

Gods Fire Marks His Presence

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having the fire of God's presence in our lives, which is a visible evidence of His acceptance and a manifestation of His power and glory.

Duration: 1:05:17

Scripture: Exodus 3:2-4, Exodus 25:8, Leviticus 10:1-2, Deuteronomy 33:13-16, Isaiah 30:18, Matthew 3:11, Romans 2:24, Revelation 3:15-16

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Passion"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being on fire for God, drawing parallels from the Old Testament where God's presence was manifested through fire. It highlights the need for Christians to be either hot or cold for God, rather than lukewarm, as lukewarmness brings dishonor to the name of Christ. The speaker urges believers to seek the fire of the Holy Spirit in their lives, to be passionate and dedicated in their faith, and to offer their entire lives as a living sacrifice to God.

Transcript

You know, the first time that Moses met with God, we read that he met him in a burning bush. And he never forgot it. Because 40 years later, when we turn to the book of Deuteronomy, you see how he refers to God and he's blessing the different tribes of Israel.

And when it comes to Joseph, Deuteronomy chapter 33, Moses is blessing the different tribes of Israel. And when it comes to Joseph, he says, verse 13 onwards, blessed be the Lord, and so on. And he says, May you have, verse 16, the choice things of the earth and its fullness in the favor of him who dwelt in the bush.

You know, that's how Moses remembered God. He said, once I met God, it was in a bush that was on fire. And he's called the God who dwelt in the bush.

And in case you didn't know, that's the first dwelling place of God mentioned in the Bible. And when God dwelt in a bush, it was manifested by a fire that never died out. And that's what made Moses stop and say, how is this? I mean, there's so many bushes here, but it's not that the bush was bigger or in any other way impressive.

There's a fire in it. And later on, when God asked Moses to make a tabernacle for him, and that's, it must be something important because about 12, 13 chapters in Exodus are devoted to describing this

tabernacle. And when he told them to make this tabernacle, this is what he told Moses, Exodus 25 and verse 8. Let them construct a sanctuary for me that I may dwell among them.

That tabernacle was to be a place where God dwelt in the midst of his people. And once again, the most important thing about that tabernacle was not the pattern. The pattern was very important.

Moses was not allowed to change that pattern in any area. If you read Exodus 39 and 40, you'll find about 18 times you find this expression. Moses did exactly as the Lord commanded him, exactly as the Lord commanded him.

Every little detail was exact. But when the tabernacle was finished, the proof that God was happy with what was done was that he came and dwelt in their midst. And there was only one way by which they knew that God was there, and that was a fire again.

There was a fire on top of the tabernacle. And later on, when the tabernacle was replaced by a temple, we read that when Solomon dedicated that temple for the first time, that was a fire that came from heaven. That has always been the mark of God's presence.

Right from the beginning, the first time you read in the Bible about Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God. And how did Cain know that God had accepted Abel's sacrifice, but not his? There was a visible evidence. There was a fire that came upon Abel's offering, consumed it.

Though it's not written there, we know from Exodus and all that, that is how God, in Leviticus, that's how God manifested that I've accepted this. And Cain saw the fire there, no fire on his, and that's what made him jealous. Now, some people think that it's because Abel offered a lamb, and Cain brought a bloodless offering of grain.

It's very convenient to think like that, but that's not what the Bible says. That's a theology that's come out of people who study in Bible schools without reading the Bible. But look what it says in Genesis 3. Today, we have a Christianity that thinks that if I come in the name of Jesus, and I accept the offering that Jesus gave of himself on the cross, God will accept me.

And they say that's why God accepted Abel. And Cain didn't bring a lamb, so God didn't accept him. Well, that's a careless reading of Scripture.

Genesis chapter 3, it says here, in the last part of verse 4, the Lord had regard not for Abel's offering, but for Abel. And therefore, he accepted his offering. It's not that God saw the offering and accepted Abel, like the millions of Christians believe, because they didn't read the Bible properly.

The Bible says the Lord accepted Abel, and therefore, his offering. What about Cain? But for Cain, he had no regard. Verse 5, that's why he didn't accept his offering.

You know, the Lord looks at you, then decides whether to accept your offering or not. You remember Jesus also taught that? He said, when you come with an offering to God, and then you realize in your heart, Matthew chapter 5, verse 23, 24, that you hurt somebody. You were angry with someone.

Maybe you spoke rudely to your wife or husband or a neighbor or somebody in the office, and you didn't set it right. You didn't go and ask forgiveness from that person. It's a sin to hurt somebody.

That was the sin of Cain. He hurt his brother. And you don't set that matter right with that person.

Maybe you hurt someone in some other way. Maybe you sinned against somebody. And then you come and offer your offering to God.

It could be a prayer, it could be an offering in the offering box. God says, he won't accept it. You can come and offer the sacrifice of Jesus and say, I come in Jesus' name.

He won't accept it. Jesus said that. Those are the words of Jesus.

He said, leave your offering there. Go and settle with that person. And then come.

And it's because Christians don't take these words of Jesus literally, and do exactly as he has said. That's the reason why there's so much of shallowness and emptiness, and why there is no fire in the lives of many Christians. God is not accepted.

You know, this tabernacle was something which was written in such detail in Exodus, that if one of the Philistines or the Moabites or Ammonites, if they have got a copy of Exodus, they could have made a tabernacle exactly like that. In fact, we can make one today. Exactly identical to what Moses made.

But there's one thing you will not be able to reproduce, and that's the fire, which is on top of the tabernacle. That you cannot produce. That, if the Philistines or the Amorites had made a tabernacle like that, and Moses had made his, how would you know which is of God? You look for the fire.

Outwardly, they look so similar. But one's got the fire. One doesn't have it.

I say, God is there. This one, God is rejected. So, how do I know when two Christians believe the same doctrine, and everything is identical? They go to the same church, believe the same doctrine, speak the same words, sing the same songs? How do I know which one God's accepted? It's the fire.

God dwelt in the bush in a fire. He dwelt in the tabernacle in a fire. And we read that on the day of Pentecost.

You know, a lot of Pentecostals like to say that, how do we know you're baptized in the Holy Spirit? And they say, in Acts 2, 4, it says, they all spoke with tongues. I say, that's not the mark. I'm not against speaking in tongues.

I've spoken in tongues for 35 years, and I enjoy it. It's a wonderful gift. It's not the mark, to me, of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

I've seen a lot of people speaking in tongues, but not filled with the Holy Spirit. I say, Acts 2, 4, they say, I say, no, start with Acts 2, 3. A tongue of fire. There was a fire on top of their heads, just like the fire in the burning bush, and just like the fire in the tabernacle.

That was the mark of God's presence. Not just speaking in tongues. There's a lot of fake speaking in tongues, but you can't counterfeit the presence of God.

What does it mean to have a tongue on fire? I know when God baptized me in the Holy Spirit the first time. It's not only that I spoke in tongues, but I found I could control my mother tongue. The fire of God came on this tongue of mine, with which I used to get angry with my wife, with which I used to tell lies and give people a wrong impression.

So many other sins that committed with my tongue, suddenly the fire of God began to control it. That's how I knew that I was baptized in the Holy Spirit on fire. You remember what John the Baptist said, when, by the way, it's the second promise in the New Testament.

It's wonderful that the New Testament begins with two promises. And if the New Testament begins with two promises, I say, I want to experience both of them. The first promise is Matthew 1 and verse 21.

Jesus will save his people from their sins. Not forgive their sins. He'll do that, but more than that.

He will save his people from their sins. I mean, if I lose my temper and I ask the Lord to forgive me, he forgives me. But if I lose my temper again tomorrow, I'm not being saved from it.

I've been forgiven from it. If I watch internet pornography and I ask the Lord to forgive me for that, he forgives me. But if I watch it again tomorrow, I'm not saved from it.

I'm just forgiven. And a lot of Christians, I tell you, they're not saved from their sin. You tell me yourself.

Can you say you're saved from your sin or you've been forgiven your sin? If you've only been forgiven, you must say, I believe in Jesus, the forgiver. That's not what most Christians call Jesus. They call him the savior.

Savior. Has he saved you from your bitterness and your jealousy and your lack of love and your gossiping, especially in speaking evil about other people behind their back and your anger and your dirty thoughts? If he hasn't saved you, he's not your savior. You say, he forgives me.

Then call him by that name. He's my forgiver. I keep on sinning and he keeps on forgiving me.

He's never saved me till today. You see how the devil, like an angel of light, has deceived Christians left, right and center. Their leaders don't know Jesus as their savior and they don't know Jesus as their savior.

The second promise in the New Testament is Matthew 3 and verse 11. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. That's the first time the word fire comes in the New Testament.

The first time the word fire comes in the Acts of the Apostles was when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. There was a fire on top of their heads. And I tell you, I believe more in that fire controlling our tongue than just speaking in other tongues.

If people speak in other tongues and they don't speak properly with their mother tongue, I see something wrong. That's not the Holy Spirit. That could be a counterfeit spirit.

How did I know that the tongues God gave me was genuine? Because he began to control my mother tongue. Something happened. Acts 2.3, not Acts 2.4, it came later, Acts 2.3, the tongue of fire.

So, this is how God wants every Christian to be. There were 120 people waiting on the day of Pentecost. All 120 got the fire on top of their heads.

It's not that some got left out. If you're a Christian, you're not supposed to be left out. Today, you know, when people seek for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, they go to some meeting or they go to some man of God, they lay hands on my head, come on, baptize me in the Holy Spirit.

And nothing happens. I've seen enough people go forward in meetings and have people, some guy puts his empty hands on somebody's empty head and nothing happens. But when they came to John the Baptist, he said, listen, fellas, I can only immerse you in water.

Do you want to be immersed in fire? Go to him. He's the only one who baptizes in fire. I baptize in water.

He baptizes in fire. When people come to me, I tell them the same thing. Hey, listen, do you want to baptize in water? I'll do that for you.

Do you want to baptize in fire? Go to him. He, he alone can baptize you in the Holy Spirit in fire. I got my baptism in fire from Jesus.

Not in any meeting. Not with somebody laying hands on my head. I got it from Jesus.

Have you got that? If you haven't got it, all your understanding of doctrine, all your so-called decent, upright Christian life, it's good. It's like the tabernacle, exactly according to the pattern. But the fire is missing.

In the tabernacle, the boards are the same size, the curtains are the same color and everything is perfect. You look at it, it's exactly like Moses. Like God told Moses, only the fire is missing.

I find that, you know, very often when Christians compare themselves with each other and with other churches, what do they boast in? They usually boast in that we have got a purer doctrine than those people. They haven't got it exactly like in scripture. You look at the Roman Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church, see, they've got things which are not in scripture.

They pray to Mary and they pray for the dead. Or they believe the wafer is the body of Christ. Oh, you say, we don't believe all that.

Right, brother. You're right. Your tabernacle is exactly according to the pattern.

But they don't have a fire and you don't have a fire either. So, what does it matter? You say, that guy's tabernacle, the curtains are the wrong color. My tabernacle, the curtains are the right color.

But we both don't have a fire. What's the use? Oh, his boards are a little smaller than it should be. My boards are exactly according to what God said.

So, what? There's no fire. It makes no difference. We glory in that which we shouldn't be glorying in.

A pattern. There was this, I love to mention this. I've mentioned it many times.

Our enemies, there's a saying that our enemies often tell us more truths about ourselves than our friends. When your enemy tells you something, you better listen to him because he'll probably tell you more truth about yourself than your friends. Your friends will just say nice things to you.

When your wife is angry with you, she'll tell you more truth about yourself than when she's very happy. There was an enemy of Christianity called Walter in France 300 years ago. He was an atheist.

But he looked at all the different denominations. There were Protestants and Catholics and Galvanists and all types of people in the 1700s. He was a very shrewd observer.

He said, all these Christians have got different doctrines. They meet in different churches. But when it comes to the love of money, they are all the same.

They all love money exactly the same. Whether they are Catholics or Galvanists or Armenians or Anglicans or Lutherans, when it comes to money, they've got the same doctrine. And he's absolutely right.

Do you have the same doctrine on the love of money as the Roman Catholics or let's say the Hindus or the Muslims? They're supposed to be better than them, right? But what about when it comes to the love of money? Has the fire of God burnt that out of your system? Or you find that you're only doctrinally different from the Muslims and the Hindus and the atheists. But when it comes to the worship of man, you worship man just like them. This is where Satan has deceived a lot of Christendom.

If there's one thing that's taken away the fire from Christendom, it is money. It's the love of money. Pastors love money.

Preachers love money. And you see that all over television. It's a blatant display of the love of money.

And that's not Christianity. It's a counterfeit. It's an absolute counterfeit.

Because if Jesus Christ cannot save a person from the love of money, He cannot save anybody from anything. I find that in the Gospels, there's only one time when Jesus said, salvation has come to this house. You know that? He said it about Zacchaeus.

It's the only time. If Jesus gives a certificate saying salvation has come here, well, you can be sure it has come. And in what context did he say it? He didn't say it after giving Zacchaeus a doctrinal test.

Do you believe in the Trinity? Do you believe in the various doctrines that Christians believe in? Do you believe that man is a wretched sinner? All the questions we ask new converts. Jesus didn't give a doctrinal test. That's how we tell a person salvation has come.

Zacchaeus was one of the biggest lovers of money in Jericho. And all of a sudden, after meeting with Jesus, he said, I'm going to give away half my goods to the poor. And I'm going to return all these fellows whom I've cheated along with interest and more than interest.

They'll be thankful that I cheated them because they're going to get four times back. And those other fellows who were not cheated by Zacchaeus will say, oh, I wish Zacchaeus had cheated me because I would have got four times back. They envy the guys who were cheated by Zacchaeus.

And when Jesus hears that, he says, this guy's attitude to money has changed. Salvation has come to this house. When Jesus looks at your life, will he say that salvation has come? Salvation from the love of money.

Has it come? And you know, there's something that Jesus said there immediately after that, which really spoke to my heart. I'll tell you my testimony. This is Luke 19, verse 9. Jesus said about Zacchaeus, today, salvation has come to this house.

What did Zacchaeus say? You see the previous verse? I'm going to give half my goods to the poor. All my possessions, I'm going to make a catalog of my assets, value it and give half to the poor. That guy was an accountant.

He knew. And he said, I'm going to return four times to everybody I cheated. Immediately, Jesus said, no doubt, salvation has come.

This guy stopped worshipping Bayal. He was worshipping Jehovah and Bayal till then. Now he stopped worshipping Bayal and says, well, this is Jehovah all right now.

It's like, you know, in the Old Testament, Elijah said to the Israelites, you can't worship Jehovah and Bayal. Jesus said, you can't worship God and man. You know, that's the equivalent of Jehovah and Bayal today.

We can imagine, we can think, how in the world can any Jewish, sensible Jewish person think that he can worship Jehovah and then during the week go and worship Bayal. But Saturday you go and worship Jehovah and then Sunday to Friday they worship Bayal. That's ridiculous.

I mean, you've got to be crazy. Go and worship Bob Barron before an idol. And once a week come and worship.

You see, you can't imagine how any Israelite could do it. Can you imagine a Christian who comes and worships God on Sunday and worships Mammon Monday to Saturday? Who? I can. Not only imagine, I can see so many of them.

It's Christ and Mammon. How many Christians can honestly say that they've been completely delivered from worship of Mammon? I think honestly very few would be able to say that. After Jesus said those words, he said something further which applies to us.

Verse 9 applies to Zacchaeus. Verse 10 applies to us. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are lost.

Whenever you read a verse, read it in its context. Jesus wasn't suddenly going to some other subject. He was saying because.

For means because. The first word in that sentence in that verse is for. Salvation has come to this house for he's also a son of Abraham.

For. Why did Jesus say that Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham? Because Abraham was the father of the Jews and he was free from the love of money. You remember when his servants and Lot's servants started fighting and he was the one who had been called to Canaan.

Lot had no business to come there. God hadn't called Lot to come to Canaan. He just tagged along with his uncle and went along.

And Abraham could have turned around to Lot and said, listen, Lot, go back to Ur of the Chaldees. God never called you here. This is my land.

God's called me. But you know what he said? He said, Lot, we are brothers. Look around and you take whatever you want.

You take the best part of Canaan. And what you don't want, I'll take. If you go to the right, I'll go to the left.

If I go to the left, I'll go to the right. What a way that man was free from the love of possessions. And later on, you read in the next, that's Genesis 13.

And Genesis 14 you read when he had delivered the king of Sodom who had been captured by a number of other kings. And the rule in those days was that if you want to battle, all the property was yours. That was the rule.

That was one of the rules of war in those days. So, when Abraham rescued Sodom and his... Sodom was a fantastically rich country. And all the people, the king of Sodom came and said, well, according to the rules of war, all this property is yours.

I mean, Abraham could have been the first billionaire in those days. And he told Sodom's king, I will not even take a shoelace from you. Sorry.

You can have it. Imagine being offered a billion free and saying, I don't want it. Would you do that? Because I will not touch Sodom's money.

If I have to get money, my God will give it to me, not the king of Sodom. One day you will boast that you made Abraham rich. And God, Jesus looks at Zacchaeus and says, here's another son of Abraham.

He's got the same spirit. And then he says, because, for, the Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are lost in the love of money. That's the full sentence.

That's in its context. And when I read it, I remember reading it years ago. And I said, Lord, I want to be honest with you.

I'll tell you something. A little secret. God loves those who are honest.

Absolutely honest. And I said, Lord, I'm lost in the love of money. My sins were forgiven many years ago.

But I'm still lost in the love of money. This is years after I was saved and baptized. But Lord, you came to seek and to save those who are lost in the love of money.

Will you save me? Many of you have prayed that Jesus will save you from hell. Will you also pray that Jesus will save you from the love of money? He doesn't say it if you don't ask for it. I asked for it.

I said, Lord, I want to be saved because I don't want to be a worshipper of Christ and man. Like those Israelites who worshipped Jehovah and Beyah. I want to be wholly a worshipper of Christ.

Sometimes we think that it's only rich people who worship money. You say, I'm so poor. I'm not a worshipper of money.

You know, we have in India many beggars who are, without exaggeration, say, a thousand times poorer than you, than anybody here. I'll tell you something. I've never seen a beggar in India who doesn't love money.

Have you seen a poor man who doesn't love money? Show me one. Show me a poor man who doesn't love money. Show me a rich man who doesn't love money.

What does that prove? It's got nothing to do with a person's income. It's got nothing to do with a person's assets. How is it that poor beggar who's got nothing, except the clothes on his back, loves money? How is

it that this billionaire who's keeping on accumulating money also loves money? Because it's got nothing to do with wealth or assets or income.

It's got to do with only one thing. Were you born of the race of Adam? If you were, whether you know it or not, you've got this lust in your flesh. And you don't get rid of it by saying, Lord Jesus, come and devour me.

No. And I'll tell you something, which no other preacher may tell you. If you don't face up to it, you'll never be free from it, even when you die.

And you'll have wasted your life on the earth. I mean, you may go to heaven. But I'll tell you something, my aim is not to go to heaven.

I've never been interested in going to heaven. I'm interested in pleasing God, whether I'm on earth or in heaven. I mean, it must be a very selfish desire for a person.

I want to go to heaven. I want to live to please myself on earth, but I want to go to heaven when I die. I'll tell you honestly, I don't want to.

I want to live a life that pleases God right now. That's the only way I can express my gratitude to Jesus for dying for me on the cross. How do you express your gratitude to Jesus for dying for you on the cross? Is it by just singing a few songs once in a while when you go to church or coming for a few meetings like this? No.

It's by a lifetime of pleasing God. You must ask Jesus to baptize you in a fire that burns up the love of money. I'll tell you, I've prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed, and I said, Lord, I still see a little bit of it over there.

In some little situation, I see a little bit over there, and I said, Lord, I want to be 100% free, because I don't want any idol left in my heart. I tell you, my dear brothers and sisters, let me say to you in love, there are a few idols in this area in your heart. And if you don't root them out, they'll remain.

They're not going to go out on their own. You can get a good testimony before others that you're a good believer because you've got all the right doctrines. The tabernacle is all exactly according to the pattern, but the fire is missing.

You know, when Elijah stood at Mount Carmel and he looked at these people who were Israelites, children of Abraham, they were not real children of Abraham like Zacchaeus. They were namesake children of Abraham, just like today people say they are born again. We are a child of God.

Wow, really? The Lord, I mean, Elijah told those people, are you really children of Abraham? He worshipped only Jehovah. Well, you guys are worshipping Jehovah and Beal. You can't worship Jehovah and Beal.

He said, here are these 450 prophets of Beal. They're like the false preachers today. The equivalent of those 450 prophets today are the false preachers who tell you that you can worship Jesus Christ and still be a lover of money.

They are the prophets of Beal today. And there's one Elijah who stands against all of them and says, what is he saying? Let's you and I have a test. The God who answers by fire.

Let Him be the true God. And if God does not answer by fire, you're worshipping a false God. And they agree.

I agree too. This is the real God, the one who can send a fire that burns up the worship of Beal from people's hearts. That burns up the worship of Mammon from people's lives.

That's the true God. I believe that with all my heart. If I worship a Christ who cannot deliver me from the love of money, it's a false Christ.

Another Jesus. The devil who has come as an angel of light. I don't want to spend my earthly life deceived by it.

Jesus said so clearly, you cannot love God or Mammon. He said that very clearly in Luke 16, verse 31. I've taken it very seriously.

You cannot worship Christ and Beal. The God who answers by fire. Let Him be God.

Now how important is this? As I said, only Jesus can baptize you in fire. He's not only coming to preachers, He's not only coming to me. I can baptize you in water.

He's the one who baptizes in the fire. Go to Him. And don't be satisfied with the conflict.

Most of the people I have met who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, I don't see a fire in their life. I'll tell you honestly. I don't see them like the bush burning with God dwelling there.

I listen to some of these preachers who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. They're some of the most boring preachers I've ever heard. All they talk about is how to get the money out of people.

Why is this? This is not Christianity. Where do you find Jesus preaching like that, trying to get money out of people? That's not the fire of Christ. It's a false fire.

You read about in Leviticus 10 about the false fire that Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, brought before the Lord. And the Lord punished them for it. And I believe the Lord will punish all these people who produce a false fire today.

Elijah stood there and said, I'm going to stand against all these prophets of Baal who are deceiving God's people. We need to stand against these false prophets who are deceiving God's people today. But you can't stand against them if you yourself are worshipping Jehovah in your heart.

The Lord told Elijah once. And Elijah thought he was alone. You know, Elijah, in these hundreds of thousands of Israelites, there are 7000 people who have not bowed their knees to Baha.

Elijah didn't know who they were, where they were. Maybe one here, one there, one there, one there and here and there. There were 7000.

But in the midst of maybe a couple of hundred thousand people, that's a very small number. I don't know what the population history was those days. But it's a very small number.

But the thing that struck me when I read that was that even though there were 7000 people whom God himself said, yeah, I've counted 7000 people here who have never bowed their knee to Baha, their testimony was a negative one. What is your testimony, brother? I have not done this. It's not a positive

testimony.

I have not bowed my knee to Baha. You know that the testimony of many Christians is that? I don't gamble. I don't commit adultery.

I don't steal. I don't watch dirty movies. I mean, that sort of disappearing.

Christians are starting to watch dirty movies now. But it's a negative testimony. I have not bowed my knee to Baha.

What about your testimony? Is your testimony a negative testimony? I have not done this and I don't do that. But do you know what Elijah's testimony was? He told King Ahab in 1 Kings 17, I stand before Jehovah. I stand before God.

There's a fire upon his life. Dear brothers and sisters, it is God's will for you and me. Don't let the devil rob you of your inheritance.

Whoever you are, it's God's will for you to save you from all your sin, first promise in the New Testament, and second promise to baptize you, immerse you in the fire. I'm so thankful that God opened my eyes to see that the first two promises in the New Testament were for me. To be saved from all my sin and to be immersed in a fire which only Jesus could do, set me on fire so that I could be like a burning bush.

I believe that burning bush is a symbol of what a Christian should be. Moses saw that. Moses saw God in the tabernacle.

And I was very interested to see in John chapter 1 and verse 14, I use the NASB, in the margin of the NASB it says, The word became flesh and tabernacled among us. Apparently, that's the original meaning of that word. The word came to earth, verse 1, the word was God, that's Jesus.

The word became flesh and tabernacled in our midst. Then I understand what the Old Testament tabernacle was all about. It was a picture of Jesus.

Just like the tabernacle was built exactly according to the pattern, everything in Jesus' life was exactly as God said. He never did His own will, He did the Father's will, but more than that, just like there was a fire on that tabernacle, there was a fire in Jesus' life. That's why He said, I am the light of the world.

In those days, light came only by fire. Today we can have light with electricity and so many other things, but in those days there was only one type of light. If you didn't have fire, you didn't have light.

Every fire around the world in those days, every light around the world was only with fire. When Jesus said, I am the light of the world, it was because there was a fire in Him. And He turned around and told His disciples in John 9, verse 5, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Very clear statement. There was a time period, for 33 and a half years, He was the light of the world. He said that so clearly in John 9, verse 5. And then He went down to heaven and He said to His disciples, Matthew 5, verse 14, now you are the light of the world.

So, if somebody were to ask me a question, Brother Zach, who is the light of the world? I would say, me. People think that's blasphemy. Everyone is saying, Brother Zach said he is the light of the world.

I say, read Matthew 5, verse 14 and see what the Bible says. You should be the light of the world. Why? Because John 9, verse 5, Jesus said, as long as I am in the world and only as long as I am here, I am the light of the world.

And after that, you are the light of the world. How easy it is to farm off that responsibility and say, oh, Jesus is the light of the world. That means, don't look at me.

What did He mean when He said in Matthew 5, verse 14, you are the light of the world. That means the fire that is in me should be in you. There must be a fire in your life.

Not once in a while. Not when you get all stirred up and worked up when you hear a message like this once in a while. No.

All the time. All the time. The bush was burning and when the fire was not on the tabernacle, it was an indication that God had left.

He was no longer there. When the glory was that fire was not on the temple, it means God had left. And when the fire is not in your life, it means God has left.

Now, He may have been there once upon a time in your life, but He has left. There are enough indications in the Old Testament that God can come and He can leave. He doesn't leave quickly.

He leaves very slowly. Let me show you Ezekiel. You know, Ezekiel was the only prophet who prophesied not in Israel, but he prophesied in Babylon.

He was a 30-year-old prophet who was prophesying in Babylon. He prophesied why God punished them by sending them to Babylon. He was explaining to them.

I'll tell you why you guys are in Babylon. And God gave him in picture language, He showed him how these people who were inside the temple, they were worshipping all types of idols. Let me show you that.

Ezekiel and chapter 8. And verse 16. The Lord brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house. You know, in a vision the Lord said, I'll show you the condition of Israel's leaders.

What all they're doing in private, which other people can't see. Outside they look like great preachers and try to show others that they're very holy people. But these leaders, let me show you their private life.

He took me to the inner court of the Lord's house and there at the entrance to the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, there were about 25 men with their backs to the temple of the Lord. And their faces towards the rising sun. Do you know that when God, some of you may not know this, when God told Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness, they had to carry it and then they go and plant it in the next place, next place, next place, wherever they went, they had to plant the tabernacle.

The Lord said, make sure that the gate of the tabernacle is always on the eastern side. Wherever they went, they had to look for the eastern side and make sure. You know, you could position the tabernacle any way you like, but you couldn't do it.

The gate, there was only one gate and the gate had to be on the eastern side. Why? Why? Because around the world people worshipped the sun. That was their God.

The Egyptians worshipped the sun. A lot of other people worshipped the sun. And God was saying to these people, when you come into my tabernacle, your back must be to the sun.

And you go the other way. You say, I don't worship the sun. Because that's how they had to come in from the east, their back would be to the sun, sunrise.

And so, here he says, these people have turned around the other way. Their back is to the temple of the Lord. Same way with Solomon's temple, the entrance to the temple had to be in the east so that they would have their backs to the sun when they entered the temple.

They go to the holy place, the altar, all the time their back would be to the sun. And here these people were turning around, their back was to the temple of the Lord and their faces were towards the sun. And it says, they were prostrating themselves eastward towards the sun.

They were worshipping other gods in private. And he said, this is why you fellows have gone to Babylon. Your leaders have gone astray and the people have gone astray.

They worshipped Jehovah publicly, but in private they worshipped other gods. A lot of Christians today worship pleasure and money, but publicly they are worshipping Jesus Christ, only for man's sake. And so, what happened? He says, I saw in chapter 10, verse 4, the glory of the Lord, this is the fire, lifted up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple.

That means, it was in the most holy place, that's where the fire was always there, it moved to the entrance. The Lord says, I'm going. It didn't suddenly disappear, it slowly moved from there to the entrance.

And then, it was there for a while and we read further down in the same chapter, in verse 18, and the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold and slowly it moved and the glory of the Lord as the cherubim moved, cherubim departed. Verse 19, the last part, the glory of God disappeared along with them and finally it went away completely. Glory of God always moves very slowly.

That means, God doesn't forsake you just because you slipped up once or twice. He tells you, hey, you're not careful with your conscience. But you keep on ignoring it.

The Lord says, you need to go and apologize to that person and you ignore it. You need to ask forgiveness from your wife or your husband, you ignore it. Well, slowly, slowly, slowly, one day you'll find the fire is gone.

You still go to church. You may be a board member. You don't have to have a fire to be a board member in any church nowadays.

And the Lord is telling his people through Ezekiel, this is why your fellows are in Babylon today. And that's what makes any church today a Babylonian church, that the fire is missing. The doctrines may be all correct.

You may be singing with great enthusiasm. You know, what is false fire? False fire is the fire of emotion. It's easy to produce emotion.

Excitement, clapping, shouting. I remember once, I was speaking at a charismatic meeting in India and there was a huge crowd there and I was sitting on the platform and I was looking at all these people and they were singing. And there was one guy out there who was singing, happier, his face was so cheerful,

happier and clapping and louder than anybody else.

I said, I've got to go and meet this brother. He seems a very cheerful, happy person. As I came near him, within about five feet I could smell the alcohol.

Ah, I said, that's why he looked so happy. It was spirit alright, but not Holy Spirit. I learned that day, you don't need the Holy Spirit to clap and be cheerful and happy.

You just need a little whiskey. That will do the job. Emotion, false fire.

It can be a preacher who can whip up your emotion. And you think that emotion is fire, it's not. Because you go away from that meeting and the love of money is still very much in your heart.

You didn't get any fire, you just got some emotion. You can go and sit in front of a computer and go to some dirty websites. What fire did you get? You didn't get any fire at all.

You're going to be reading books which Christians shouldn't read. You're going to be watching TV programs which you know Christians should watch. You're going to be watching movies with Jesus Christ next to you and watch.

What fire have you got? That's not the fire of the Holy Spirit. You've got some emotion in you, false fire. Why am I saying this brothers and sisters? Because I don't want you to one day stand before the Lord and discover that the devil fooled you left, right and center all through your life.

And I've heard a lot of preachers today, they don't tell us the truth about such matters. It's almost as though it doesn't matter. It does matter.

One of the wonderful things I've seen, you know after chapter 14 Ezekiel is like a New Testament, New Covenant preaching that Ezekiel speaks. And he says in the New Covenant, Ezekiel 43, he says the glory of the Lord is coming back. There you see in the New Covenant the glory of the Lord, verse 2, coming back and back.

And verse 5, the glory of the Lord filled the house. This is the message of the New Covenant, that that fire that departed can come back and fill the house. That happened on the day of Pentecost.

There's a prophecy of the day of Pentecost. And when the fire of God filled the house, it says here, there is a law for this new house now. And the law is, verse 12, this is the law of this new house.

The entire area must be most holy. That is the law of this house. In the Old Testament tabernacle, only one part was most holy.

One small little 15 feet by 15 feet place in the tabernacle was most holy. The rest was holy, outer court. But in the New Covenant temple, it says the whole area is most holy.

There is no outer court and temple. The whole thing is most holy. The fire of God filled the house.

What that means in practical terms is, it's not that you're just going to have the fire of God on a Sunday. You're going to have it on a Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, the whole week, all the time, every area of my life. Not just when I'm clapping and singing on Sunday mornings.

It's when I'm working. It's when I'm living at home. There's a glory of God, a fire of God filling our life.

That's the message of the New Covenant. As I said, how important is this? Let's turn to Revelation chapter 3. Everybody knows that the Laodicean church was a terribly backslidden church. We know that the church in Ephesus, their fault was they had left their first love.

They left their first love means they lost the fire of love for God. And the Lord says, all your work, all your preaching, all your conferences, all your meetings are useless if you don't have the fire of God in your heart. That was his complaint against the first church in Ephesus.

You have left your first love and therefore all these other things are worthless. It's like a tabernacle with every detail exactly according to the pattern, but the fire is missing. Now look at the Laodicean church.

He says, I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot. See, there's a saying, a proverb in English which says, something is better than nothing.

That's true in the world maybe, but not in the kingdom of God. Something is better than nothing? The Lord says, you are lukewarm. Isn't lukewarm better than cold? The Lord says, no.

Lukewarm is not better than cold. I wish you were cold. Can you imagine the Lord telling a church or believers, when the Lord came to you and said, listen, I wish you were cold.

If you're not hot, I wish you were cold. Take that as a word from the Lord to you directly. If you're not on fire for God, be an utterly worldly person.

Don't waste your time coming to church and pretending to be a Christian and pretending to be interested in spiritual things. Be out and out worldly. Be an atheist.

I wish you were an atheist. Imagine Jesus coming to a Christian and saying, I wish you were an atheist. I wish you would never come to church.

Just be out in the world. That's cold. Then, this lukewarm, something is not better than nothing.

And I'll tell you the reason for that. You know, one of the charges that God made against Israel, you read that in Romans chapter 2, verse 24, I think, it's a quotation from Isaiah 52-7, the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen because of you Israelites. Do you know the Egyptians could not blaspheme the name of Jehovah? Because they worshipped Osiris and all these other gods.

The Greeks could not blaspheme the name of Jehovah because they worshipped Zeus and all the other gods they had. Who could blaspheme the name of Jehovah? Only those who took the name of Jehovah. That was the Israelites.

Today, who can blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ? Not the atheists. Not the Hindus or Muslims or Buddhists or anybody. It's only Christians who can blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ.

Because they take that name. You know, my wife could not bring dishonor to my name before she took my name as my wife. I mean, before she took my name as my wife, she had some other name.

She couldn't ruin my name. And you cannot ruin the name of Jesus Christ until you say you're a Christian. But when you say you're a Christian and you're lukewarm, you bring dishonor to the name of Christ, then

the Lord says, I wish you wouldn't take my name at all.

I wish you were a Buddhist or a non-Christian. Then be cold. That's why the Lord says, I wish you were cold.

Lukewarm Christians bring tremendous dishonor to the name of Christ. Because they claim to be Christians and they don't behave like Christians in their office or in their home or with their neighbors or on the road with other drivers. They don't behave like Christians.

Then the Lord says, I wish you were cold. I wish you didn't even call yourself Christian. You've got to be either hot or cold.

Now, I don't know how many of you believe this. I believe it with all my heart. I could make a list of verses that most Christians don't believe.

One of them is this. Jesus says, I wish you were either hot or cold. And if you are lukewarm, verse 16, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Whatever it means, it's not a good thing. You ask yourself, what do you spit out of your mouth? Do you spit out of your mouth something you're enjoying? Have you ever started eating ice cream and spat it out of your mouth? If it's spoiled, yes. I'll tell you what you spit out of your mouth as soon as your tongue touches it and you say, boy, this is old stuff.

This is spoiled stuff. I want to spit it out. I don't like this taste.

Imagine Jesus saying that about you, brother or sister. I don't like your taste. I'm going to spit you out of my mouth.

Whatever it may mean, I don't want it in my life. I don't want Jesus to say to me, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth. And why? Because you're not on fire for me.

Now many of us think that being on fire for Jesus is sort of an optional extra, like when you send a child to school, don't say, you must get your PhD. No. I mean, if you finish high school, that's enough.

The Lord says, no. It's not like that. It's not an optional thing.

I mean, you come and accept Christ and be saved, make sure you go to heaven. But if you want, you can be on fire. It's not like that.

I wish you were either hot or cold and because you're not, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth. I believe it. I don't care what all the preachers in the world say.

I'd rather believe Jesus Christ than all the preachers in the world. But I'll tell you, one of the biggest lies, one of the biggest lies that Christians say is they say, I believe the Bible is the word of God. It's a lie.

If you believed it, you'd believe this word, that Jesus would spit out of his mouth. Everybody goes lukewarm. I believe it's the word of God.

I believe this book is God's word. I've read it for 50 years and I know it's God's word. It's changed my life.

And I believe it with all my heart that Jesus would spit out of his mouth anyone who's lukewarm. Now, you don't hear such messages nowadays because the preachers themselves are lukewarm. How can they talk about it? I remember when God baptized me in the Holy Spirit and fired me.

It put a burning desire in my heart, not only a desire for purity, not only a desire that my speech would be pure. One of the words Jesus said was in Matthew 12, 36-38, every careless word that men should speak, they should give an account in the day of judgment. Think of all the words you spoke just today, just today, in one day.

How many of you really believe, tell me honestly, how many of you really believe that, forget all your past years, just today, that all the words you spoke, you ought to give an account in the day of judgment? I believe it with all my heart. That if I have spoken words that are sinful, words that hurt other people, whatever you may say, I've got to give an account for it in the day of judgment. Because in some of the verses, most people don't believe.

They say this is the word of God, they don't believe this is the word of God, they're telling lies. I believe it's God's word, I take it seriously. And so, I want a ton of fire in my life.

I remember when Jesus filled me with the Holy Spirit and I got that fire and I said, Lord, I want this to be always there in my life. I want it to increase. I never want to lose it.

I don't care if I don't have many things in this world that doesn't interest me. I want the one thing that's important. Have you sought it with all your heart? Many of you have migrated to Australia.

Was that easy? It was not. Why did you migrate to Australia? You had some thoughts in your mind that if I get to Australia, I can get this and that and the other place which I cannot get if I live in my home country. And that passion was so great that you're willing to fulfill the conditions and do this thing and do that test and pay so much money and, I'm sorry to say, in some cases even tell lies.

In order to get a visa. All that just to become a citizen of some country and you won't take 10% of that desire to get the fire of God in your life? That passion you had to become a citizen of Australia. You don't have 10% of that desire to have the fire of God in your life? What type of Christian are you, my brother and sister? Are you on fire for God or are you lukewarm? I never want to be like that.

I say, Lord, I don't care which country I'm a citizen of. I'm a citizen of this earth and I want to be a witness for Christ on this earth and be on fire for God every single day of my life. And I want to increase as I grow older.

I don't want to become less. More and more and more and more. Not because I don't want to be spat out of the mouth of Jesus.

Because that's the purpose with which I was born again when Jesus saved me. It was in order to put His fire in me. That's why He saved you in case you didn't know it.

He did not save you to take you to heaven. He saved you so that you can be a fiery witness for Him on the earth. Please remember that, my brothers.

So, if you see that right from the beginning to the end of scripture, that's the mark of the presence of Jesus Christ in a person. The God who answers by fire. Let Him be God.

Everyone else is a contradiction. The only Christianity that's worth anything is the Christianity where Christ dwells in the burning fire of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And there's no partiality with Him.

If you offer yourself completely up to Him, He will send the fire. If you kept one leg back or something back for yourself, there would be no fire. And that's the reason why there is no fire in the lives of many Christians.

They've given something of their life to Christ, but not everything. And the fire is waiting. People say, do you have to wait for the fire? No, you have to wait.

I mean, God's waiting for you to put every piece upon the altar. That's all. God's waiting for you.

You don't have to wait for God. But He waits because there's a verse in Isaiah 30 which says, the Lord waits on thy to be gracious to you. He waits.

People think we're waiting on God. No, God's waiting on you. Waiting for you to put that last piece of your life, the last area of your life upon the altar.

And the fire will come immediately. It's true. I've seen it happen in my life.

I've seen it happen in other lives. And I've also seen enough of the counterfeit fire. It satisfies a lot of people.

Don't be deceived by it. There's an inheritance that Jesus purchased for you on the cross. Don't settle for anything less than that.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before the Lord. And once again, I plead with you, my dear brothers and sisters, don't just get stirred with something temporarily.

And don't just say it was a good message. Go before God and say, Lord, I've got only one life to live. And many years of that life has already gone by.

But I really want the rest of my life to be for you. I want a fire to burn in my life. In every area of my life.

I yield it all to you. Heavenly Father, help us we pray each one. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/_9CmYeFL8jM.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/gods-fire-marks-his-presence/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net