundering Scott, John Knox. John Knox, the British ambassador at that time, Thomas Randolph said of him, the voice of this one man is able in one hour to put more life in us than 500 trumpets blustering in our ears.

And his gravesite, they said, here lies one who neither flattered nor feared any flesh. I can take, we could have stayed here all morning. Men and women filled with the fire of God.

Amy Carmichael, Adonai Hudson, Hudson Taylor, John Bunyan, filled with the fire of God. You don't read about people who are not filled with fire because they're not doing anything for God. We've got to get that fire back in the pulpit and the pew.

So let's do a quick practical application. Revelation 12.11, you're familiar with this. And they overcame the devil by what? How? By the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony.

And they did not love their lives to the death. So they overcame him by the blood of the lamb. They're filled with the holy fire.

They're Christians. And by the word of their testimony, the fire of their words. That's how they overcome the enemy.

Isn't that true? As the enemy's trying to take us out, we're filled with holy fire. We're filled with the Holy Spirit. I'm not perfect.

God, I fell last week or I fell last month or yesterday, but God, I'm getting back up and I need to be back in your will again. I need that holy fire again. And then we preach the words or we go and we lead people to the cross or we pray for our family members.

See, when you're on fire, it can't just stay contained. Fire can't stay contained. It burns, it goes out.

And that's what it talks about being, when the Holy Spirit is upon you, there's an overflowing of the Holy Spirit. It comes out of you. And if I were to turn on the water from this baptismal and just let it flow, would it shut itself off? No, it's flowing out because it's upon, it's overcoming, it's coming out of the person in the same way.

That's the fire of God. Now, you can't love this life and Jesus at the same time. You cannot love this life and Jesus at the same time.

Jesus said, whoever loves his life will lose it. Now, a lot of people, maybe especially if they're not Christians, that doesn't make sense. Loving life means, as a person, we all know this, in this room at least, my love can't be divided.

Try telling your spouse, hey, I'm going to pull a King Solomon, I'm going to have a thousand wives, and can I get married 12, 15 times? You can't give your love to another. Same way with following Christ. You can't serve two masters.

You'll be loyal to the one and hate the other. And so loving my life, when I love my life, I cling on to that life. For example, a people pleaser, back to that.

If I want to be a people pleaser, I love my life, I can't follow Christ conditionally. You think I can preach? You think I can really preach if I'm worried about the opinions of people? Absolutely not. And if I love, I love my finances, I love my job, I can't, oh Lord, I can't do that.

I can't give up everything and God doesn't call everyone to give up everything. Once you realize, this was life changing for me, years ago, I heard teachings, maybe Chuck Swindoll. I'm like, you know what? We are money managers.

Everything we have is not ours. Let that sink in. The money in your bank? Your income, it's not yours.

As a believer, you are a money manager. Where does God want these resources to go? Don't worry, we're not doing a building fund. It could be, where does he want to go? First, to pay your bills.

If you don't provide for your own family, you're worse than an infidel, the Bible says. Boy, that will kill laziness. Get up and do something.

I used to have too much, but guys, all the time, it's like, man, I'm trying, I threw out a few applications, well, throw out a few more and go pound the pavement, they used to call it when I was younger. They still say that? Go out and do something, something. So if you love your life, I love my life.

I love your hold on to what you love. And often, Christ tells us to, hey, just release it. Release it.

Doesn't mean, you might still have everything you have, but at least you release the grip it had on you. So practical application on this message, who do you need to talk to this week, or write to, or text, or email, or even I put create a track, or you can use ours. We handed out a few, I believe you can hand out our tracks.

And what I mean by that is who, do you need to talk to anybody about God? The fire of God in your heart. Getting back to that, because witnessing will bring out the fire. When you start to witness to God, it's just, there's something about the fire comes out.

I remember I was, early morning, I went to an AM, PM, and I was walking in there, and this guy, you can tell, he's probably, I don't know, homeless, or maybe sleeping on the sidewalk. And I said, hey, let me just buy that for you. And he's, oh, man, thanks.

He goes, hey, you want some marijuana? I'm like, no, I'm okay. But what you need, and I just, man, whoa, where did this come from? I was just gonna do my own thing. And now, I'm like, you need God, you need to get into church this weekend.

Your time is running, you can't keep playing games. I'm like, what is this? Yeah, I know, he puts his head down, I know. And I went out and looked for one of my books, because it's good to give people something, and just like, you can feel that come out when you start to do that.

Now, I could've said, ah, I don't wanna deal with this. Or another guy, he just wanted me to fill up his little tiny gas thing that says girlfriend's car's out of gas. I don't know if it's true.

But I filled up his car. And he's like crying. I can tell, I go, you high right now? You on meth? He's like, yeah, we're coming down off.

I'm like, man, you need to get to church. Can I pray for you? And it just comes out. Like, you need to stop this, it'll take you out.

And this bolt, where's it come from? I'm just pumping my gas, I'm not even thinking the Gospel. But it comes out as you begin to step out and begin to witness. You don't have to worry exactly what you have to say, just tell them about your story, what God has done in your life, in your heart.

So is there anyone you need to talk to that you've been avoiding? I need to write a letter to a family member. I need to step out and do that. Or take one of our tracks that has the church on the back, has the Romans Road, briefly.

Just say, hey, let me share this with you. I wish I would have had those when I encountered these people. Because you never know.

You never know. What about if we actually went to school board meetings and spoke the truth with fire? In love, of course. What about if we went to these meetings, as parents, you're retired, you don't have kids at home.

So many of you have so much extra time, I get jealous. Do something with it. Netflix will be there tomorrow.

You know? Ooh, that must have hit a chord. But what about if we actually went to school board meetings and spoke the truth with fire and let it consume sinful agendas? I just heard from someone who was at the Santa Clarita. Heart Union High School District is considering not informing parents when a kid comes out as whatever.

They're considering not telling the parents. The reason is some parents might not handle it correctly, correct? That's like 1%. What about the other 99% of parents who need to be informed? And they were clearly outnumbered.

The parents were clearly outnumbered by those with this godless agenda. So by the way, the next meeting's down there, December 6th. Not letting you off the hook.

Anybody going, can I put them in touch with you? I don't know if there's any at this service. But let us know we can put you in touch with the people who are going. I have it on my calendar if it works.

And just, I don't care what people say, you tell them the truth. And you just, with love, and you speak the truth. But we should be the most loving, understanding, and caring people there.

Absolutely. We're the most loving and caring. But we're also the most boldness.

Boldness? No. We're also the boldest. The fire of God.

The fire of God. See, what's happening is the schools think they are their children. And you need to go and say, no, they're not your children.

They're the parents' children. And it's sad that some, maybe, parents are violent to their kids when that happens. We need to figure out how to fix that, but how dare you punish the other 99%.

Also, this one, I don't know if you've been following, but the Los Angeles Unified School District unanimously approved a resolution encouraging all district schools, hello, we're in Los Angeles County, to incorporate lessons on the LGBTQ community into their curriculum. This is such a hard topic, because I talk to Christian teachers. Like, I don't know about that.

They say it, I have to do it. I'm like, golly, Lord, help. I guess I couldn't be a teacher.

I couldn't be a politician. And I know it's hard, so I'm not discounting that. I don't know, you don't wanna just go and lose your job either, but how can you, how do we let a godless culture, why not at least come to prayer meetings? Why not at least be filled up with the fire of God instead of being swayed by public opinion, whatever the government says? There's a church I know, I wanna talk to this guy.

It's like, his church is from here to the road from Planned Parenthood. Yes, I'm not gonna say anything about abortion, Shane, the government says it's okay. My goodness, that is cowardliness.

You don't have the fire of God in your heart? You're a motivational speaker who wants to please men. Where's the fire of God? What if we ran for office and asked God to use us in powerful ways as we're filled with the fire? I didn't know much about the new Speaker of the House until I knew who was against him. I said, oh, must be a great guy.

That's right, that's all you have to do. Look who's coming against the new speaker. Oh, well, he must be fantastic.

How dare they pray? Do you know the founders would pray? Lincoln called how many days of prayer and fasting? Nobody can even run for office unless they believe in God. Did you know that? You can even run for office? In God we trust. What if we posted things on social media exposing the unfruitful works of darkness, but in a spirit of humility rather than remaining silent because of fear? Fire begins with prayer, it's fueled by worship, and it is sustained by obedience.

I didn't expect to get too many claps on that one. But what I said, if I would have said, God's gonna bless you beyond measure today. Whatever the sole of your foot touches, you're gonna be blessed.

That Mercedes you want, just go stop by the Mercedes dealer. You just go walk around that place like Joshua. Seven times you say, this is mine, this is mine.

Oh, we'd have a standing ovation. But when it comes to the fire of God and wanting more of God, it penetrates the heart and we have to repent of our callous and coldness. Could powerless be the result of prayerlessness? Could powerless be the result of prayerlessness? Yes.

Guys, why does this fire me up? Because we are living in dire times. Do you see the times we're living in? It still blows my mind. Why aren't prayer meetings full? Why aren't we calling for nights of worship? What? We just must not realize we're just living in this bubble.

This is a call specifically to men, but women, you can listen as well. Men, did you know you can be an awful weapon in the hand of God? Women as well, of course. And I titled it, Where Are They? Where Are They? And it's from my book, If My People.

And I threw this out to the congregation in Lancaster. Years ago, I still remember. I want to just throw out the challenge to you.

And I wrote them down so you can see it. Let it penetrate your heart. Where are the Isaiahs and the Jeremiahs calling nations to repentance? Where are the Peters and the Pauls who spoke with such authority that martyrdom did not silence them? Though they are dead, they shall speak.

They still speak. Where are the Wycliffe's who stood so unyielding for the truth that he was called the morning star of the reformation? Where are the Tyndales and the Husses who were burned at the stake for simply declaring the truth? Where are the Luther's who said, I can do no other when he was asked to recount all of his works? Where are the John Calvins who shaped the religious thoughts of our Western culture? Where are the John Knox's who cried, give me the Scotland for the cause of Christ or I shall die? Who's saying give me America for the cause of Christ or I shall die? Give me the Antelope Valley for the cause of Christ or I shall die. Listen, God really had to deal with, let's pause for a minute.

God really had to deal with me for years ago, years ago. I didn't want to tell people where I'm from. How embarrassing for a Christian.

Even now it's a badge of honor because I like it now. Palmdale, the meth capital of L.A. County? Lancaster? This? Have you checked the crime? This, this? Yes, I'm supposed to be a light in the darkness. Why aren't more people signing up to go thank the sheriffs in Lancaster and Palmdale? Church, where are we? Why does such a small amount of people do the majority of the work? Every week it blows my mind.

Do people not see what's going on in the world? We should be the most energetic, filled with holy fire people on the planets. Where are the Whitfields who shook the continents? Where are the Hal Harris's, the Daniel Rowlings and the Griffin Jones who preach with such passion during the Welsh revivals of the 18th century that we still honor them today? I say again, where are they? Where are the John Wesleys who said, give me 100 preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and we will shake the gates of hell? Where are the David Brainers who spent so much time in prayer that even the great Jonathan Edwards was convicted? Where are the Robert Murray McShaney's who even though he died at age 29 was one of Scotland's most anointed preachers causing people to weep before he even preached a word? Where are the Spurgeon's who spoke with such authority that his sermons are read now more today than ever before? Where are the D.L. Moody's who brought America to her knees? Where are the Evan Roberts who during the Welsh revivals preached so powerfully against sin that people would cry out, no more Lord Jesus lest I die. And where are the famous Puritans like Richard Baxter who preach I preach as a dying man to dying men? Where are they today? Guys, we need that holy fire.

There's baptism for repentance. If you need to finally repent and give your life to the Lord, stop playing games with God, now's the time to do that. But there's also a baptism I call a baptism of re-enlistment.

I'm gonna show you the picture someday that in 2000, I got baptized again and I was re-enlisted. I'm fully in, I'm surrendered. I was baptized as a baby, blah, blah, blah.

I was baptized at five or six or seven, meant nothing. But I'm getting baptized, I'm re-enlisted. Re-enlisted, I'm on fire again.

I want that fire of God. If you want to do that as well, let us know. We would love to baptize you.

And I want to end with this. They don't have it, but I just pulled it in. Next week, next week, as we read in 11, it's something very interesting.

He says, and there was a loud voice in heaven saying the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever. Oh, we need to remind ourselves of that. We are not defeated, we are in a position of battle right now, but ultimately there is victory.

The world, specifically the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord. See, never forget this, this is helpful. Jesus sits down at the right hand of the Father, right? The Bible says He's sitting down at the right hand, oh, I can't sit down.

But at some point, He's gonna stand up. But at some point, He's gonna get up. And as we keep reading, it says, He comes back with the armies of heaven and His eyes are like flames of fire and on His head are many crowns.

And out of His mouth goes a sword that He rules the nation. He treads those nations with the white breast in the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. That's Jesus.

And when He stands up, when He stands up, nations tremble, the earth splits when He puts His feet down. Even kings bow and armies flee from the presence of Christ. So if you've been lacking that fire and you need that fire, you wanna reenlist, you wanna be, isn't it funny how the Bible puts, well, the English language, but we put R-E in front of words.

Revived, re-ignited, renewed. What it is is something that used to be but has died. You light a fire and it goes out, you have to re-ignite it.

Oh God, would you revive us again? We were once alive and on fire for God. But just, hey, I'm just like you. I'm never preaching at you.

I'm in the same battle. The enemy's shooting me with the same bullets, honey. Sometimes it's a little difficult because I live in a fishbowl.

People are watching me all the time. Same struggles. Sometimes I quench and grieve the Spirit of God.

Hello? I can't believe our pastor said that. You run from any church where a pastor tells you he doesn't. Because that means they're perfect, that means they're living in pride and they're already quenching and grieving the Spirit.

So I fight the same battles, have the same struggles. But come hell or high water, we will get back up and we will fight again, no matter how far I go down. No matter how far I go down, I say, God, oh God, revive me again.

Oh, that the bones may rejoice again. God, ignite in me that passion again. I don't feel it right now, but God, I want that fire of prayer.

I want the anointing of the Holy Spirit on my life. I need to be a better father. I need to be a better husband.

I need to be a better pastor. I need to be broken and humble at that altar. Oh God, create in me a clean heart.

Renew that fire again. God, revive me again. And the joy comes later.

Often we have to pursue God when you don't feel like it. But the joy comes later. The reason is you're fighting your flesh.

You're fighting the flesh. Of course you don't feel like it. Why is fasting so hard? Hello, King's Stomach! So the benefit comes later.

And I know there are thousands, thousands upon thousands of Christians who have lost that fire. They've lost that flame. The Word of God is boring.

God doesn't speak to them like He used to. They haven't led anybody to the Lord in years. Worship is okay.

I can't feel it. I'm dying spiritually. So thank God for the word repent.

Repent. Man, God is so awesome. It's not like anybody has an angry father or a heart.

You know, you have this view of God. It's like, oh, it's going to take six months, they're in my favor again. Go spend some time down at County.

Twin Towers. It's going to take a while. He just says repent.

Repent. Come home. Come home, prodigal.

Come home. Isn't that beautiful? No checklist. No I have to earn His favor.

No work hard for a while, come to church for the next six months straight. Repent, which is reestablish that broken relationship. So we're just going to open the altar if you need that fire again.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/OimWjFtI9z0.mp4>

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