

When The Fire Goes Out – 2/11/24

TEXT-Matthew 3:7-12 11 . . . *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*

Leviticus 6:13 *The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.*

INTRO – The dictionary defines fire as:

- 1) the active principle of burning, characterized by the heat and light of combustion;
- 2) a strong feeling and excitement;
- 3) to become excited or aroused.

The purpose of fire as we know it is used in several ways. Fire in its most common use is used to heat things up, mainly food... Fire is used to burn things up... Fire is used to warm us up. . . Fire provides light . . . Fire is also used to kill germs.

Fire can also severely burn you, destroy your home, and ravage a countryside.

If we would transfer these everyday uses of fire to our spiritual lives, we would discover that the fire of the Holy Ghost does the same thing for our minds. The Holy Ghost fire sanctifies, satisfies, justifies and purifies the believer. The fire of the Holy Ghost is the power of God in the believer's life. The fire is needed for the continual cleansing of our mind because we are contaminated daily by the germs of sin and the pollution of life.

Acts 2:1-4 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The only way to combat sin is to burn it out with the Holy Ghost fire.

Too often in our Christians lives, our spiritual temperatures fluctuate. The fire of love for our Saviour may never be fully extinguished, but the fire is at a low intensity and the embers are losing their heat. Revivals/ camps/ special retreats—we get all “on fire” for God, but then a few weeks later it's back to lukewarmness again!

- **Samson's fire went out**

Judges 16:20 *And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.*

What happens to a Christian whose fire is gone out? What happens when the “light” of God that gives them life is neglected so long that it ceases to burn?

I have watched as some Christians begin to lose that “fire”. When the flames begin to die down, or there isn't enough oxygen to allow the flames to burn brightly, the only thing we can see is the smoke. It isn't that the fire isn't there anymore. It is still burning, but the smoke hides its brightness.

- **Moses spent 50 years in the desert. (1/3 of his life)**
- **David stayed behind during the war and committed adultery. His fire went out.**
- **John Mark turned back**
- **Demass forsook Paul loving the present world.**
- **Peter denied Christ**

I. The Cares of This World Can Diminish The Fire.

What can keep the fire from burning brightly? What happens is that the cares of this life, and our own desire for what this world has to offer, becomes a shell that surrounds the fire of God in our hearts. As we begin to focus more and more on those things, it forces the fire of God into a smaller, or lesser place in our lives. We no longer put Jesus as the center of our lives, but He is pushed aside and put into a corner, and surrounded by our own desires until the flame begins to die.

Banking a fire – The embers are there but they are covered with ash
Stoking a fire - you separate the ash from the embers and add wood.

What do you sense when you get around those who have left God? First, you don't see the light shining in their hearts any more. You don't see them in church worshipping the Lord. You never hear them talk about Jesus. You never hear them mention the Word of God. And they don't have any friends hanging around who are on fire for God because they have chosen to run with people who are in the darkness with them.

II. Spiritual Exhaustion can Diminish The Fire

After Elijah's great victory on Mt. Carmel, he ran for his life from Jezebel.

1 Kings 19:1-8 *And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. 3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and*

behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

He ran and sat under a Juniper tree to die.

After the angel fed him, he went 40 days and 40 nights until he reached a cave in Mt. Horeb.

He stood on the mount before the Lord, and the Lord passed by:

- **God brought a strong wind**
- **An earthquake**
- **A fire**
- **A still small voice**

God gave a new fire and a new anointing.

III. Tragedy Can Dampen The Flames

Naomi - The Book of Ruth in the Bible starts by describing a famine in the land, which caused Elimelech to seek refuge in a foreign country (namely Moab) with his wife and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. As time passed, Elimelech died, and Naomi was left a widow. Her two sons took Moabites as wives. After a while, they died, and their wives, Orpah and Ruth, became widows.

Ruth 1:20-21 *And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*

IV. The Flames an Be Rekindled

The flames of marriage can be rekindled

The flame of service can be rekindled

The flame of prayer can be rekindled

Evangelist Gypsy Smith was speaking here in America at a large gathering of Christians when he was in his 80's. During his sermon he preached with such passion, enthusiasm, and fervor, the audience would have guessed he was in his 20's or 30's. After the service a young pastor approached him and asked this elderly saint this question: "Brother Smith, I respectfully ask how you preach like you preached tonight at your age?!" Gypsy Smith's reply was later turned into lyrics for a well-loved Christian song: "Young man, I have never got over the wonder of it all." The problem with too many believers is that they have gotten over it!

Jeremiah 20:8-9 *For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. 9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

1. Keep Burning With A Heart Filled THE FIRE OF PRAYER
With Communion With Your Savior
2. Keep Burning With A Heart Filled THE FIRE OF THE WORD
With Commitment To The Scriptures
3. Keep Burning With A Heart Filled THE FIRE OF EVANGELISM
With Compassion For Souls
4. Keep Burning With A Heart Filled To Capacity With The Spirit
This verse makes reference to Acts 2—note the fire there! (vs. 1-4)
The Fire Of The Spirit Ephesians 5:18
 - The Word of God is fuel for your fire
 - Prayer is a log for the fire.

Luke 24:32 *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

CONCL – Isaac Taylor captured Whitefield's single mindedness this way: It would not be easy to name an instance, surpassing that of Whitefield, of a thorough uniformity of conduct and intention, held to from the moment of a man's coming before the world, to the very last hour of his life.

On the eve of his death, George Whitefield stood on the landing to the second floor of the Presbyterian manse at Newburyport, Massachusetts, candle in hand, and preached to the crowd gathered at the door until the candle went out.

**"Burning hearts are what we need today;
burning hearts for those who've gone astray.
Compassion, tears—for these we need to pray.
Dear Lord, give us burning hearts."**