

# The Burning Bush

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being a burning bush, filled with God's presence, and living a life that prioritizes Jesus above all else.*

**Duration:** 1:00:00

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:2, Job 3:16-19, Psalm 146:3-4, Jeremiah 1:5, Malachi 1:10, Acts 5:1-11, Romans 15:3

**Topics:** "Holy Living", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of preserving a pure testimony for God, focusing on the need to die to self, let go of personal opinions, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. It highlights the significance of being like a burning bush, where every impurity is burnt up, and God's presence dwells. The message calls for a deep commitment to live a life of holiness, free from worldly influences and distractions, and to seek a genuine encounter with God that transforms hearts and lives.

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## Transcript

So the burden the Lord has placed on my heart for this conference, you know we have it only once a year here now, this is not an outreach conference. We're not trying to reach the lost in this conference. That all of you do the 361 days of the year when you get back to your churches.

That's the place for outreach. But we're going to spend four days for building up those who have already come to the Lord. It's going to be a time of teaching and consolidation.

We're not here to be entertained. Even the music is only to help us to worship the Lord, that's all. But primarily our aim is to meet with God.

And if you're met with God, even if everything else goes wrong, even if it rains every day and we get wet and the food is bad and the accommodation is not convenient, if you're met with God, I'll tell you it'll be worth it. You come with that attitude and you'll really get a blessing. But if we are occupied with other things, and I want to especially warn you in these four days at least, stop gossiping.

Stop speaking evil of others. And perhaps if you stop speaking evil of others and gossiping, fast from that. Fast.

If you can't fast from food, that's okay. But fast from gossiping and speaking evil of others and murmuring and complaining just for four days. Can you do that? You know what may happen? You may be cured of it

forever.

And you'll be thankful. So try fasting from expressing your opinions of other people and complaining and murmuring for four days. I guarantee it'll bless you.

My life has completely changed since I completely decided to obey the command in Philippians 2.14 which says, do all things without murmuring and grumbling. I decided to do that long ago. My life was transformed.

It just made me a very happy person. I guarantee it'll make you. Your whole life you'll spread happiness wherever you go.

And the most wonderful thing is God will be with your mouth. Every time you open your mouth, whether in a pulpit or in ordinary conversations, you'll bless people because God sees that the rest of the time you don't lend your tongue to the devil to accuse or criticize or backbite or murmur. Around the world there are lots of churches waiting for revival.

There'll never be revival. Until we learn to control our tongue. Any amount of prayer, prayer, prayer, all night prayer, nothing will happen.

It's holiness that's going to bring God's presence. So my burden is, you see there, preserving a pure testimony in the picture of the burning bush. The first dwelling place of God mentioned in the Bible is the burning bush.

Why is that important? Because our body is to be the dwelling place of God. Our home is to be the dwelling place of God. Our churches, our local churches are to be the dwelling place of God.

Not just preaching centers. I never want to build a church which is a preaching center which gathers crowds. I'll tell you quite honestly, I'm not excited when I see a crowd.

Because I don't know whether all of you are wholehearted, radical, disciples. I don't know how many of you sitting here can really look up to Jesus right now and say with all your heart, Lord, I desire nothing on earth other than you. That's a spiritual Christian.

Perhaps many of you sitting here desire 101 other things other than Jesus on the earth. You want Jesus, but along with him you want so many other things. That's fine.

I hope by the time these four days are over, you want only Jesus. You know, many of you have come from many, many conferences. And you still find your home life is pretty much the same level.

The disease is not cured. You've taken a thousand spiritual tablets. The disease is not cured.

You know why? You'll be cured when you can say, Lord Jesus, I desire nothing on earth but you. I'm not going to pursue anything but you. And when I get to heaven, I'm not interested in the golden streets.

I'm not interested in mansions. I'm not even interested in a crown on my head. I want you.

In heaven, I desire nothing but you. Whom am I in heaven but you? You come to that place, you'll be a worshiper. And I tell you, I'll tell you that from 50 years of experience as a believer.

All the things you need on earth, God will add to you without your running after them. Are you worried you'll never be in debt? No. I'm giving my personal testimony.

I'm 70 years old and I've never been in debt for one day. I decided. If you want Jesus only, many things get sorted out in your life.

We must not be religious Christians who are just, you know, excited during a conference time or stir it up for a while and then die out again. We must be on fire for God all the time, like that burning bush. I want to be like that burning bush.

For many years, I wanted to be like that. That all the time in my heart there's a fire burning for God. A fire of purity.

A fire of love for everybody whether they love me or not. It makes no difference. You see, that burning bush, it didn't depend on anybody else.

If somebody threw some water on it, it would just continue to burn. The water would become steam. That's what happens when we're a burning bush.

Somebody throws some bad words at you, it doesn't disturb you. It just evaporates in steam. Somebody throws accusations and everything.

It all gets burnt up. But if you're not a burning bush, then that water sits inside and destroys you. So, this is the solution.

God dwelling in man. That is the pure testimony. I want you to turn to Exodus.

We read in chapter 2 about this burning bush. Sorry, chapter 3. You know, the way God prepared Moses to lead his people was first of all, first of all, to see him dwelling in that burning bush. It's almost as though God was saying, Moses, you're not going to lead my people with a supernatural ability to preach or to sing or administrative abilities.

A lot of people seeking for all that. You will lead my people when you become like this burning bush. I want to say to every elder brother here who wants to be a leader among God's people, you will be a leader when you're like this burning bush.

And if you're not like this burning bush, you may be the greatest preacher in the world. You'll be useless as far as being a representative of God. It doesn't matter how well I preach.

It doesn't matter whether I can't preach or I can't sing. If I'm a burning bush, I can lead other people to God. Because it says here in Exodus 3, I believe this was a parable that the Lord was speaking to Moses.

And that applies to all of us. It's not just leaders. Every single brother and sister must be a burning bush.

In the Old Testament, this is only for certain people. But the wonderful thing of the New Testament, oh, I wish you would see it. I feel the fundamental problem with most Christians today is they have not believed what the promise Peter said on the day of Pentecost.

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. We've got 10,000 counterfeits of the baptism in the Holy Spirit going around the world today. Fooling people that just because they shook something or babbled something,

they're filled with the Holy Spirit.

They're not. You look at their life. There's no burning fire in them.

They're not filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said when Jesus comes, he will not only save you from your sin. He's the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

And he said, secondly, he is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit and fire. And fire. And that fire begins here.

Exodus chapter 3, you read in verse 2. The angel of the Lord. Now, I believe that's the word angel means a messenger. Jesus Christ in his free, before he arrived in Bethlehem, before that, you read occasionally in the New Testament, he manifested himself by this expression, the messenger of the Lord.

It was the Lord himself, the second person of the Trinity. There, in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush, as far as I can remember, that's the first time in the Bible that you find Jesus Christ coming from heaven to this earth and appearing in spirit form in a burning bush. And there was a prophetic picture of what he was going to do on the day of Pentecost.

By the spirit of fire, he was going to come and dwell in the midst of people and make them all into burning bushes. You know, some of us are struggling with sins and worldliness and how to be free from the love of money and, oh, I'm attached to this and I'm attached to that. Brother, you need the fire.

The fire will burn up everything. You try to crush this, crush this, it'll grow again. It's like crushing weeds.

You try to crush the weeds in your garden, they grow again. Burn it up! The Lord will come as a burning fire and burn it up and that will solve the problem permanently. You won't love money anymore.

You'll love better things than that. And you won't need to go to any revival meeting in your life because you'll be always revived. Revival is for dying people.

They say in a hospital, this guy's dying, we've got to revive him. If your church needs to be revived, that church is dying. It's pathetic, that's the condition of so many people.

And I will tell you, many, many churches, what they need is not a revival meeting, they need a resurrection meeting. They're dead! How can you revive a dead man? Any amount of prayer, what they need is not revival, they need resurrection! And then we need to stay in that resurrection. And it says here that the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire.

Verse 2, from the midst of a bush. And he looked and the bush was burning with fire and it was not consumed. Burning with fire, all the bugs and no bug could stay inside that.

Whatever germs there were in that bush up till that time when the Lord came, they vanished. What a life, I want to be like that. That no bug of this world or sin will have any place in me.

Because the fire of God burns in my heart, no bitterness in somebody, no unforgiving spirit, no worldly attitude, it will all be burnt up by the fire of the Lord. And yet I myself am not consumed. My personality remains, that's what it means, the bush is not consumed.

I'm still Zac Poonen, and my personality remains the same, but all the other things in me are burnt up, every wretched thing that I inherited from Adam. That's what God wants to do through the Holy Spirit. And

then the Lord manifests himself through that burning bush.

And the interesting thing here is, Moses had gone by there so many times, there are probably hundreds of bushes there, but there was one bush that made him stop. Dear brothers and sisters, I don't know whether the longing that you have, but I remember when I read this, I said, Lord, I want my life to be like this, that when people know more about my life, they'll stop. And say, how is it possible for a man to live like this? How is it possible for a man to rejoice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, never to be in a bad mood 365 days of the year, never to be interested in money or the things of the earth, even if he has little.

How is it possible for a man to be devoted to God, to be on fire for God every single day, even if he never attends any meetings, even if nobody is there to stir him up. I mean, if you get on fire only when somebody stirs you up, that's good. But you need to go one step further, where you come to the place where you're on fire for God, when nobody stirs you up.

See, this bush did not need somebody to pour oil and put some fuel into it. No! I'll tell you this honestly. When God fills you with the Holy Spirit, you don't need even conference meetings.

You'll be on fire for God whether you go to a conference or not. And you won't backslide after the conference is over. You'll be the same and you'll be setting other people on fire.

If you always need fuel and fuel and fuel and fuel, that's good. That's the early stages. But how long are you going to sit in the early stages? How long are you going to be a baby? We've got to grow up and we've got to communicate that fire to our children until our homes get set on fire.

Very important. And then people will stop. You know, if you're a man on fire for God, people will stop and see, hey, there's something different about this man.

They may not agree with you, they may criticize you, but they'll never forget you. Because they met a saint who lives before God. And every one of us can be like that.

Think if we can be scattered across India and just be one individual here and one individual there whom people will never forget. I remember when I was in the Navy, I was second in command in a ship where I had a senior commanding officer. And, of course, every ship I was in, they knew I was a disciple of Jesus Christ and a Christian.

I was a witness for Christ wherever I was. And I remember I heard that on his deathbed, when somebody went to visit him, he spoke about me. And years later, because I was perhaps the only man he came across who reminded him of eternity.

That's how we must be. They may forget about us, they may criticize us, but years later on that deathbed, they will remember, there was one man I met in my life who made me conscious of eternity. Who showed me that eternal things were more important than the things of time.

Not one man who was a joker and made fun and could make me laugh. I don't want that type of reputation. What type of reputation do you want? There are so many people whom you know who will never come for a conference like this.

Who I never know, but they meet you. One day they will die. And on that deathbed, I want to ask you, will they remember you? That you were the one who made them aware that there's a world beyond this world.

That the things of eternity are more important than the things of time. And if they saw you getting upset over some earthly loss, then they'll believe that you're just like the rest. You get disturbed with ugly things.

But if they see that you're not disturbed, because eternity is more important than time, like I've often said to people, remember this, brothers and sisters, the only thing serious on this earth, the only thing that's serious on this earth, is sin. That's all. Jesus did not come to save us from anything other than sin.

The rest are byproducts. The angel Gabriel, when he came to Joseph, he said, don't hesitate to take Mary to be your wife, because this is born of the Holy Spirit. And that holy thing is going to be born of him, born of her.

You shall name him Jesus. Because, there's a meaning to that name, Gabriel told Joseph, he shall save his people from their sins. And you've heard me say this often, that's the first promise, as you turn to the pages of the New Testament.

That's a new age coming. Someone has come from heaven, to save me from what? Not to save me from my poverty. I'll tell you honestly, I'm not afraid of poverty.

My wife and I have gone through poverty in our early married days, and we are thankful for it. It taught us a lot about God. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from poverty, and make them wealthy.

That's a false gospel. That he'll save his people from all their sicknesses, and make them healthy. That's a false gospel.

Read Matthew 1.21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he's going to set in order all the political injustice going on in the world. No. He's not come here to set right all the injustice in the world.

That he'll do when he comes and reigns, in the millennial kingdom. You shall call his name Jesus, because he will deal with man's biggest problem, and that is not political injustice, or dictatorships. Jesus hasn't come here to remove dictators, and make countries into democracies.

I'm not interested. I'm not interested in anything to do with politics. I'm interested in doing what God sent Jesus on earth to do, and called me to be a member of his body, to save people from their sin.

If they are healthy, praise the Lord. But if they are sick, at least let them be saved from sin. If they have enough money to meet all their needs, praise the Lord.

But if they don't have and they are poor, never mind. Let them be saved from their sin. I mean, I'm not preaching what I didn't practice.

Even in the days when we were rock-bottom poor, my wife and I never prayed, Oh God, make us wealthy. No. When I'm sick, I say, Lord, you either heal me or give me something better than healing.

Holiness. I choose holiness any day. I want to ask you a question.

How many of you can honestly say before God, that if I speak a rude word to somebody, it will disturb me much more at night, than if the doctor told me that I had incurable cancer. I can say that. That if I speak a rude word to somebody, that will disturb me much more when I sleep at night on my pillow, than if the doctor told me today, Zach, you've got incurable cancer.

You've got another week to live. I say, fine. If I've got another week to live, I want to live another week without sin.

You know why so many people say, Oh brother Zach, I've been trying for victory over sin. I haven't got it. You'll never get it.

Till you see sin is much more serious than every sickness in the world. I'm asking you honestly. Can you honestly say, that you hate sin more than any sickness? Can you honestly say, that if you have Jesus, you don't want a comfortable life.

You don't want a good bed to sleep on. You don't want a good food. You can sleep anywhere, live anywhere, eat, drink anything, because Jesus is everything.

Oh, we're all so fussy, about so many things. We want this, and we want that, and we want the other, and at the bottom, number 85, we also want Jesus. Where in the world are you going to be on a burning bush for God? We come to God, you know like God told Solomon, in a dream once, say, ask what do you want? He said, I want wisdom.

And the Lord gave him so many other things. He said, because you've asked for wisdom to rule my people. You know that in the book of Proverbs, wisdom is a picture of Jesus.

It's a synonym for Jesus Christ. He is the perfection of wisdom in a human being. And as a man, when he came to earth.

And if God were to wake me up in the night, and say, Lord, Zach, what do you want? I say, Lord, I want Jesus. I want to be like him. You'll do that for me.

I promise you, I'll never ask for anything on earth. I don't want a car, I don't even want a cycle. I'll walk, if you want me to do that.

I'll never desire anything on this earth but you. You, please take this prescription, and do it. And tell me when you see me next year at the conference, whether you got victory or not.

I tell you, you'll be astounded at how quickly God answers your prayer. You'll be astounded at how God transformed your home into a heaven. From the complaining, grumbling place it is right now.

Say, Lord, I want to be like that burning bush. Where every bug in me is burnt up. Where Jesus is everything.

The angel of the Lord. Jesus came into the midst of that bush, and manifested himself. I want that to happen in me.

That Jesus comes into this bush, this dry, good-for-nothing bush, called Zakunin. That he'd come into me, and make me burn. I can never take any credit for it.

If I burn and another bush is not burning, I say, that's not me. I was the worst bush than you. But the Lord came in, and the Lord can come into you.

And it made Moses stop and listen. And that's what should happen. That people look at your life and they stop.

And then God is able to speak to Moses through the bush. And God is able to speak to people through you. And to preserve yourselves like that.

All the great need is for consistent Christianity. Day by day by day by day. I don't want anything that stirs me up temporarily, and leaves me like that for a few days.

God's desire is that we must be like that. And it says here in verse 4, when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, then God spoke to him. There's something there.

People have to stop and say, hey. See, that's what happened on the day of Pentecost. People said, hey, this is something supernatural.

And whatever it was, it was people speaking in other languages, but it doesn't always have to be that. But something that people stop and say, hey, what's this? And God can speak. And that's how he wants us to be.

Now, years later, 40 years later, we read in the book of Deuteronomy. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses is blessing all the tribes of Israel. And he says, when it comes to Joseph, of Joseph, verse 13, in Deuteronomy 33, he's blessing the tribes of Israel.

And verse 13, you know, Joseph was the one of Jacob's sons, who was most upright, most godly. And in the tribe of Joseph, Moses said, blessed be the Lord, of the Lord be his land, blessed be the Lord be his land. And then he says, may you be blessed, verse 16, with the choice things of the earth and its fullness, and the favor of him who dwelt in the bush.

Let it come to the head of Joseph and to the crown of the head as one who is distinguished among his brothers. One who stands out among his brothers like a bush stood out in the wilderness. The favor of the one who dwelt in the bush.

Oh, when I read it, I said, Lord, I want that. Moses remembered God as the one who dwelt in the bush for 40 years. He never lost that vision.

This is what God wants. And 40 years later in Deuteronomy 33, he calls God as the God who dwelt in the bush. And that has been God's desire all along.

You know, after dwelling in the bush, we read in Exodus, in chapter 25, the second dwelling place of God that you read is the tabernacle. Again, God, you know, you got to see something of God's heart here. I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, when you read the Bible, please try and see God's heart.

Say, Lord, I want to see your heart here. What are you trying to say to me? I want to turn to Exodus 25 and verse 8, the tabernacle. Let them construct a sanctuary for me that I may dwell among them.

I wish you could see God's heart here and not just read those verses. Stop. Read the Bible slowly.

Don't rush to the next verse. You're missing a lot if you do. See God's heart here for you.

God saying to you, this is how I take it, will you build something for me in your heart where I can dwell? Will you build a home for me with your wife and children where I can dwell? Will you build a church for me where I can dwell? And I say, Lord, yes. What's the use living for anything else on earth? God told Noah once, will you build an ark for me? I don't find anybody else on the earth who's interested. Noah said, yes,

Lord, even if I'm the only one on earth, I'll do it for you.

I want you, Noah. You're the only one I can find on earth. A lot of people talk about God, but you're the only one, Noah, who's serious.

And I want to use you to build an ark. And Noah said, sure. And because he was wholehearted and radical, his wife joined him, his three sons joined him, and their wives joined.

There were eight people. Because one man was wholehearted for God. When God told him, I want to build something, Noah volunteered.

And he never asked the question which so many Christian organizations and churches ask today, where is the money going to come from? Noah never asked. Because he knew that if he asked that question, God would have told him, from your pocket. It's understood.

We have never asked anybody for money in the 35 years that we have built 40, 50 churches in different places. Because we believe that God's work must be done with our money. And what the Lord told me is this, many years ago, as long as you've got one rupee left in your bank account, don't ever ask anybody for money.

When your bank account comes to zero, then you have the right to ask other people. And I'll tell you, my bank account has not come to zero. That's the reason I don't ask other people.

How can I ask another person when I've got money in my bank account? Supposing I want to go and buy some food for my children, and I've got money in my bank account, will I come and ask you for money? How many of you would do that? When you want to buy food for your children, and you've got money in your bank account, you go and ask your neighbor, can you give me some money? Wouldn't that be shameful? Why do Christians go and ask other people for money, Christian preachers and others, when they've got money in their bank account? I'll tell you why. Because they don't consider God's house as their own house. They consider God's house as an orphanage.

All the people there are orphans. So they've got to send reports to other people saying, please give us money to support these orphans. I'll tell you, I don't have any orphans.

I've got children. Somebody asked me this question, Brother Zach, your four children are in America. When are you going there? I said, I've got 4,000 children in India.

Where's the question of going there? They're children. We don't run orphanages. We run families.

We build families. And who's going to provide for the needs of the family? The father! And if he's got money in his bank account, he's not going to beg and borrow. And he believes that God will provide enough.

We may not be able to build all those fancy buildings and have all those extra gadgets that other churches have, but with the little resources we have, we take five loaves and two fishes and put it in Jesus' hand, and he'll bless multitudes. We believe that. We've experienced it.

But it all depends on beginning with being a burning bush, willing to let God burn up every desire in me that's outside of his will. You don't know what you're missing. You don't know what you've missed by listening to the devil's lie that you'll have a better time in life if you do a few things to please yourself.

It's a lie. Look at the mess that's come into your life and your home because you did things to please yourself. Follow Jesus, about whom it's written that for 33 years, 33 and a half years, Jesus lived, it says in Romans 15, and verse 3, never pleasing himself in anything.

I say, Lord, you never pleased yourself in anything for 33 and a half years? And I sing these empty words, saying, follow, follow, I will follow Jesus everywhere, anywhere. Rubbish! If I don't want to follow Jesus who never pleased himself in anything. That is true Christianity.

Everything else is substandard. That is the real normal Christian life. I've read a book called The Normal Christian Life by Wachmanine.

It's a great book. But I find a lot of people who read it think they've got the normal Christian life. I'll tell you, the normal Christian life is where you desire nothing but Jesus.

If you've got there, you've got it. If you haven't got there, I don't care how many books you've read on it, you haven't come there. And that's the root cause of all the problems.

That's why Jesus said, you must take up the cross every single day and follow me. And we know what it means to take up the cross. In those olden days, if you saw a man taking up the cross, you know he was going to die.

So what Jesus was saying is, you've got to die every day if you want to follow me. You've got to die to your own choices and your own preferences. And I'll tell you, most Christians don't want to do that.

That's why there are so many problems. I remember when I was a young man and I was trying to understand the way of the cross. The Lord first revealed the way of the cross to me when I was about, I think, 23 years old and I was seeking for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And the Lord showed me that you can't have the baptism in the Holy Spirit without the cross. And the Lord showed that to me from the baptism of Jesus where he went down into water baptism accepting total death. You know, if you allow somebody to submerge you under the water, it's like a burial.

Total death to yourself. And then you're raised up, it's no longer I but Christ. And that time the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and the Lord showed me the connection there between dying to myself, being dead to the world, dead to the flesh, and coming up in resurrection life and the Holy Spirit coming upon.

I saw something there I've never forgotten. And the Lord said to me that day, this is way back in 1963, the Lord said to me, if you walk this way, my power will rest upon you every day. I'll be with you when you live, I'll be with you when you speak.

But the day you think that you graduated from the way of the cross and think that you're going to some higher class, my power will depart from you. I will never graduate from the way of the cross. I will one day when Jesus comes, there'll be no cross in heaven.

But until the end of our life on earth, there's to be a cross. There's a close connection between the cross and the fire. I want to show you that.

The first time in the Bible where you read about fire is not in the burning bush. That's the first place where you see God dwelling as a fire. But the first time you see a fire in the Bible is after sin has come into the world in Genesis chapter 3. That's the first time you read about fire.

And that's the first time you read about the cross. You read about the cross, first of all, in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, talking about Jesus being born through a woman. I'll put enmity between the serpent, that's the devil, and the woman, between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise you on the head. Satan would bruise the head of Jesus with the crown of thorns and bruise... No, sorry. Satan's head would be bruised by the devil, but Satan's head would be bruised by Jesus Christ.

But Jesus, you shall bruise him on the heel, but Jesus would crush his head. Jesus would be bruised in the heel means he would be crucified. But in the process, Jesus would crush the serpent's head.

He, the seed of the woman, will crush the head of the serpent while he himself would be bruised by the serpent. That's the cross. The cross is right there.

Jesus would be crucified and the devil would be crushed. Now a lot of people haven't understood that. They only know that Jesus was crucified, half the truth, and he died for our sins.

But in the same sentence it says as his heel is bruised, Satan's head would be crushed. It's a very important result of Calvary. Then comes the cross in our life.

Also in Genesis 3. All these things are in seed form right in the beginning of the Bible. And the Lord said in verse 22, Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now he might stretch out his hand and take from the tree of life and live forever as a sinner.

I don't want him to live forever as a sinner. So I'm going to make sure he doesn't go to the tree of life. And so he drove the man out of the garden and he stationed cherubim, verse 24, with a sword that was on fire.

It's the first mention of fire in the Old Testament. After sin came, a sword and a fire. The sword speaks of death, killing.

That's the cross. And the fire speaks of the power of the Holy Spirit. So it's there, even there in the Bible, right at the beginning.

You see it in the baptism of Jesus. The baptism of Jesus is the cross and the Spirit coming upon Him is the power of the Holy Spirit. The tragedy in Christendom is many people who preach about the power of the Holy Spirit have not chosen, explained, and walked the way of the cross.

And therefore there's no power. They get counterfeits. And then there are other people who talk about the cross, the cross, the cross, the cross, the cross, dying to self, dying to self, dying to self.

They are among some of the most miserable, depressed, sick, physically sick people I've met on the face of the earth. Because they're always talking about the cross, and the cross, and the cross, and judging yourself, and judging yourself. I'm dying, I'm going to die, I'm going to die.

Brother, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's the sword and the fire. It's the death to self and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

And we have Christendom at two extremes. One emphasizing this, and the other emphasizing that. And these people are saying, oh, those people are all emotional.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit. We need the cross. But brother, look at your life, so miserable, gloomy. Nobody wants to be a Christian after looking at you. They're always complaining, criticizing, finding fault, this, that, and the other. And anybody you meet, you've got 10,000 things to tell about yourself, and your problems, and this, that, and the other.

Who wants to be a Christian like that? You come to me, I have no problems of myself to tell you. I have to tell you about Jesus. He's the Savior.

He's the healer. He's the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. He's the coming King.

Yeah. We need both. The power of the Holy Spirit, and the way of the cross.

They go together. And if only those who are emphasizing the cross would seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, and those who are emphasizing the power of the Holy Spirit seek the way of the cross, we'd have a much better Christendom. That's a pure testimony.

A pure testimony is that which accepts both. The Lord, first of all, raised up the nation of Israel to be a channel, a vehicle, to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus. But he was so disappointed with Israel.

The whole Old Testament. You know, when I read the Old Testament, many times the Lord has told me, many, many times, he has told me, read the book of Jeremiah. Read the book of Jeremiah.

I don't know. I think I've read the book of Jeremiah more than any other book in the Old Testament. He tells me to read it, and read it, and read it.

Because that's what Christendom means to hear. A Christendom that's moving headlong towards Babylon. Jeremiah tried for more than 40 years with one message.

He never wanted a reputation for a new message every Sunday, like a lot of preachers desire. He was not interested in a reputation. He was interested in saving people from Babylon.

And you see the burden of these Old Testament prophets. It was only holiness. They were not preaching, even in the Old Testament, they were not primarily preaching material wealth and healing and all the other things so-called New Testament preachers are preaching.

They were preaching holiness. It was a mark of a prophet was that he would preach repentance and he would preach holiness. The mark of every prophet in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

And that's why you can't get a prophet out of a Bible school. No, not a single prophet in the entire Bible came out of a Bible school except the false prophets. They had knowledge.

The true prophets came out of contact with God. They met God face-to-face. And they lived before God face-to-face like Elijah said to Ahab, as the Lord God lives before whom I stand.

Lord God lives before whom I stand. The false prophets came with their Bible college certificates and degrees. The true prophets said, as the Lord God lives before whom I stand.

That was their certificate. And they always preached repentance and holiness and for temporarily the nation of Israel would be stirred up like when Elijah preached. They fell on their face.

Yah, Yah, Yah. Baal is not God, Jehovah is God. But how long did it last? Not much longer.

Because the false prophets were always much larger in number. And they came with their message saying peace, peace when everything is when everything was wrong. They said everything is okay.

Instead of repairing the broken wall they put some plaster on it and say it's all okay. You read that all in the Old Testament. And the Lord said, I never sent these prophets.

And yet they ran. And the Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah and Elijah and Elisha had to contend with all these false prophets who were accusing them and saying you're the false prophet and you're the heretic and etc. We see the same thing today.

And so many people get scared of that because a lot of Christendom today, I'll tell you honestly, a lot of Christian preachers and leaders, they want to be popular. They want to be accepted. They want larger crowds in their meetings.

We're trying to reduce the numbers in our meetings just by the way. We're trying to bring people down to radical disciples because I know that two or three are enough for the Lord to be present. And the Lord is not present in most churches.

That means he can't even find two. If he found two in a church he would be there. But if he can't even find two he won't be in that church.

And when you see the Lord not there in so many churches and if you don't believe me go to some churches. Even those who preach about being born again and water baptism and speaking in tongues. Go and sit through a meeting of that church and tell me whether you've met with Jesus or whether you've got an entertainment like you go to some rock concert and get entertained and feel nice and come back.

That's what a lot of people feel on Sunday morning. They haven't met with the Lord. They haven't come home deeply convicted, deeply encouraged that God is their father that they can live a holy life on this earth and live for God despite all the opposition of the world.

They don't come back like that. The sermon is boring. The music is very entertaining and they're spending all their time improving the music.

Because music has replaced the fire of the Holy Spirit. Money. The other thing is money, money, money because money has replaced the fire of the Holy Spirit.

And finally God said after sending many prophets to Israel He said I've given up on you. I've finally given up on you. He sent them to Babylon, brought them back after 70 years and said okay let me try again.

I brought you out of Egypt first but you backslid. I taught you a lesson by sending you to Babylon for 70 years. Come back.

Have you learned a lesson now? Oh no. Again. Again.

After they come back 250 years later God sends the last prophet in the Old Testament, Malachi. This is 250 years after God has or at least about that period after God has taught them a lesson in Babylon. He says through Malachi you better close the temple.

Close the temple doors. We don't want any more of your temple services. I'm sick and tired of your meetings and your He said that through Isaiah earlier but he repeats it through Malachi.

It's good to read these Old Testament prophets. He says in verse Malachi chapter 1 in verse 10 Oh You know whenever you read the word Oh in the Bible Stop. This is God's heart.

In the Old Testament in Deuteronomy there's a verse like that. Oh. It's chapter 4 or chapter 5. God says Oh that my people had a heart to obey my commandments so that it might go well with them.

And now at the end of the period of Israel he says Oh Oh that one of you priests would shut the gates of the temple. Don't let anybody inside. What's the use of them coming here and coming for meetings and singing praises.

Shut the doors and say there are no meetings. No more meetings. Don't uselessly kindle fire on my altar because I am not pleased with you and I will not accept this offering.

How many churches do you think you know nowadays one of the most common practices in churches is what they call praise and worship. It may be praise but it's definitely not worship. That I'll tell you.

No. It's praise and have you noticed what people say at the end of a time of praise they go home and say boy we had a good time today of praise. The emphasis is on we.

It's like the people who go to a rock concert. We had a great time today at the rock concert. Or they go to a praise meet.

We had a great time. Oh wasn't that a very moving song that we sang. Or that solo that person sang.

Oh it moved me to tears. Of course I'm not going to get rid of my sin. I'm not going to get rid of my hard attitude towards my husband or wife.

I still plan to divorce him. But that was a moving song. This is today's Christendom.

And the preachers allow it to go on and on and on. It is moving songs. Psychology.

Techniques to move people. Either with loud cymbals and loud noises and banging away at the drums or with gentle melodious soft type of music. It's all psychological tricks.

Replacing the power of the Holy Spirit. Close the doors he says. I want to accept all these offerings.

It's the word of the Lord. But I'm going to do something new. This is God's last message to Israel.

I am going to do something else now. I've given up on you fellas. You people are a small little nation of Israel.

You thought you're the only ones I'll ever accept. Now see what I'm going to do. From the rising of the sun way in the east, beyond Japan from the rising of the sun, way beyond there whichever is the first land of the rising sun, all the way across to the west.

Way across beyond Hawaii and all that to the west. All over the earth in every little place there's going to be another type of offering that's going to be offered to me. There'll be no temple there'll be no Levites but there'll be people pockets of people across from the east to the west in every nation who will offer to me

an offering that is pure not corrupted by sin not corrupted by worldliness and not corrupted by soulish manipulation of people's feelings by whipping up their emotions through music or whipping up their emotions through intense loud praying and shouting.

No. It's going to be genuine fire of the Holy Spirit. There'll be a pure offering and my name as a result of that pure offering will be great among all the nations dear brothers and sisters that's what started on the day of Pentecost.

It was the fulfillment of that verse. God was said to those people I'm sick and tired of you but I'm going to start afresh. And if you read the history of Christendom God started off with the churches that the apostles planted but within about 60 70 years or less than that churches have become corrupt.

You read in the book of Revelation before the last of the 12 apostles had died 5 of the 7 churches are in such a pathetic state the Lord says I want to spit you out of my mouth you know people say we want to be like the early church I say which one? Laodicea? That was one of the early churches? What do you mean by the early church? First century church.

Laodicea was a first century church that was a church in purity you read it I think in Acts of the Apostles you probably see it up to chapter 5 that's all if you want to see a pure church read up to Acts chapter 5 that's it chapter 2, 3, 4, 5 then corruption starts and do you know how it started? in the first verses of chapter 6 some sisters were grumbling against some other sisters hey I see those Jewish people put more food on your plate than on my plate because you're a Jewish widow and I'm a non-Jewish widow that's how corruption started in the early church oh fool do you think these were people who said I desire nothing on earth but Jesus somebody else got more food than me there are Christians like that today jealous occupied with earthly things and trying to be a pure testimony in

a hundred years you will not be a pure testimony you come to the place where I say Lord I desire nothing but you I'm going to set a pure testimony everywhere and for that we have to die and one of the things the Lord showed me you know He showed me what the message of the cross really meant in practical terms and not just a theory the Lord showed me a verse you probably have read that verse but you've never seen it in the light of the cross now I'll show you in your Bible verses that you've read many many times but the Lord is going to speak to you something new from that verse today turn to Psalm 146 Psalm 146 Psalm 146 it speaks here about mortal man verse 3 mortal man means a man who dies and I said hey what happens when a man dies verse 4 in that very day his thoughts perish I said

Lord now I understood what taking up the cross means my opinions must perish my thoughts about how to do God's work must perish that's what happens to a dead man in that very day his thoughts perish and if I really died with Jesus if I really died you know how children sometimes play games where they act dead ok I'm dead or just kick him and see he's not dead at all he'll get up and fight back with you and a lot of Christians today talk about I'm taking up the cross they're not taking up the cross at all just scratch them a little bit and they'll come up fighting but if a person's really died in that day his thoughts perish and I began to understand as a young man oh so this is what the cross means I have to give up my opinions and my mind has to be renewed to think like God thinks the

only way that I can do that is by spending hours reading the Bible I don't have time to watch television because life is too short yeah we must be up to date with the news going on in the world nowadays we can get that very quickly through the internet we don't have to waste time watching television quickly in five minutes you can understand all that's happening in the world we need to be up to date but concentrate on

meditating on the scripture I don't mean necessarily always having the Bible open before us for hours I don't do that I did it in the early days but to think about what's God trying to say to me man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds that keeps on proceeding from the mouth of God it's coming every day and I want to hear it then I can live otherwise

I will not live that word is like a fire God says isn't my word like a fire and the more I hear that word it sets my heart on fire and if my heart is set on fire other people come near me they'll feel the heat they'll feel the heat and either they'll get offended and go away or they'll try to catch some of that heat and that fire that's up to them I wanted to be like that and here's another verse that the Lord spoke to me about death not only my thoughts and my opinions and my ideas perish my opinion about somebody ok I have a very strong opinion I think such and such a person is a very carnal person ok die brother die to it now it doesn't mean we don't have any thoughts it is no longer I what does Paul say I'm crucified with Christ and nobody lives in me now no I'm crucified Christ it is

no longer I but there is somebody living in me it's Christ and so I do have thoughts about people but they are Christ's thoughts I do have opinions Paul had an opinion about the Corinthians inspired by the Holy Spirit says you are carnal but it's not just his personal opinion it's not because they hurt him in some way that he's saying that it's because he saw there was something carnal about that here's another verse Job chapter 3 Job is speaking about death here he is wishing he had never lived verse 16 if I wish I were like a miscarriage that as an infant that never saw the light ok what happens to babies that die as soon as they are born or anybody who dies any human being you know 100 years old when he dies what happens listen to this and see how blessed it is to die with Jesus there

the wicked people will stop troubling you isn't it wonderful that I can live a life where nobody can bother me anymore your neighbor can't bother you your wife can't bother you your husband can't bother you the wicked cease from raging the weary are you weary you want to rest die you know what they write on top of the coffins R I P rest in peace that's what will happen to you when you die with Jesus there they are resting and the prisoners once I was a prisoner think of this guy who was a prisoner for 25 years in a jail and he dies he's out of the jail now this is what happens when you take up the cross and they don't hear the voice of the taskmaster anymore now the devil doesn't come and harass them and scare them and say I'll do this to you and I'll do that to you they don't even hear

it they are hearing the voice of Jesus it's a wonderful thing to take up the cross the small and the great and the slave is free from his master these are the verses I read as a young man and I said Lord I want this way where I don't hear the voice of the taskmaster anymore the devil and the slave is free I was the devil's slave so long but I'm free from my master now because I've died the slave is not free from his master by running away because the master can catch him but when he dies the master is finished you want to escape the devil's grip on you die you want to escape the grip of the world on you die you want to live a life of rest just like those people in the graveyards as far as earth is concerned die but you live a better life Christ lives in me that is the Lord who dwelt in

that burning bush a pure testimony like we read in Malachi dear brothers and sisters let me say this in closing God wants you and me I believe that's one reason God has brought you here and I believe that's one reason God laid it on my heart to keep this as a theme for this conference preserving a pure testimony many of us started like that we started like that in Bangalore I don't know whether we are still like that you started like that in your local church maybe your home was once a pure testimony maybe your life was a pure testimony but to preserve it till Jesus comes as a burning bush make it your goal and say Lord here's

my heart's desire I want to be a burning bush myself and in my home and in my church till you return I want to be a pure testimony for you on this earth let's pray

let's bow our heads before God the Lord has spoken to you my brother sister just forget about everybody else think about yourself say Lord I want to have personal dealings with you throughout these 3-4 days I want you to meet with me whether you are a child or an older person Lord I want the fire to burn in my heart thank you do it in these days fill me with the Holy Spirit show me the way of the cross where my own opinions will perish and I can be free from the voice of the past master and where I'll be free from that old master the devil and it will be no longer I but Christ that lives in me thank you Father thank you Father thank you Dad that you care for us, you love us you sent your word from heaven to deliver us pray to be so throughout these days we humbly ask in Jesus name Amen

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