

(The Power of the Holy Spirit - 3) the Fire of God

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit as the fire of God, calling for total surrender and commitment to holiness in the life of believers and the church.

Duration: 55:57

Scripture: Exodus 3:2-3, Leviticus 6:12-13, Leviticus 9:24 - 10:1, Revelation 3:15-16

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a witness for Christ in our daily lives. He compares the church to a small sample of God's kingdom and encourages believers to recognize their responsibility in their workplaces and communities. The speaker also discusses the power of the Holy Spirit, using various symbols such as breath, rivers of living water, and fire. He highlights the need to be spiritually educated and aware of the negative influences that can harm our souls. The sermon concludes with a reminder to embrace the fire of God in our lives while being cautious not to imitate the work of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Third, in a series of four messages that I'm giving on the subject of the power of the Holy Spirit. The first two we did this morning using the symbols that Jesus used to refer to the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as the breath of God and also as rivers of living water.

So in this session we want to look at a word that Jesus spoke in Luke chapter 12 to begin with. The Holy Spirit is symbolized as the fire of God. John the Baptist said, I can only baptize you in water.

But Jesus, when He comes, He will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire. And Jesus Himself said in Luke chapter 12 and verse 49. Why did He come to earth? I have come to cast fire upon the earth and how I wish it were already kindled.

But I have a baptism to undergo and how distressed I am until it is accomplished. So Jesus Himself said that He came to set people on fire. And we must never forget that.

And if we don't allow Him to set us on fire for God, we are frustrating the purpose with which Jesus came and limiting what He did for us on the cross. Right from the beginning of time, God has always borne

witness to those whom He has approved of by fire. When we think of Cain and Abel offering their sacrifices to God.

And we read that God accepted Abel's offering but He did not accept Cain's offering. How did Cain know that God accepted Abel's offering? It's not mentioned in Genesis 4. I don't believe it was a voice from heaven. I believe it was fire falling down upon that sacrifice and burning it up.

And fire did not fall on Cain's sacrifice. And we see that today also. There are religious people who got many good things for after all Cain did not offer anything bad.

He was not an atheist. He was a deeply religious man. But there was something in his life that God could not bear witness to.

And so even though he offered an offering and perhaps his life was okay, I don't know. There was no fire. Whereas in Abel, in his offering a fire came.

So way back in the beginning of human history, we find a religion with fire and a religion without it. And we see that even in our day today. A Christianity with the fire of God and a Christianity without it.

Which has got all the forms of religion. The Bible speaks of it as having a form of religion without the power. You can be doctrinally right, you can be dead right and dead and right.

And that's no use. Jesus came to set us on fire. That's why he is called the Immerser.

Baptizer means Immerser. He will immerse us in the Holy Spirit and fire. And the Holy Spirit has come to set us on fire for God.

So let's turn back and look at some of the examples of this in the Old Testament. In Genesis chapter 3 first of all. I believe this is the first time that fire is mentioned in the scripture.

It's interesting that Jesus used word pictures that are so essential for our life on earth. To refer to the Holy Spirit. The breath of God.

We cannot live without breathing. And water, living water, we cannot live without water. And fire which is so essential for our life on earth, for cooking, for heating.

And electricity itself is a form of fire in one sense. We become so dependent on it. We know how valuable fire is.

And here we read of time when man had sinned. And we read that God drove the man out. Genesis 3 verse 24.

He drove the man out and at the east of the garden of Eden. He stationed the cherubim. Cherubim were angels.

And here is where we read the fire. A sword that was on fire. Which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

So there were two trees there. In the garden of Eden among thousands of others. The tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And the tree of life. Before man sinned, there was no flaming sword around the tree of life. Man could access either tree just as easily.

But he chose to go to the tree of knowledge. It's the same today. Man would rather have knowledge than life.

Even today. Even in Christianity. Most people have knowledge.

Very few people have eternal life. And the life of God. Many Christians think that because they increase in knowledge.

They are increasing in spirituality. This is a deception. It's only when we increase in divine life.

In the character of Christ. Increasing in our life. That we are becoming spiritual.

Otherwise, attending meetings even like this one. Can. It depends how you respond to God's word.

You know, two people can sit in a meeting like this. And for one person, this may be just another gathering around the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We spend one hour understanding what is good and what is evil.

And we've increased our knowledge of good and evil. And like the Lord told Adam, that only brings death. And it does bring death to lots of Christians who go Sunday after Sunday.

Increasing in the knowledge of good and evil. But another person sitting in the same meeting. Can go beyond just knowledge.

He is seeking after God. Not knowledge. And he touches God before he leaves the meeting.

He's got life. And yet they can be sitting next to each other. It's like when Jesus was going down that road.

And there were many people thronging around him. Many people touching him. One woman touched him and got life.

The others just thronged around him and touched him. I've often thought of that in relation to meetings. When we come together, the Lord is in our midst and many throng around him.

But here and there, somebody with a need and a longing touches him and gets life. And the others, they just get knowledge and go away from the meeting. That's a tragedy.

And that's the thing, that's the tragedy we should avoid. We should not come to a meeting or for any fellowship merely to get knowledge. It must be to get life.

Remember those two trees. And so as I said, before man sinned, there was no flaming sword around the tree of life. But after man sinned, God put a flaming sword around that.

And all this has got symbolism. That because man had sinned and man had become self-centered and selfish, if he was now to access the life of God, a sword had to fall upon his self-centered, selfish way of life. That's what Jesus called taking up the cross.

That's symbolized right here. If anyone wants to come after me, he said, let him take up his cross. Let him allow the Holy Spirit to put his self-centered life to death.

All the misery and all the confusion and chaos in the world has come because of man's self-centered, selfish way of living, which we inherited from Adam. And when we say that Jesus came to save us, it's a very common expression among Christians. He's my savior.

He's come to save me. For many Christians, it only means being saved from hell. But that's not what the Bible primarily speaks about.

Right in the beginning of Matthew chapter 1, the angel came to Joseph and said to him, Mary is going to have a child. And you must call his name Jesus. Matthew 1.21 is the first promise in the New Testament.

You shall call his name Jesus because he will save his people, not from hell. He will save his people from their sins, from their self-centered way of living. That's what Jesus has come to save us from.

And a person who glories in the fact that he's saved from hell, hasn't really understood the gospel at all. If when we were enemies, he died to save us from the wrath of God, much more being alive, it says we shall be saved by his life. God's desire is that we might partake of this tree of life, the thing that Adam missed.

That is the very life of God. And that's what the Holy Spirit has come to do. And in order to make us partake of that tree, he's got to burn up something in us.

That's what the fire does. He's got to burn up the self-centered way of living that we've inherited from Adam. So, let's move on to Exodus, the next book of the Bible.

It's the first time in the Bible we read here of God dwelling somewhere. Now, this is important because the Bible says we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. And God wants to dwell in us.

And here is the first place in the Bible where we read of God dwelling in a bush. Moses was looking after the sheep in the wilderness. In Exodus chapter 3, we read that while he was looking after the sheep, the angel of the Lord, which is an expression meaning the messenger of the Lord, referring to Christ, appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush.

Now, in our Indian translations of the Bible, that word is translated as thorn bush. It wasn't an attractive bush. It was one of the things that we wouldn't want to go anywhere near.

In the midst of a thorn bush, God came and dwelt. He didn't come and dwell in the most beautiful tree in that place. He looked for something simple, ordinary.

And a thorn bush, there were no thorns before the curse came. Something which symbolized the result of sin. A thorn bush.

God came and dwelt in that in a blazing fire. And that's the first place in the Bible where we read of God dwelling in something. A picture of the way God desires to dwell in us as a burning fire.

And you can imagine that no germs could survive in that bush when this fire was burning. The whole bush was aflame. It wasn't a little twig there that was burning.

The whole bush, not half the bush, the entire bush was aflame. And when the Holy Spirit is pictured as the fire of God, seeking to dwell in man in that way, this is how He desires to dwell. Taking possession of our entire being.

Why is it many Christians are afraid to surrender their entire being to the Lord just like this bush surrendered itself completely for the fire of God? It's because they feel that if they give themselves completely to the Lord, they won't be able to enjoy certain things. That's the lie of the devil. The devil keeps telling us that God's a spoiled sport who's come to mess up your life and make you unhappy somehow or the other.

That's a lie. We've got to look at... Fire is a picture of holiness. Why is it many Christians are afraid of holiness? Because the devil's given us a wrong concept of holiness.

I want to try and give you the scriptural understanding of holiness this morning. Holiness is to your soul what health is to your body. How many of you are afraid of perfect health? You get scared.

Perfect health. We long for it. We pay so much money to doctors and for medicines to get perfect health.

Because we know that sickness is destructive. If you have a child, you don't want a single sickness in that child. Aren't you happy to have a healthy child? God's also happy to have holy children.

Exactly the same way. Why does He long, why does He keep on telling us to be free from sin? Why do you keep on seeking to keep your children healthy? Exactly the same desire God has. Sin is to the soul what sickness is to the body.

Once we understand that we won't be scared of holiness anymore. We'll hate sin like we hate sickness. And I believe that this is part of the message that comes through in the Holy Spirit being symbolized by fire.

Fire burns, consumes everything. And that's how God wants to burn up every trace of sin in our soul. He doesn't do it all of a sudden.

There's a verse in Exodus in chapter 23 where the Lord said to the Israelites that when you go into the land of Canaan to possess it, I will drive out the Canaanites from in front of you but I will not, this is Exodus 23 and verse 28 and 29 but He says I will not drive them out in a single year because if I drive out all the enemies in a single year, the beasts of the field will become too numerous for you. I will drive them out little by little until gradually you take possession of the whole land. This is a picture of how the fire of God seeks to possess our soul.

Little by little by little by little. If God did it all of a sudden the beasts of spiritual pride would possess us. One of the most difficult things for God to do is to give a man holiness and to keep him humble.

To give him victory over sin and to keep him humble at the end of it. To bless him mightily and to keep him humble. It's very difficult for God to do that.

Because most people as soon as they are blessed their heads become a little bigger and it's difficult for God to keep them humble and that's why He's got to bless us slowly. The beasts of the field multiply so quickly. And that's the picture here.

But God's desire is that our entire being like that bush is filled with the Holy Spirit totally holy. Totally on fire for God. There are verses in the Bible like fervent in spirit serving the Lord.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength. No part of our being should be left out. This is God's will.

And that's why if you turn to the last chapter of last book of the Bible in Revelation chapter 3 the Lord says to one of the elders of a church and to the whole church these amazing words I wonder whether you have thought about these words seriously because these were written these words were written for Christians and to a Christian leader in a church. Revelation chapter 3 He says to the leader of the church in Laodicea and to the entire church write these words. Verse 15 I know your deeds that you are neither cold nor hot.

I wish you were cold or hot. In other words I wish you were totally on fire or that you didn't have any fire in the bush at all. You must be a bush totally on fire or no fire at all.

But he says you are not like that. You are sort of half hearted. You are lukewarm.

That means half the bush is on fire or 10% of the bush is on fire. You want a little bit of Christianity but you don't want Christianity to take over your whole life. You don't want Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life of your finances, of your home of your speech, of the television programs you watch, of the movies you watch of the way you spend your money, the way you spend your time.

You don't want Jesus to be Lord of everything. You just want patches here and there of the bush to be on fire. And the Lord says I detest it.

Do you know that? There was a bush that was completely ablaze for God. That is what God desires. Because you are lukewarm but neither hot nor cold neither totally on fire neither totally without fire, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Now there is a proverb in the English language that says something is better than nothing. What would you say about this? Does the Lord believe that some fire is better than no fire? Something is better than nothing? This seems to be an extreme statement. I wish you were totally cold or totally on fire.

100% or 0% Are we like that? I think we are in certain areas. Would you like your wife to be 50% for you and 50% somebody else's? Or would you say be 100% for me or 0%? That is exactly what God is saying. Exactly the same thing.

You either belong totally to somebody else or totally to me. The relationship between Jesus Christ and His disciples is described in the Bible as a bridegroom and a bride, a husband and a wife. And in God's plan a husband and wife are to be 100% committed to each other.

Not 50%, not even 90%. That's the meaning of this verse. You are not totally committed.

You are like a wife who wants the benefits of what she can get from her husband but then she wants to live by herself. A lot of Christians are like this. We want all the benefits that Christ can give us but we want to live for Him.

We don't want to be totally His. So the message of the bush on fire is that God wants us totally. And that's because He loves us.

I mean, it's like a husband who loves his wife so much he doesn't want her to have an interest in anybody else. She must be His alone. Exactly what you would desire in your wife.

That's what the Lord desires in us. And the Holy Spirit has come to make that a reality in our lives. That our whole being will belong to the Lord.

And that is also the way our church should be. Many people through the years, particularly in the last 100-150 years have sought after what they call the New Testament Church. They say, we want to leave all these dead denominational churches and come together and form a Bible Church or a New Testament Church.

What is the mark of a Bible Church or a New Testament Church? Very often as I've traveled around different countries what I've seen is that what most people mean by a Bible Church or a New Testament Church is just a matter of doctrine. That means we believe certain doctrines which those old denominational churches don't believe. We believe in this type of baptism and we believe in salvation like this.

It's all centered around doctrine. But what is the real mark of a New Testament Church? Is it that it has certain doctrines which other churches don't have? You know another dwelling place of God in the book of Exodus was the tabernacle. And if you read Exodus chapter 25-40 God gave detailed description, a detailed description of every part of the tabernacle.

What size the boards were to be, how many there were, what color the curtains were to be and sockets and all types of things. All the details were given down to the last little point. And if the Philistines had got a copy of the book of Exodus they could have made a tabernacle exactly like that.

In fact we can make one like that today. But there was one thing in that tabernacle that the Philistines could never produce or copy. And that's one thing we can't copy either.

You know what that was? That was the fire of God that dwelt in the most holy place in the tabernacle. That came from heaven. How do you produce that? You can make an exact copy of that Old Testament tabernacle and the only thing missing will be the fire.

And you can make an exact copy of a New Testament church and the only thing missing can be the fire. But that's the most important part. It was the presence of God that was manifested in that fire.

And if the presence of God is absent in a church that's not a New Testament church. That's not a Bible church. What sort of Bible church is that if God himself isn't there? You know when this church that I referred to in Revelation chapter 3 where the Lord spoke to the elder.

That was a church. They had their meetings. But they didn't have the fire of God there.

And you know where the Lord was? I'm sure when they gathered together in that church in Laodicea they must have said things like the Lord we thank you that where two or three are gathered together there you are in the midst and we thank you for your presence in our midst. And yet he says further down in Revelation 3.20 I stand at the door and knock. Where was he? He wasn't in the midst at all.

He was trying to get into that church. And there are a lot of churches like that where the Lord is at the door trying to get in. But they are ignorant of that.

What is the mark of a New Testament church? Is the presence of a holy God in burning fire in the midst of that church. A church where sin is not tolerated. Where worldliness and that which corrupts our body and mind is not tolerated.

What's the mark of a good hospital? A hospital that will not tolerate any sickness in a patient that's determined to cure every patient totally before discharging him from that hospital. Would you call that a good hospital? Yeah. And what would you call a good church? A church that preaches against sin and is determined to free every person in that church from sin.

That's the mark of a New Testament church. And that's why the Holy Spirit has come. And we can substitute so many other things for this.

A church can major on collecting money or music or noise or so many things. Why did the Father call the third person of the Trinity the Holy Spirit? There are many other options. Father, Son and Musical Spirit or Father, Son and Noisy Spirit or Father, Son and whatever.

But he called him Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe there's a meaning to that. That if we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit I presume one of the first things that should be manifested in our life is holiness.

Spiritual health. Freedom from sin. And if a church is filled with the Holy Spirit then the primary characteristic of that church should be holiness.

The amount of noise or the quality of the music is all secondary. Holiness. And see how the devil has sidetracked Christianity from this into so many other things.

The fire is absent and the pattern is there. And a lot of Christians are happy with that. The tabernacle is there.

The glory has departed. You know that the in the days of Ezekiel they had a temple and that temple was built according to Solomon's temple, built according to the pattern of the tabernacle. It was exactly according to that pattern.

But Ezekiel saw just before the Babylonian captivity the glory departed. The glory was going but the temple was still there, exactly according to the pattern. These things are written in the Old Testament to teach us how you know your life can be correct according to all your doctrines and the things you are supposed to do as a Christian you do.

And the fire of God can be totally absent in your life. And many a Christian does not realize this as something serious. God wants us to be on fire all the time.

Let me show you an Old Testament verse. These Old Testament verses were symbolic. It's in the book of Leviticus.

It's a book which many of us don't read often. But it's a very beautiful verse. As far as I know, it's the only place in the Old Testament where this verse occurs.

It's in Leviticus. You know where Leviticus comes, the third book from the beginning? Chapter 6. Leviticus Chapter 6. When the offerings were kept on the altar. It says here the altar was the altar of sacrifice.

Leviticus 6 verse 12. And the fire on the altar remember this fire is a picture of the Holy Spirit as we just saw. The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it.

It shall not go out but the priest shall burn wood on it every morning. And verse 13. Fire shall be kept burning continuously on the altar.

It is not to go out. That was a law in the Old Testament. And that was a picture of God, what God wanted to see in His church in this time.

It doesn't matter if one or two of the minor doctrines are not if we don't have clear light on it. For example, I believe that the right form of baptism in water is by immersion after you are born again. But I know many good born again people in different parts of the world who were baptized or christened as little children and who don't seem to have a conviction of the necessity of being baptized in water thereafter.

So I believe they are wrong doctrinally. But I would rather have fellowship with a child baptized man who is on fire for God than a man who is baptized properly and is lukewarm and cold any day. That's what I mean.

It's a question of priority. Which is more important to God? And I think God Himself would rather have fellowship with that man whose doctrine is wrong on baptism but who is totally surrendered to God and is on fire for Him than this fellow who's got all his doctrines right but he's cold, he's lukewarm. It's so easy for us to imagine that we are more pleasing to God because our doctrines are more right than certain other denominations.

This is a deception. You're more pleasing to God if you've got more of the fire of God in your life. If more of your being is being consumed by the Holy Spirit.

If you love God with more of your heart, soul, strength and mind that's what makes you more pleasing to God. It's the fire that God looks for. Not correctness of doctrine.

Correctness of doctrine can be like the tree of knowledge of good and evil. You're absolutely right there. Your knowledge of what is right and what is wrong is perfect but there's no life.

That's what all says to Timothy. Be careful of those who got a form of godliness but don't have the power. The form of godliness is the doctrine.

The power is the power of the Holy Spirit. And the devil is always leading people. I know how he's done that in my own life.

That's how I know. Made me glory in doctrine when the fire is absent. The fire is a burning passion to be free from sin.

To be free from every possible defilement that would dishonor God. To be free from everything that would defile my body or mind so that it is in any way not effective as an instrument for God to use. And there are a lot of things in the world in which we live that can make us cool off.

The pursuit of money, the pursuit of pleasure, the type of programs you watch on television, the movies you watch, all these things can have an effect of cooling off, cooling us off and God is no longer pleased. This is why the Holy Spirit has come. To set us on fire for God, to make us totally healthy in every fiber of our being.

The thing is, you know, we who are educated know the value of physical health. We are careful with what we eat. We watch our cholesterol levels.

We are careful about our diet. Now, a lot of people are not educated who don't know about these medical facts, can be careless about their diet. Now, apply that spiritually.

There is a diet on which our mind is feeding through the TV programs you watch, through the movies you watch, which can ruin you much more than any cholesterol level can ruin you. I don't know whether you realize that. Why don't you realize that? Because you are uneducated.

Spiritually. It's exactly like those uneducated illiterate people in the world. They don't realize that their diet is ruining their body.

They will die early. The same thing that education has given us in terms of knowing what is good for our body. The word of God tells us what's good for our soul.

And the Holy Spirit as a fire comes in to burn up these other things which are destroying us. Bible says God is a jealous God. He doesn't want any part of our being polluted.

He wants us totally healthy. And that's why He sent the Holy Spirit as a fire. He wants to dwell in us as a fire.

I want you to turn to John's gospel in chapter 1. Here we read of John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and saying there is the person verse 33 He on whom you see the Spirit descending and John 1.33 remaining upon Him this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. And in Matthew 3.11 the same verse is mentioned as being baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. He is the one who will immerse you in that fire.

This is God's will for us. That all the time our being is immersed in the fire of God. Every part of our being totally holy.

Let me show you another verse in the book of Ezekiel and chapter 43 Ezekiel 43 and verse 12 We read here that this is the law of God's house. There is a law for God's house. The entire area shall be holy.

Every part of God's house must be holy. I also want to say that this fire is a protection for us. When the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt it says God I don't know whether you remember this the Egyptians were chasing after them before they reached the Red Sea.

And do you know what protected them from the Egyptians? A pillar of fire came from heaven. That's a picture of the Holy Spirit. Came between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

And the Israelites' lives were saved. That was one function of that pillar of fire. It was a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

And the Bible says it is a huge pillar of cloud that protected them from the heat of the sun. It was like a shadow. Like a cloud that gave them protection in that desert.

Those of you who know Psalm 91 know the expression there about the shadow of the Almighty. He who dwells in the shadow of the Almighty. For many years I used to think what is the shadow of the Almighty? That's the Holy Spirit.

This cloud that was like a shadow protecting the Israelites from the heat of the sun during the day. Protecting them as a pillar of fire from wild animals in the desert. In the wilderness at night.

This is the function of the Holy Spirit. To protect us as a fire from evils that seek to destroy us, that seek to destroy our home, that seek to destroy our children. We should welcome this fire into our life.

We should allow the Holy Spirit to purify areas in our life that are still polluted. Because that's the way we're going to be protected from Satan's attacks. The area of my life which I do not allow the Holy Spirit's fire to purge is the area that Satan can get a hold on.

And cause problems for me. So the fire is a protection. Let me show you a verse in Zechariah.

It's a very beautiful verse. I've often claimed it in my own life. The book of Zechariah in chapter 2. It says here, I says the Lord verse 5, Zechariah 2.5 will be a wall of fire around her and the glory in the midst.

Wonderful promise. If I allow the fire to purify and purge out from my life everything that's dishonoring to God, that fire will be a protection for me from the attacks of Satan. Satan won't be able to touch me.

Just like those Israelites were protected by this wall of fire from the Egyptians, from the wild animals in the wilderness. Many Christians complain of being attacked by Satan here or there. Why is that? It's because some area in their life they did not surrender for the purging by fire.

So, fire is not something we got to be afraid of. It's the thing that protects us. Another thing, this pillar of fire was given to the Israelites to lead them into the land of Canaan.

The promised land. It was the Holy Spirit has come not only to purge us. That's one part of his ministry.

But to lead us on into the place that God has promised for us. And the children of Israel disobeyed the Lord and turned back when the Lord told them to enter the land of Canaan. And that's why they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

The whole purpose of that pillar of fire was to lead them from one degree of glory to another. Let me turn you to another verse in the book of Deuteronomy in chapter 33. Towards the end of Moses' life, he blessed the children of Israel.

And one of the ways in which he blessed the tribe of Joseph was like this. Deuteronomy 33. He said, May the favor, in verse 16, May the favor of him who dwelt in the bush come upon you.

What was Moses thinking of? He thought of how 40 years earlier when he was a shepherd in the wilderness, he had seen this bush. A bush which was aglow. And he stopped.

And he was praying for the tribe of Joseph here and saying, He said, The greatest thing I can pray for you is that the blessing of the one who dwelt in the bush will come upon you. And I apply that to myself and I say, Lord, I want that blessing to come upon my life. I see the value of total purity in my mind.

My life can be effective for God if my mind is pure. And I believe the devil is doing a tremendous work in polluting the minds of God's people with the internet and so many, I don't mean everything in the internet, you know what I mean. There are whole sections there that a Christian should never go to.

And if you do, I'm not saying you'll go to hell, I'm just saying your life will be useless for God on earth. We're not called just to go to heaven. We're called to be a flaming witness for Jesus Christ on this earth.

I love those words that Jesus said about John the Baptist. And I've always been challenged when I think of it. Jesus said about John the Baptist, he was a burning and a shining light.

When he said to us, you are the light of the world. How can I be the light of the world if the Holy Spirit doesn't set me on fire? The only type of fire, the only type of light they had in those days when Jesus spoke about light was a fire. And I have to allow the Holy Spirit to make me a burning and a shining light setting me on fire.

Removing from my life, purging from my life everything that dishonors Him. And this is a process that must continue in our life all the time. The Bible says the Holy Spirit seeks to lead us from one degree of glory to another.

Purging our speech, teaching us to be more careful how we spend our time, how we spend our money, how we speak to one another, the things we read, the things we watch, so that our life can be effective for the Lord in these last days. A lot of Christians say the Lord is coming soon. I believe that with all my heart, but if you really believe that, we should seek to be much sharper and much more effective.

And this is one function of the Holy Spirit coming as a fire. The favor of Him who dwelt in the bush may it come upon you. I also want to say a word about false fire.

You know, that's another thing you read of in the Old Testament. In Leviticus chapter 9 we read about a time when the children of Israel offered a sacrifice to God. And we read that fire came from heaven.

Leviticus 9 and the last verse, verse 24. Fire came from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering. It's a picture of the Holy Spirit sovereignly falling in different situations.

We've heard of revivals where the Holy Spirit has fallen upon people, brought deep conviction of sin. And I believe we should pray that we see that more often. Where there's repentance, where there's weeping and mourning and turning to God and it's the fire of God falling.

And we read here about when Nadab and Abihu, chapter 10, verse 1. The sons of Aaron saw this. And I believe this is a lesson here for many today. When they saw this, you know, we see revival somewhere and we want to duplicate it.

You can't duplicate it. Revival is a sovereign work of God. And when you try to imitate the work of the Holy Spirit, you're going to end up with a counterfeit.

And that's exactly what we see here. And it's a very serious warning in chapter 10 that Nadab and Abihu, they offered strange fire before the Lord. There is such a thing as strange fire in Christendom even today.

And we got to be careful about that. It's an imitation of the real work of the Holy Spirit. It's the techniques of psychology trying to duplicate the work of the Holy Spirit.

And a lot of undiscerning Christians are deceived. There's a lot of psychosomatic healing. That means healing that comes because of changed mental attitudes which go under the guise of healing in the name of Jesus.

We need to know the difference. We need to know the difference between a fire produced by man and a fire produced by God. I've been in meetings where pastors seek to whip up the emotions of people through psychological gimmicks and techniques thinking that thereby we're going to get the Holy Spirit revival there.

This is what this passage is warning about. The Holy Spirit will fall upon anyone who comes to him with sincerity, cleanses his conscience. He doesn't have to work up his emotions.

He's got to cleanse his conscience. He's got to go and apologize to his wife or to her husband. That's more difficult than getting worked up emotionally in a meeting.

And the devil always tries to show us the shortcut. We've got to return that money we've taken wrongfully. That's when the Holy Spirit will fall.

When we purge out sin, every sin that we're aware of. But instead of that, we find in Christendom today a lot of this false fire. And what happened? It says again fire came out from the presence of the Lord.

Chapter 10 verse 2. This time not to consume the offering but to consume Nadab and Abihu. The fire of God is a wonderful thing. It's like electricity.

Electricity is such a useful thing to have. But we got to follow the laws. If you play the fool with electricity, we know what's happened to many people.

Many people have died because they did not follow the laws of electricity. So the fire of God is a wonderful thing. And I believe it should be found in our lives.

It should be found in our churches. It should be found in our homes. But we have to be careful that we don't try to imitate the work of the Holy Spirit.

And there's a lot of that going on in the world today. The Bible says that one day the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. One day this fire is going to spread everywhere.

Today the Lord keeps the church as a little sample of what His kingdom is going to be one day covering the whole earth. And I believe that's why we need to recognize our responsibility. In the place where you live, in your office, surrounded by people who do not know the Lord, your calling is to be like that burning bush which Moses when he saw, he stopped.

He said, hey, this is different. And that is what it means to be a witness for Christ. That when your neighbors, your relatives, your co-workers see the principles by which you live, they may not agree with you, but they stop and say hey, here's somebody who's different.

Here's somebody who doesn't live for himself. Here's somebody who really believes that eternity is more important than time. That God is more important than money.

And it says when Moses stopped, God could speak to him through the bush. This is our calling, brothers and sisters. Let's bow before God in prayer.

Holiness is like health, and the fire of God does not come to destroy anything valuable in us, but only that which is impure, that which defiles in our life, in our home, in our church. And if we allow the fire of God to

do its work, that very same fire will be like a wall around us, protecting our home from the attacks of Satan, protecting our body, even from the attacks of sickness. God's fire is a protection.

Let's open our beings completely to it, and say, Lord, I can't do anything about the years of my life that I wasted, but I want to do something about the days that are left before you come again. I want to be like a burning bush. I want my life to count for you.

Heavenly Father, I pray this will be true in all of our lives. I pray you will enable each one of us to know what it means to be immersed in the Holy Spirit and in fire. We ask in Jesus' name.

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