

Burning Bush

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon on the burning bush explores its profound spiritual significance and the transformation it brought to Moses' life and understanding of God.

Duration: 1:08:14

Scripture: Exodus 3:1

Topics: "Divine Revelation", "Spiritual Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of a basic revelation that we must see in order for God to use us. He uses the example of Moses, who took 80 years to accept this revelation. The great sight that Moses saw consisted of three elements: the thorn bush, the flame of fire, and the angel of the Lord. The speaker also highlights the process of God working in our lives to bring us to the end of ourselves, where we have no more confidence in the flesh and consider ourselves as finished.

Transcript

Please turn to the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 3. We'll read a very, very familiar portion. Exodus chapter 3, we'll read from verse 1 to verse 6. And Moses planted the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian.

And he led the flock behind the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God to Horeb. And the angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a thornbush. And he looked, and behold, the thornbush burned with fire, and the thornbush was not being consumed.

And Moses said, Let me now turn aside and see this great sight, why the thornbush is not burned. And Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see. And God called to him out of the midst of the thornbush, and said, Moses, Moses.

And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not, neither, lose thy sandals from of thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look.

Then we'll turn to the New Testament. 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians chapter 4. We'll read from verse 7 through verse 12.

2 Corinthians chapter 4. Verse 7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us. Every way afflicted, but not stricken. Seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up.

Persecuted, but not abandoned. Crashed down, but not destroyed. Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

For we who live are always delivered unto death on account of Jesus. That the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So that death works in us, but life in you.

Near the hall where we meet in New York, there is a Jewish synagogue. And you know there are lots of Jewish synagogues in New York City. And on the wall of that synagogue, there are three pictures.

One is the two tables of law. The other is a candlestick of gold. And the third one is a burning bush.

Now to the Jewish people, to Judaism, these are the three most important symbols. These are the important symbols of Judaism. And then, nearby, another synagogue is almost finished building.

And at the entrance of that synagogue, above that entrance, two tables of law. In other words, to them, you enter into Judaism by the way of law. I don't know whether this is the best way.

If you have ever been to New York, you know in New York City, near Columbia University, there is the largest Jewish theological seminary in the world. That's in New York City. And above the entrance of that theological seminary is a picture.

It is a picture of the burning bush. To the Jews, to their theology, the burning bush is most significant. Now I do not know how much they understand the spiritual significance of that burning bush.

But at least they know that to their theology, the burning bush is the basis of their theology. Dear friends, we know that all the things in the Old Testament are baptized. They are for our admonition.

The reality is in Christ. Therefore, we need to fellowship together tonight as to the spiritual significance and application of the burning bush. If to the Jewish people, the burning bush is so important, and it is but physical to them, how much more it must be important to us who are the real children of God.

Before, of course, we look into the significant spiritual meaning of the burning bush, we have to go back to a little background. Now, I suppose that you are all familiar with the story of Moses. I will just say this much, that Moses was brought up in the Egyptian palace.

But he was nursed by his own mother. Even though the time of his nursing was short, yet somehow the mother, and maybe with the help of the father, they had instilled into his little mind that he was one prepared by God to deliver his own oppressed people. In that little mind, he was conscious that he belonged to God in a very special way.

That he had a divine commission, a divine appointment. And even though for 40 years he grew up in the palace of Egypt, he was the adopted son of the daughter of Pharaoh. And he learned all the learnings of Egypt.

He was mighty in words and in deeds. And tradition told us that he was a great general at that time. And he had every hope of being the Pharaoh of that Egyptian empire.

Because his adopted mother was a great queen. And yet with all the luxury, all the ease, all the positions, all the power, all the learning, all the success and achievement in the royal palace, he never forgot that he had a divine appointment. When he was 40 years old, he could not withhold himself any longer.

This sense of divine appointment grew steadily year after year, and it increased to such a degree that he couldn't hold back anymore. He thought that he must go out and visit his own brother. He went out.

And you know the story. He saw a Hebrew oppressed by an Egyptian. So he looked to his right and to his left.

He saw nobody there. And he was mighty in deeds. So he killed that Egyptian and buried him under the sand.

The next day, he went out again to see his brother. He saw two Hebrews were fighting against each other. Now he was mighty in words.

So he stepped in and tried to reconcile these two brothers. He thought that surely they understood. Surely they knew that he was a man sent by God.

Surely they will listen to him. Surely they will follow him. But to his surprise, they pushed him aside.

They rejected him as their leader. And the news of his killing an Egyptian reached the ear of Pharaoh. And you find Moses fled to the wilderness.

And he became a shepherd. Now if you know anything of Egyptian background, you know that to the Egyptians, the profession of a shepherd was the lowest of all professions. The Egyptians will not become shepherds or cataracts.

They will take other professions. But they left such professions to foreigners. Do you remember the story of Jacob and his sons? When they entered into Egypt, Joseph had to warn them and told them that shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.

They looked down upon the shepherds. Now Moses was brought up in the royal palace. Somehow, no matter what you know, if you have been exposed to certain circumstance, environment, ideas for 40 years, you are brainwashed to a certain extent.

Even without your knowing it. We are all brainwashed one way or the other. So surely Moses was brainwashed.

For one who was destined to be a pharaoh. And now he was degraded to such a degree that he became a shepherd. If you know Moses' inward feeling, you will sympathize.

He had fallen so low as to be a shepherd. Well, in the very beginning it wasn't too bad. Why? Because he had hope.

Oh, I was a shepherd maybe just for a few months. And surely God will open opportunity for me to go back and deliver my people. So he was supported by a vote.

But one year passed by, nothing happened. The second year, nothing happened. As the numbers of year increased, his hope decreased.

And surely after 40 years, there was no more hope. No more interest. Remember, Moses was 80 years old now.

Of the 150 songs, you know that at least one song was written by Moses. Song number 90. A song of Moses.

And some people say song 91 is also by Moses. It is a continuation. Now if you read song number 90, what do you have there? Moses himself declared, that the days of our years are 3 score and 10, 70.

And if by reason of strength they may be 4 score. 40 years. 80 years.

In other words, to Moses' judgment, if anyone should reach the age of 80, he was at his end. That was the end. And even though one may reach 80, he said when he looked back, all that he could boast was labor.

And vanity. Now this can describe the life of Moses up to that. Moses had the best opportunity that anyone in this world could ever have.

He was reared in the palace. He was at the very center of the highest civilization in the world at that time. He was in touch with the best culture of his days.

He learned everything. He was mighty in words and deeds. Now what more could you have? He had the best of everything.

And yet he ended up with a total defeat. He said, as if he said, I am 80 now. And who am I and what am I? And what am I doing? I am a shepherd.

The lowest of all professions. And all my years are characterized just by labor and vanity. Vanity of vanities all.

This is the life of Moses. If the life of Moses should end there, it is a tragedy. A real tragedy.

He came to the end of his own self. The sense of divine appointment was completely lost. Even when God called him, he wasn't interested.

He had lost all interest. All hope. He couldn't even speak.

Why? Now suppose you are shut in with a few sheep for 40 years. You will lose all your eloquence. The sheep couldn't hear your lectures.

And so you will lose your skill. He lost all his self-confidence. While he was young, he believed in himself.

He believed in his divine appointment. He was a man of destiny. And he was to do a great thing for God.

But now, nothing left. Nothing left. Everything had come to its natural.

But it was at that moment that God showed him a great sight. The sight of the burning bush. And that vision of the burning bush was the turning point.

A real turning point of his life. From a tragedy to a success. From a defeat to a victory.

From a vanity to a purpose. The whole life of Moses afterwards was a different life. And you can find, it can be traced to this vision of the burning bush.

So you see the importance, the significance of that vision. The Jews understand that very much. It all begins with that burning bush.

Now dear friends, in the wilderness, nothing can grow but fungus. And because in the daytime, the sun is so hot. It is a common sight in the wilderness.

For some fungus suddenly tingled itself. Under the scorching sun, the fungus can become so dry that it can ignite itself. And burn out in a few minutes.

It is gone. Now during the 40 years of shepherding in the wilderness, Moses has witnessed such scenes thousands and ten thousands of times. It was very common in the wilderness.

He must have seen it again and again and again. And he paid no attention to it. But that day, something different happened.

A fungus was burning. But it was not consumed. Now this was strange.

So when Moses saw such a strange sight, he said, I will go and look at it. Why is it that the fungus is burnt but not consumed? Why? This is not natural. He turned aside.

And the angel of the Lord called him in the midst of the flame in the burning bush, saying, Moses, Moses. And Moses said, Here am I. The Lord said, Take off your shoes. This is holy ground.

And the Lord declared himself to Moses, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face. He was afraid.

Now dear friends, let me ask you a question. Did Moses know God before this incident? Do we have any record in the scripture that God had appeared to him before this incident? Can you say that Moses did not know God before this incident? Surely, Moses knew God. Even while he was sucking from his mother's breast, the very name of God must be in the milk.

It was raining his veil. It was in his blood. Nobody can take that out.

Not even the luxury of the royal court. Not even all the learnings of Egypt. Nothing can take away that idea of God.

That belief of God, of one God, the Creator. Nothing can take away from him. It was in his very blood.

And not only that, he not only believed in God, but he knew he was called by God. How did he know? His parents told him. And during the first 40 years, he must have pondered upon this again and again.

He compared the riches of Egypt and affliction of God's people. He weighed these two things. It wasn't an easy decision.

But as he weighed and weighed and weighed and weighed, he came to a conclusion that he was called of God to be with the people, to be afflicted with the people. He despised all the riches of Egypt. He not only believed in God, but he acted on his belief.

And he suffered for his faith. You cannot say Moses did not know God. And in the wilderness for 40 years, he was in close touch with the nature.

And surely he had lots of time to meditate. He was very close to heaven, we will say. Moses knew God.

But how? His knowledge of God was indirect. Impersonal. Informational.

External. He knew God, yes. He even knew God's purpose.

He even knew his place in God's plan. And he acted for God. He suffered for God.

We will say he must be one who knew God very well. No. All his knowledge of God was external.

There is no record that God has ever appeared to him. Can it be possible that we may believe in God? We may even know something of the will of God. We may even act for God.

We may even suffer for God. And yet we do not have a direct, intimate, personal, inward knowledge of God. Is it possible? If this is the case, then no matter how much you know of God, how much, how good is your intention, how much you try to serve God, it will end up in a failure.

God, after 80 years, when Moses came to the end of himself, then you will find God appear to him in the burning bush. This is the first record that God has spoken to him directly. God said, I am the God of your fathers.

Yes. That is what he knew. He knew God was the God of his fathers.

The God of Abraham. Wonderful. God as the God of Abraham is really wonderful.

Think of that. Abraham was an idol worshipper. And yet the glory of the Lord appeared to him and called him to leave everything behind and to follow the Lord, to go out without knowing where.

And God led him into Canaan and promised to give that land flowing with milk and honey to him and promised him a seed when he came to the end of his natural life. Everything about Abraham was wonderful. It was the wonderful God of Abraham that made Abraham wonderful.

Oh, the God of Abraham. Wonderful God. Moses knew that.

God was the God of his father Abraham. Oh, he was a wonderful God. The God of Isaac.

Wonderful. Think of that. God is the God of Isaac.

Isaac came by promise. Isaac came by a miraculous act of God. Isaac inherited all the inheritance, the promise of Abraham.

Oh, how God was good to Isaac. Wonderful. Moses knew God as the God of Isaac.

The God of his father Isaac. Very good. And Moses knew God as the God of Jacob.

Oh, a most marvelous God that had turned a Jacob, a twister, into Israel, a prince of God. Oh, that is wonderful. Moses knew God as the God of his fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob.

But what God? Can he say, God is my God, the God of Moses? That's different. We may know God as the God of our fathers. It's a good heritage.

But unless we know God as my God, He is my God, in a very personal, direct, inward, special way. Dear friends, our life with God has not begun. You may accumulate all the knowledge about God, and good knowledge, but if you do not have a personal touch with Him, and He with you, it's all awkward.

Nothing comes. That might be the reason why Moses failed. He thought he knew everything.

He thought he could act now, but he failed. So you find that it was in the wilderness that Moses get the first, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob. I am your God.

And you remember, to Moses, the name of God was in the next chapter. What is your name? God said, I am that I am. That's my name.

That's Moses' God. Moses' God is the great I am. Later on you will know how important this is.

Anyway, here you'll find God, for the first time, revealed Himself. And it is on the basis of this revelation that transformed the life of Moses, that characterized his life. What is this great sight? We want to see it.

You know this great sight is composed of three parts. Or, let us say, three elements constitute that great sight. First, the bush, the thorn bush.

Second, the flame of fire. And third, the angel. These three factors combined, made up the great sight.

If it is only the thorn bush, it is not a great sight. It is a very poor sight. You don't like to look at the thorn bush.

Nothing to look at it. If it is only a flame of fire, it is terrible. If it is only the angel of the Lord, I don't know what effect will be upon you.

But when you find these three elements combined, it becomes a great sight. A great sight not only to Moses, but will be to everyone of us. Let us look at them one by one.

Moses saw, it is very common in the wilderness. What is that thorn bush? I wonder. If in the Garden of Eden, there was thorn bush.

I wonder. I suspect there wasn't. Because the Garden of Eden is a garden of pleasure.

So when you pick the rose, you won't be pricked. It is a garden of pleasure. There is no sign.

There must be roses there, but no thorns. Wonderful place. It was after man had seen.

And God said, The earth shall be cursed, and out of the ground shall come forth thorns and thorns. What is a thorn? A thorn is an abnormal, arrested, abortive growth of a leaf. It should be leaf, but its growth is arrested.

So it becomes a thorn. It is the result of sin. It is the sign of curse.

That's a thorn. God took the earth and formed it into the form of a man. We are made of earth.

Now the earth produces thorns. There is a meaning in it. It means that we are all children of earth.

We are all the product. We are all our growth are all arrested somehow. Abnormal.

Abnormal. That's what we are. You know in the Bible, as I mentioned this afternoon, the Bible usually use trees to represent mankind.

The humanity. Trees. When it speaks of noble man, all seed of love.

But when it speaks of mean and base and degraded man, the depravity of human nature, it uses a thorn. I will not go over the Bible with you because you can find many instances. But I will just mention one instance to prove it.

You remember in the book of Judges? In the book of Judges, Gideon had 70 sons. And he had another son through a concubine. So when Gideon died, Jeroboam died, the son of the concubine as an elector.

He went to his own city, Shechem, and persuaded the citizen there to support him. He said, do you want 70 men to rule over you? Or just one man to rule over you? And don't forget, I am blood of your blood. I am your nearest of kind.

So the men followed him. They killed all the sons of Gideon. 69 of them.

But the youngest one, Jotham, escaped. You remember the story in Judges? Now when they went to Shechem to crown Abimelech, Jotham heard of it. So he climbed to the top of a mountain overlooking that city and he cried on Mount Gerizim.

He used a parable. Now listen to it. Hearken to me, ye citizens of Shechem, that God may hearken to you.

The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, reign over us. And the olive tree said to them, shall I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and men, and go to wave over the trees? And the tree said to the fig tree, come thou, reign over us.

But the fig tree said to them, shall I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go to wave over the trees? Then said the trees to the vine, come thou, reign over us. And the vine said to them, shall I leave my new vine, which hears God and men, and go to wave over the trees? Then said all the trees to the thorn bush, come thou, reign over us. And the thorn bush said to the trees, if in truth ye anoint me king over you, come, put confidence in my shadow, but if not, fire shall come out of the thorn bush and devour the cedars of Nebuchadnezzar.

That's clear. Thorn bush here represents Abimelech, a depraved person. Can a thorn bush produce fruit? You remember in Matthew our Lord Jesus said, can you pick the fig from the thorn bush? The thorn bush does not produce fruit, but it inhibits, In Matthew chapter 13, our Lord Jesus sent some good seeds, all sown in the thorny ground.

Now these seeds grow up, showing the stem, but it never bears fruit. Why? Because all the nourishment are taken away from them by the thorns. They are squeezed by the thorns.

So it is not fruit producing, it is fruit inhibiting. Can you use a thorn bush to make any furniture? Never. Never.

What is the use of a thorn bush? Can you burn it to warm yourself? Strange to say. All the travelers in the wilderness, when they are caught in the cold of the night, you know in the wilderness, in the daytime, it was most hot, but in the night it could be very, very cold. Now suppose you are caught in the wilderness.

You had to warm yourself by something. What will you do? No traveler will collect thorn bush and burn them to warm themselves. Why? Because the thorn bush burns and consumes too quickly.

Before you get the warmth, it is gone. It is no use. No use trying.

There is absolutely no use of a thorn bush. Yes, there is one use. A misuse.

You remember that story. That is the only record in the scriptures of any use of a thorn bush. And that is when our Lord Jesus was mocked by the soldiers.

They made a crown of thorns. That is the only use. They beat him.

Beat his head. With the thorn crown on him. Yes, after they finished mocking him, they took off his purple garment, but the Bible never says they took off his garment.

It remained on his head. That is the only use you find of thorns. Misuse.

Isn't that very revealing? As if God was speaking to Moses. Moses. Moses.

You all thought God had to wait 80 years before he could say this to Moses. If God should say this to Moses while he was in the royal palace, could Moses take it? Oh no. He considered himself as a sinner of Lebanon.

Quite a few years ago I was in Lebanon. I purposely went to the top of the mountain. It was in the summer.

But there was snow there. You know they cut down all the cedars. The kings, the nobles, the rich people.

Throughout these centuries they cut down all the cedars to build buildings, palaces and so forth. So there was almost nothing left. The whole mountain was barren except on the top of the mountain there were, at that time several years ago, 300 trees.

That's all. Of course they were starting to plant new trees at that time. They were thinking of making the whole mountain covered with cedars.

Well, we took a car and drove up to the top of the mountain. High up in the mountain 300 cedars of Lebanon. Big, sturdy, straight, full of leaves.

Moses considered himself as a sinner of Lebanon. Well, humanly speaking he had every right to think that way. He was mighty in words, mighty in deeds.

He learned all the learning of Egypt and yet he had a divine appointment. What more do you want? Can you have it? But God allowed him to suffer defeat. God put him in the wilderness for 40 years.

But not in the beginning of 40 years. Because there was still hope in himself. God let time worn him out until he came to the end of himself.

He was 80 years old. To his own judgment. And when he came to the end of himself God stepped in and said, Moses, you are but a thorn bush and Moses an ant.

Please turn your cassette over at this time for the continuation of this message. We are expecting God to show us something great, spectacular, noble, glorious. And by seeing such we become great.

But do you know? There is a basic revelation that we must see. If we do not see this basic revelation God can never use us. A very common sight.

Are you ready for that? You say, surely God will show me something great. Something thrilling. Exciting.

Here you are. A thorn bush. A thorn bush.

You are a good former. All you can do is to hurt and to harm. How much does God suffer in your hand? That's all your usefulness.

That's all. It's humiliating. Can you take it? How many years? It takes Moses 80 years to accept this verdict.

May the Lord shorten the day that it may not take us 80 years. But dear friends, this is the first part of the great sight. One day, by His grace, and this does not come suddenly, throughout the years, God is working and working and working in you and in your environment.

He is bringing you to the end of yourself. When you are brought to the end of yourself, you have no more confidence in God. You have no more interest in yourself.

You consider yourself as finished. The end. Thank God.

That's where God begins. I'm nothing. Often I say, Oh, I'm nothing.

I'm nothing. As if I'm quite humble. But suppose you say that I'm nothing.

I cannot take it. Dear friends, are you angry because somebody says you are good for nothing? Don't be angry with me. I dare not say that to you.

The Lord alone can say that. Should the Lord say to you, so and so, you are but a dumb bush. Can you accept it? Can you bow before God and say, Oh God, how right you are.

Yes, I am. I was born in sin, as David said. As Paul the apostle said, in me, that is in my flesh, I'm good for nothing.

A dumb bush. Well, there was a fire. Fire in the Scripture can represent several things.

But we will limit ourselves to just one thing. And that is the holiness. You remember, after man had sinned, God drove man out of the garden of Eden.

And there on the east of the garden, God set up cherubim with sword of flaming fire. In other words, the holiness of God judges. No one can enter into the presence of God.

No one can approach to the tree of life, but be smitten to death. The fire will consume him completely. The holiness of God will consume anything and everything that does not meet his quality.

Fire. God is a consuming fire. If it is not for the mercy of God, we shall all be consumed.

Well, the thorn bush is just good for the fire. You cannot put thorn bush and fire together. Once they come together, the fire will consume the thorn bush.

There will be no more thorn bush. That's our condition. That's our situation.

Who can see God? Who can approach God? Who can dwell with God? Nobody can. If you try, you will be smitten to death. You will be totally consumed.

It is the holiness of God. The fire is not only negative. You remember that? After Solomon has finished building his temple, he put a sacrifice on the altar and fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice.

What was that? It wasn't negative. Fire could be condemnation. But it couldn't.

On the one hand, it can be punished. Consumed. On the other hand, it can be purified.

Satisfied. The second element. Now, ordinarily, when the fire burns the bush, the bush is burned in a fume.

That's the answer. But the strange sight was there was a third element. Now, remember, without the third element, nothing would happen.

It wasn't a great sight at all. Who are we? We are the thorn bush. Nothing too good to look at.

Nothing good to look at. The holiness of God is a terrifying thing. We are good for nothing but to be consumed by the holiness of God.

This is what we are in ourselves. An ugly sight. But thank God there is a third element.

The angel of the Lord. In the flame of fire. God was in the thorn bush.

And that was the reason why the thorn bush was not consumed. By the fire. You know, God has a special name.

If you read Deuteronomy chapter 33, you'll find God has a very special name. He is called One who dwells in the thorn bush. And you know the word dwells means He makes His home in the thorn bush.

If anybody should push you to a thorn bush, you will be pricked by the thorns and you will hurriedly flee. Is there anyone who make thorn bush? It is too painful. Too painful to do that.

But think of that. Our God. The heaven and the heavens cannot contain Him.

And yet He makes. Do you think we make Him very confident? How we must have picked Him? But He said I will never leave you nor forsake you. You may grieve me, but you cannot drive me away.

You may quench me, but I will speak again. God in His great love and mercy and compassion, He is willing to make His home in man and woman. I think this is the love.

God dwells in man. And you know this is God eternal. Because of His great love, He had even before the foundation of the world, before the creation of man, He had this longing in His heart.

He wanted to. He wanted to make man His home and let man make Him their home. To be united.

He created man. He put man in the garden of Eden. He paid them a visit.

But do you think this is the purpose? God made man not just paying them visits. I do not know how many of you enjoy your visits to your mother-in-law. You have to visit her.

But it is just a visit. You comfort yourself and say, Well, it is just a visit. Now suppose you live together with her.

Remember dear friends, It is not God's purpose that He would just pay us some visits. God created man, put them in the garden. Yes, God visited them.

But God's original thought was not just visits. He was hoping that man may eat the fruit of the tree of life. And by doing that, God came into man.

So you find that in the very beginning, God's thought towards man was to make man His home, His dwelling place. He wanted to be united with you, to live in you. And if you read from Genesis down and down to Revelation, you will find this thought continues all the way.

God never gives up. So when you come to the last two chapters, the New Jerusalem, what is that? The tabernacle of God. That is God's thought.

Even though we are but thorn bush, we are not fit to be His dwelling place. Yet He comes in to us. He is willing to dwell in us.

He is willing to suffer because of us. Until He is able to transit for His dwelling place. Now dear friends, maybe you say now, if God should dwell in the thorn bush, then there should be no fire.

Isn't it a popular prevailing concept of Christians? Before you believe in the Lord Jesus, oh you had many problems, you had many difficulties. But after you have believed in the Lord Jesus, surely He so loved you and gave Himself to you, surely He will take all your problems away, He will take all your difficulties away, He will not allow you to go through any trials. Your life afterwards will be just a smooth sailing to heaven.

No more fire but water. Everything is water. No more fire.

But be careful, if it is all water, you will be drowned. The wonderful thing of God's working is here. You are but a thorn bush, and yet He is willing to dwell in you, but He does not take away the fire.

After you have believed in the Lord Jesus, is it true you have no more problems? Is it true you have no more difficulties? Is it true there is no more trial, no more fiery trials? As Peter said, Oh no, you have more, if not less. Then why is it? Why is it? Why is it that God allows a fire to burn and to burn and to burn you, and He does not let the fire consume you? Now what is the fire for? It seems purposeless. Many Christians ask this question.

What is the purpose? Why does God allow me to suffer? Why does God allow me to have such testings and trials? Why does God allow me to be sick? Why does God allow certain things to happen to me? If God loves me, He should show His love to me, and not deal with me in this way. What is the purpose of all this? If He wants to burn me, all right, burn me up, but He does not consume you. Why is this at all? Remember, the fire is supposed to come down, but because of the presence of the Lord in you, instead of finishing you, it appears.

Does it change you from a corn bush to a cedar? No. You remain a corn bush. When you look at yourself, but thank God, with a fire burning, and the Son of God in the mist, you know what? This thorn bush, have you ever seen a thorn bush shine? Not physically, naturally, but dear friends, I have seen it.

You see a brother or a sister in the Lord, who have been under great trials, burned by fire, and yet, after He has gone through all these trials, yes, He remains a human. He knows He is but a man, a woman. He is nothing but a thorn bush, and yet in that brother and sister, you see the glow, that thorn bush, that is.

In ourselves, we can never shine. There is nothing in us to shine, but with Him dwelling in us, it is the fire that brings out. Now let us use the New Testament.

Paul tells us exactly the same thing. We have this treasure. You see, the earthen vessel is the equivalent of the thorn bush.

Common, cheap, fragile, opaque. But we have the treasure in the earthen vessel. Treasure is the equivalent of the angel of the Lord.

Nobody puts a treasure in an earthen vessel. They do not fit. But God always does what men do not do.

Thank God He put this treasure, which is our Lord Jesus, that can be none others. God put the Lord Jesus in us. Christ in you.

What is it? The hope of glory. How? By fire. So here you find, Paul says, we have this treasure in the earthen vessel, that the surpassingness of the power of God, that the surpassingness of the power may be of God, and not from us.

Dear friends, if the Lord Jesus is not in us, when we go through these fiery trials, we will be consumed long. But thank God He is in us. Therefore, when we go through the fire, it is not our power.

We have come to the end of our power. Again and again, Paul's experience is, every way afflicted. You may be surrounded again and again, and yet there is hope.

You may be beaten again and again, but you are never crushed. This is the wonder of a Christian. So far as we ourselves are concerned, that's the end.

The fire will burn it, consume it in a few minutes. But, still there. Still there.

And the wonder is, instead of being consumed, the life of Jesus works in us. Do you know? This great sign of the burning bush, the burning bush, represents. Moses is a burning bush.

Oh, look at Moses. He is a burning bush. When the Israelites murmured against him, Moses said, don't do that.

Who am I, that you murmur against me? I am an avalanche. Why do you cry, avalanche? I am nothing. But, he prostrated himself before God.

And you'll find the glory of God, a burning bush. Oh, even today we light it, a wonderful sign. Dear friends, this is what God, this is what He, this is what God is doing in your life.

If only you, sometimes we do not understand, we are but dumb. Sometimes we do not understand the fire. But, dear friends, God wants to bless it, and you need it.

He wants to transform you, to glorify you. And that is the reason why He goes through all your trials and mania, that He might make you shine. Today, we all shine.

And may the world see many burning bushes. Burn, our Heavenly Father. We do praise and thank Thee that it is Thy eternal purpose to dwell with us, to make Thy home.

Oh, Father, we know that. How unsuitable we are to Thyself. And yet, Thou art willing to come to take up upon Thyself the form of a man.

Thou art willing to go all the way to the cross, that Thou mayst dwell with us, thank Thee. Oh, Lord, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou dost not only dwell in us, but that Thou dost dwell in us with a purpose to transform us by fire that we may be glorified. Oh, how we praise and thank Thee that Thou art the hope of glory.

So we do look to Thee that all that Thou hast done, and Thou is doing, and are doing, and are going to do to us, we may heal ourselves to Thee and cooperate to Thee. That what Thou dost desire to have may be had. Oh, Lord, we praise and thank Thee that Thou wilt do this not only individually to each one of us, but Thou wilt do it as a covenant that we together may be that earthen vessel to contain the treasure and to manifest.

Oh, we do commit ourselves afresh to Thee. May Thy blessing be upon every child. And yet the day is to come.

Work hard.

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