

Someone Must Light The Fire

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the need for believers to ignite and maintain the fire of God's Spirit within them. It highlights the importance of genuine surrender, seeking God diligently, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. The speaker shares powerful testimonies of individuals who experienced a transformation through surrender and seeking God's power, encouraging listeners to press in and not give up in their pursuit of God's presence and anointing.

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:21, Matthew 3:11, Jeremiah 20:9, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:22, Acts 1:8, John 7:38

Topics: "Igniting the Holy Spirit", "Surrender and Transformation"

Description

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Transcript

Someone must light the fire. Let that sink in. Someone must light the fire.

And I had a lot of different directions to take this. I had one approach was to go through the Bible in different cases of God using people. And it's crystal clear throughout scripture that when God touches a person, He uses that person.

And somebody has to light that fire. Somebody has to be given the passion and the desire for more of God. And then once you receive that, once you're on fire, others will feel the heat of that.

And I thought of even this morning, our kids' dads are waiting for you to get on fire for the Lord. And this is something you can't make up. You can't play games with it.

You can't fake it till you make it. That might work in business or Hollywood or sports, but in God's kingdom, it doesn't make it. It's gotta be real.

It's gotta be genuine. And our families and kids, young adults, did you know that they're looking for authenticity? They want what is real, what is true. And when they see it lived out, it's contagious.

And as I shared before, once the father catches that fire, more than likely, the family will as well. But I also wanna encourage you, although this is the topic, although we're praying for that, sometimes receiving the fire of God is, it's a process. It's a seeking God until sometimes you don't feel like it.

It's travail. It's not giving up. You know how many people say, you know what, forget it.

I've tried that all night, prayer meeting, right? I came to church for a while. I went to the prayer room and nothing happened. I've heard that and it breaks my heart.

I went in the prayer room, I tried that, I tried that. Well, you don't try God out. You keep pressing and you keep surrendering, you keep seeking.

If you seek me with all of your heart, and I don't understand God's sovereignty. Sometimes he will answer by fire. Sometimes he will grant that request fairly soon.

And just, I don't wanna belabor the point because I've talked about it a lot, but there are some scriptures that I think are important to put up there. And the first one is from 1 Kings. 1 Kings, it's when Elijah approached all the people.

Remember when he was standing on Mount Carmel? And he said, how long will you hesitate? Another translation says, how long will you waver? Another version says, how long will you falter between two opinions? If God be God, follow him. But if Baal is your God, then follow him. Choose, Joshua would go on and say, choose this day whom ye will serve as for me in my house, we will serve the Lord.

And so we see here, even a call back then, how long will you waver between two opinions? And I thought of a great analogy, I actually saw it recently, a couple days ago. I texted Ray, one of our ushers, and asked him if we could get the big 14-foot tall ladders. And I wanted to put them together.

It was just too much work. So, and I was gonna straddle, right? Climb up a couple feet and straddle both of them. I have to let go of one to get to the other.

How long will you waver? If I wanna go up this ladder, I gotta let go of this one. And it was such a great picture of, how long will you falter between two opinions? And if God is God, if God is truly the God of the Bible, God that saved you, set you free, the power of the Spirit, if that is the God, then let go of the things of the world and follow him. And it takes time.

It takes time to press in. And if you don't get what you want tonight, whatever that means, you don't go home defeated. You keep pressing in and pressing in and pressing in.

Has anyone ever heard of Paul Washer? Well, you think I'm hardcore, you should listen to him. I wanna read something, a friend of mine, Greg Gordon, with Sermon Index, he just texted me actually a few minutes ago. This is from Paul Washer.

Paul Washer, look him up on YouTube tonight. As a young man in the ministry, I was privileged of being around a lot of very, very godly men, old godly men. And they would talk to me about the power of God.

Yet, I didn't experience it. They would even talk to me about the presence of God. And one day I decided enough is enough.

I will seek him until I find him or until I die. I asked one thing, Lord, you said if I seek you, I will find you. And you said you would reveal yourself to me.

You would let yourself be found by me if I seek you. And remember, that word doesn't mean you find right away. It's a process.

Often the longer the journey, the greater the reward. Have you ever reached a goal that is hard? And once you get it, there's more excitement than if you would have received it that day. He said night after night for months, two or three hours a night, day after day, I would say this.

And then one day, I felt like the Lord wanted me to just go out to West Texas in the hill country. I know somebody thinking of moving there. And I walked on top of those hills for three days like a wild man.

I was picking up rocks and throwing them at God, literally. I was screaming, God, I must know you. You must come.

I can't live like this anymore. I can't just live like this and read books that talk about you. I need to experience you.

I can't just hear about revival, I want revival. And nothing happened. Another several weeks passed.

And one night, God came down into my heart. I was thrown down on the ground. And I didn't know how long, covering my head, thinking God's gonna come to kill me.

D.L. Moody felt the same way. See, the presence of God is not for the faint of heart. The presence of God came down and revealed my sin, and revealed my need, and his glory and his power were revealed.

And then all of a sudden, every bit of fear was taken away. And I was filled with such joy. And my mouth shot open.

I am no longer afraid. Verse after verse from the Psalms, everywhere praising God. And I can tell you, it's been over 20 years, and the presence of Christ is more real to me in this room than any one of you.

Howell Harris in 1749, 1749, preached in Scotland with men like Daniel Rowlands, Griffin Jones, and the great Scottish revivals. He said, the Lord came overpowering me with love like a mighty torrent that I could not withstand or reason against or doubt any longer. May 1749.

And it's such a profound topic. It's such a controversial topic. And you'll note, you'll find that many conservatives don't like this topic.

Those who are concerned with emotionalism, right? Now, emotionalism is not good for the sake of emotionalism. We can get emotional, and that'd do nothing. It can be actually kind of dangerous because we're allowing our emotions to control us.

But when the living God, the living God touches you, there are no emotions to even explain that. It's real, it's genuine. And so that was my hope tonight that many of you just keep pressing in.

Keep pressing in, whatever it takes. I would even say, hey, I'm gonna be at the prayer meetings in the morning here at church, or the early morning worship. Even, I'm gonna drag myself out of bed, and I'm gonna come and I'm gonna seek, or in the comfort of your own home.

You get up and you begin to seek God like never before. And another verse that I've shared before, I indeed baptize you with water, Matthew 3:11. So John the Baptist is saying, I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. So the people were going to John the Baptist.

He was baptizing them in the Jordan River, and they were repenting. That's why he called out the Pharisees, and he said, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come, therefore bear fruit worthy of repentance. And don't say to me that you are Abraham's children, for God is able to take this ax and knock down this tree to the very root.

In other words, uproot who you are, and show you your heart. But he said, I'm not even worthy to take off this man's sandals. He is coming after me and he is mightier than I. I mean, just comprehend this for a minute.

He said, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and they go together. If you have no fire, no passion, no desire, you have to ask your Lord, why? Is there a quenching and a grieving that's going on in the Spirit in your life? And there's so many little things even that can kind of stop up that well, so to speak, because the Holy Spirit is the water, right? It's refreshing, the anointing, the well. Out of your belly will flow rivers, and you can even look that up, it's like a torrent, it's these rivers of living water that can't be stopped.

So like I said before, where are these rivers of living water? They're dammed up, they're dammed up. And I wish, I mean, there's tons of examples. I've even read some of the kind of silly examples.

This lady, I remember under D.L. Moody's ministry was pressing in, pressing in, and I can't, I want that, but I can't seem to receive it. I don't know what's wrong. And God did begin to show her that it was something so little, I guess, in her mind, as the way she dressed.

She was concerned about her looks and her dress and the uppity-ness, right? The how do I appear to others? And that was a big block. Other blocks, of course, can be a critical heart. Anybody struggle with it? Don't raise your hand, but anybody struggle with a critical heart? You're just negative.

People look at you and they can tell you're just not nice. Sad Susie. Critical Carrie.

Carrie's not here. Oh, you are here, sorry. Debbie Downer.

Mad Melissa. And that will definitely prevent the living one. Is there a Melissa here? Okay.

Oh, yeah, I need some Mels, I need. Judgmental Jerry. Critical Ken.

Negative. Negative Neil. Angry, yep, we can see, we can just keep going.

Even though it is kind of funny, but that will prevent the rivers of living water. You think God's gonna, the power of God's Spirit's gonna flow through you and pray for people and just have the joy of the Lord with that in blocking? And we see there's so much that we must repent of, but excuses get in the way. And that's why, even though I don't agree with everything in any denomination, right? That's why, if you heard of a four-square denomination, that's one of their squares is, Jesus is baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

The other ones are soon-coming king and things like that, but that's one of, and that's a solid doctrine. He's the baptizer of the Holy Spirit. And it gets people, I don't know why it's such a controversial topic.

I mean, you hear conservative Bible teachers talk about it, you're saying, oh, it's almost like, I don't wanna touch that topic. I've seen YouTube videos. Well, so have I, but what's the Bible say? Jesus is going to baptize believers, unless you disagree with this, well, that's not for today, really? No, it's always for today.

So just reading it, again, you look at the verb tenses, you look at the sentence structure, he will baptize believers with the Holy Spirit and fire. How much of that fire, though, is up to you? How much of that fire is up to you? And then I love Jeremiah 20. He was told, God, I'm not gonna preach anymore.

I've been there. I'm done, Lord, this is ridiculous. I will not even make mention of you anymore.

But, but, but, his word was in my heart like a burning fire. It was shut up in my bones. I was weary of holding it back and I could not.

In other words, he's tired trying to hold it back. That is tiring. Women who've had babies, you can't hold it back too long.

Right, it's tiring holding back what God wants to do. And he said, it was in my heart like a burning fire. I could no longer hold it back.

A man by the name of Malcolm Gladwell said this, look at the world around you. It may seem immovable. It is not.

With the slightest push in just the right place, it can be tipped. You can make a difference. God still looks for men and women to light the fire and fan the flames of revival.

But there's gotta be a desperation. And what it is is desperation and it's continual seeking. Think about that.

Think about how many people, oh, that's what I want, that's what I need, I'm gonna desperately seek God and then by next week they're gonna forget it. Forget it, it's not what I thought it would be. It's not God, you're not answering, we begin to blame God.

And it's all about timing with God. Keep seeking me, keep pressing in. John Wesley said, light yourself on fire with passion and people will come for miles and watch you burn.

He also said, my fear is that our people will become content to live without the fire, live without the power, live without the excitement, live without the supernatural element that makes us great. Isn't that so true? You go into some churches and I don't wanna put down church, but where's the fire, where's the excitement, where's the power? We should come to church with the spirit of expecting God to move. Lord, what are you gonna do today? What are you gonna say today? What's worship gonna be like? What's John gonna say? I wonder that myself.

What's the message? Lord, what are you gonna do? Expecting God to move the fire, the supernatural element that makes Christianity so great. Because you can't put God in a box. And I feel for those gatherings and churches that do a song, I've been there and you've got the song, it's four minutes and then you've got the announcements are seven minutes and two seconds and play this clip and then these three songs are this, this, this and then you go up to you and you have 32 minutes.

If you could stop around 30, that'd be great. And then we've got this song and then we're out of here. Well, that's about all you're gonna get.

It doesn't leave much room. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones said preaching is theology coming from a man on fire for God. I think we have that quote up there as well.

I love what Ian Bowne said. It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends. Think about that.

It's only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends for none but the earnest man gets access to the ear of God. The whole heart is gripped. The whole heart is gripped.

If you search for me with all of your heart, you will find me. I'm sorry, I might have the slides out of order. I moved some things around.

But we must be willing to pay the price. Death to self, crucifixion to the world and the travail of your own soul. Again, Ian Bowne.

Breakthroughs always come with a cost. It always costs someone something. And when God commands you to do something, never delegate it to someone else.

Oh, in my house, that's my wife's job. Let her teach the kids. Let the kids feel the fire of the spouse.

Let her go to the Bible study and the prayer meeting. Never delegate what God wants you to do to someone else. Many want the recognition, but not the brokenness.

The honor, but not the humility. And the limelight, but not the loneliness. I also love Hebrews six.

But without faith, it's impossible to please him. For he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Are you catching all these words? Diligently.

Diligently. This was life transforming for me years ago when I realized, oh, whole heart. When you search for me with your whole heart, when you love me with your whole heart, your whole mind, your whole understanding, your whole strength, he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Diligent, diligence, doing the same thing, but not necessarily seeing the results just yet. Pressing in. And so what I wanted to do is kind of whet your appetite a little bit for the things of the spirit.

And Sarah, we can put up that verse from Matthew 3.11. I baptize you with water unto repentance. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. I think it was right at the beginning when I first started.

But it's one of the books I told you about. He found the secret, they found the secret. And it's biographies of Christian men and women that we know from centuries ago, many times, who were Christians, were Christians, but had no zeal, no passion, no fire for God.

Some were even in ministry. And I wanna just read some of their own words to you. In the introduction it says, and please listen, I hope this doesn't bore you, because it's so important.

Listen to these testimonies. Anybody in ministry, listening now, listening later, if you're in a teaching ministry, a preaching ministry, any type of study of God's word, wanting to do something for God, you need to listen to this. Their experiences are much the same.

They had believed on the Savior, yet they were burdened and bewildered, unfaithful and unfruitful, always yearning for a better way and never achieving it by their efforts. Then they came to a crisis of utter heart surrender to the Savior, a meeting with Him in the innermost depths of their spirit, and they found the Holy Spirit to be an unfailing fountain of life and refreshment. Thereafter, life was never the same again.

And this person is named Samuel Logan Brengel. I believe I pronounced it right. He was, have you heard of the Salvation Army? Well, they were a lot different at the beginning than what they are now.

They would go out and actually preach the message. They were humbling experiences in my first year of ministry. I knew the Savior, and I sought the truth of God in scriptures.

I saw the humility of Jesus and my pride. I saw the meekness of Jesus and my temper. I saw the lowliness of Jesus and my ambition, the purity of Jesus and my unclean heart, the faithfulness of Jesus and the deceitfulness of my heart, the unselfishness of Jesus and my selfishness.

I came to loathe myself and my spiritual condition. But, oh, the day came. Love entered my heart.

I fully surrendered. My soul melted like wax before the fire. I sobbed and sobbed.

The pure flame of love burned like a blazing fire. And I was filled with love and a changed man from that day forward. Anybody heard of Oswald Chambers? Remember I talked about him this morning? His exact words.

I was searching for that definite baptism of the Spirit, but the Bible was the dullest, most uninteresting book in existence. As a Christian, do you know that's not uncommon at all? Because if we're feeding on darkness and death all week long and things that we shouldn't be watching and our appetites are wrong, we're not gonna be hungry for the things of God. It's boring.

I don't want to hear that. I don't want to read that. And then like a flash, something happened to me.

I surrendered my life completely. If the four previous years had been hell on earth as a Christian, these five years have truly been heaven on earth. Glory to God.

The last baking abyss or aching abyss of the human heart has been filled to overflowing. Adonai Judson. I had to obtain this power.

It costs one full surrender, humiliation and yielding our most precious things to God. It costs the perseverance of long waiting and the faith of strong trust. But when we are really in that power, we shall find this difference.

That whereas before it was hard for us to do the easiest things, now it's easy for us to do the hardest things. There's just one more, so I wanna, it's so important. I love this one.

Anybody heard of D.O. Moody? Well, he was preaching. And he could tell that these ladies were praying for him. Everyone, listen up, even those who serve tonight.

And D.O. Moody asked these two older ladies, why are you praying for me? They answered, you need power. Can you imagine? Like, why do you guys keep praying for me? Because you need power. I need power, I said to myself.

I have the largest Sabbath school and the largest congregation in Chicago. I need power. But they convicted me and I asked them to keep praying for me.

I kept crying out to God, would you fill me with your Spirit? I was crying out to God. And then one day in the city of New York, oh, what a day. I cannot describe it.

I seldom refer to it. It's almost too sacred an experience to name. And he talks about going into a room and God was pouring in His love, baptizing him in the Holy Spirit.

He said, now my preaching when I came back, I didn't present any new truths, but now it had power. It had fire. It had anointing.

It had unction. And hundreds were converted. And he would go on to say about the Bible teachers of his day.

Oh, they're great men. They're good men. But why can't they see that the power of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that they are lacking? And so I felt my responsibility tonight was to help fan those flames because I could have stayed home, relaxed much easier.

I've got the fire. I'm good. But we're called to encourage others, give it to others.

And they see people, this is what did it for me. I read this like 20 years ago too. Like just, and there's 20, there's 15 other examples, John Bunyan and Amy Carmichael, Adonai Judson, Hudson Taylor, and where they just had this incredible encounter with God.

And we don't seek after signs or gifts. We seek the gift giver. We don't, oh, I want power to impress people.

No, I just want to know you. I want to know you. And the power of your resurrection, the fellowship of your suffering.

Jesus, I want to know you. And I was gonna read another one. There's tons in here, but this guy prayed, Lord, I don't care if you put me in Africa or in the hospital with pneumonia.

I don't care if you give me cancer or send me to Cambodia. I'm just, I'm giving you everything. And the fire of God came upon his heart, upon his life.

And so think about it. Someone needs to light the fire. One thing about God, he doesn't really make us do anything, does he? There's invitations out there.

If you seek me, you'll find me. If you call on me, I will answer. Jesus will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and with fire as a believer.

It's an amazing concept. I think we all, as a believer, you have the fire, but is it a little tiny, you ever see those little tiny red little things in the fireplace? Oh, how cute. I can grab it and put it out.

I don't feel any heat from it. It's still a fire, right? They'll tell you up in camping, you gotta throw water on it. It still can do some damage.

It still can do some damage if it gets some air on it, some oxygen and some wind. So that fire in your heart that has been kindled and crushed and almost down to just a flickering, oh, with the spirit of God, blow on

it again. And would he refresh your fire? Would he lift you up? Would he ignite you again? Oh God, I wanna feel that fire burning again.

I wanna get up and I can't wait to open your word and see what you're going to say to me this morning. I can't wait to put on worship and begin to weep in your presence and in your power. I can't wait to go home and be a better father, a better husband, a better wife, a better spouse, a better employee.

God, I just want to serve you and know you. I want the power of God in my life and I don't have anything to do with religion. You've got to cry out for that.

And keep seeking, keep pressing in. Just ask God if there's anything that needs to be removed in my heart. Lord, remove it.

If there's anything that's causing me to not receive that fire, God, show me what it is. Because what happens to most people, most Christians, myself included, is you can have that raging fire burning in the living room in a couple hours. If I don't stoke it or put more wood fuel on it, what happens to that fire? And same thing.

That's why the fire in the hearts of many Christians is just, it's flickering, it's there. They know it's there and they want more of God, but something is blocking. Something is preventing.

Whether it's besetting sin, whether it's a critical heart, wrong attitude. You guys, you need to let that go. I keep preaching my heart out month after month to some of you folks and you don't do anything.

Nothing changes. Nothing changes. And if nothing changes, nothing's gonna change.

Preaching doesn't change you. A response to the preaching changes you. And this is a controversial statement, but let me fully exhaust it.

It'll make perfect sense. The word of God, reading, hearing it, doesn't change you. Be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Because if you only hear it and don't do it, you actually live in deception. I didn't say it. James, right? So we think, oh, I heard the word of God.

Oh, I heard it, oh boy, that sermon, thank you. But month after month, month after month, nothing changes. You get tired of me hearing it.

You're out of here, you go to some other church. By the way, do you know your problems? Do they follow you? When the honeymoon's over, I always tell my wife, I said, give it six months. When the honeymoon's over and real ministry sets in, another church, no changes.

Years go by, no changes. I'm still stuck in neutral. At some point, folks, we gotta look in the mirror.

We gotta look in the mirror and say, am I preventing this mighty downpouring of God's Spirit? Jesus says, if you drink of this water that I'm giving you, you will never thirst again. Out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Jesus actually said, don't go do, he told Christians, don't go out and do anything. What? Don't go out and do anything, read the book of Acts. Just wait.

Wait for what? Power. Power. Wait for power.

The power to witness. That dynamite. That's what the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit is not some force, the force be with you, it's not weird, it's dynamite.

Dynamic, dunamis, power. These are all biblical terms. So where is that dunamis? And hey, listen, I don't feel beat up because I'm preaching myself as well.

Why can't I go into a store and pray for people again and have people be healed and set free and be more receptive when I go out? I'm always in a hurry, right? You gotta plan, I gotta listen, and I miss what really God wants to do. It can happen in all of our lives. And we have to say, Lord, even I'm saying tonight, Lord, ignite that flame again.

Give me that boldness. Give me that boldness to testify of you. I want that power again to cast out demons, to pray for the sick and have them healed.

Like the Bible says it. And so maybe tonight you just laid at the altar. Lay whatever is preventing that mighty outflow of the Spirit from your heart.

Whatever's stopping that. And God might be showing you, might be convicting you. If you don't know what it is, ask Him.

Lord, I want the fullness of your Spirit. Is there anything hindering, or do you just want me to keep pressing in and keep pressing in? And don't be discouraged because the more you press in, we used to sing that song, the more I seek you, the more I find you. And the more I find you, the more I seek you.

And it's that pressing in and pressing in. I personally thank God He didn't just do this to me the next day. Because I would have took it for granted more.

It was a season of pressing in. God, I've got to hear from you. I've got to know you.

I want that fire. I want what the Bible says. And the more you begin to press in, He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

I can't, it doesn't say, but I have a feeling, I have a feeling the verse doesn't say, He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him when they feel like it. I'm just thinking out loud here. Because diligence is often tied to something I don't like to do.

If it was something I like to do, I wouldn't have to be diligent because it would come naturally. Correct? Tell people all the time for losing weight, getting in shape, be diligent. No kidding.

Hello? Right, because you have to keep pressing in. You have to keep moving forward, even when you don't feel like it.

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