

FIRE IN YOUR HEART !

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Declaring war on sin

“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. It shall be in that day,” says the Lord, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.” (Zechariah 13:1-2).

God has declared war on idols, false prophets, and unclean spirits. He is determined to drive them out of His house, and to cleanse the hearts and lives of His people. Indeed, the day of the Lord’s zeal has come in which He will pity His people and will no longer allow them to be a reproach among the nations (Joel 2:18-19). He is gathering His people who have been scattered and defeated, so that He might cleanse them from their filthiness and their idols, and give them a new heart of faith and obedience (Ezekiel 36:24-26).

God has opened a fountain in the Church for sin (habitual missing of the mark, falling short of God’s standards, committing of offences) and for uncleanness (sexual immorality). He wants to come by His Spirit and burn up the desire for drugs, sex, alcohol, money, and power that is lurking in many of our hearts. Some people question the relevance of addressing these issues in Church. And yet, the Apostle Paul confronted such sins in the Church at Rome, lovingly, but unashamedly: “Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy” (Romans 13:12-14). It is apparent that some ‘Christians’ in Rome were still going to parties, getting drunk, sleeping around, and jealously competing with one another. Finally, Paul put his apostolic foot down. “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

What happened on the day of Pentecost?

In the fifth century B.C.E., the prophet Malachi delivered a remarkable message concerning the Lord Jesus and His ongoing ministry through the person of the Holy Spirit. “The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, in whom you delight... But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3:1-3).

Just as Malachi prophesied, when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, the disciples were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

What was actually happening in the upper room? The presence of God, which is represented in Scripture as a consuming fire, was purifying the disciples’ hearts and minds. The Spirit of God was burning up the dross of jealousy, rivalry, pride, and greed which hitherto had dogged the disciples’ footsteps (see Luke 9:46-56; Matthew 20:20-28).

As a result, the disciples, without Jesus being physically present as a mediator, were able to stand up and speak with a united voice to the crowds on the Day of Pentecost. Moreover, they were able to worship together on a daily basis, and share their material possessions with anyone who was in need. They were able to go up together to the temple at the hour of prayer and minister as a team. They

were able to lift their voice to God with one accord and pray a heaven-rending, earth-shaking prayer. They were able to flow together with one heart and one soul in the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 2-4)

Like fire in my bones

Two discouraged and disillusioned disciples were trudging down the road to Emmaus after the crucifixion of Jesus. Their conversation centred on the climactic events of the last few days, and in particular, their hopes and dreams that lay buried in a rock tomb in Jerusalem. While they conversed and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, showing that it was necessary that the Messiah should die and rise again. Entering the house where the disciples were staying, Jesus sat at the table with them and took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32).

The proclamation of the word of God, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, will set your heart on fire! Jeremiah said, "His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not... the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One" (Jeremiah 20:9,11). Faith is a living, moving force. And faith comes by hearing the word of God proclaimed with power (Romans 10:17). Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

The fire of holy desire

Paul exhorted the believers not to lag in diligence, but to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord (Romans 12:11). The R.S.V. puts it this way, "Be aglow with the Spirit," and E.J.Goodspeed, "On fire with the Spirit." The Greek word *zeo*, translated 'fervent', means to be fiery hot, full of burning zeal. It denotes the opposite of a dignified, cold, and unemotional state. It denotes a high spiritual temperature, inflamed by the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, in 1 Corinthians 14:1, Paul exhorted the believers to "pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." The Greek word *zeloo*, translated 'desire', means to be zealous for, to burn with desire, to pursue ardently, to desire eagerly or intensely. And in Titus 2:14, Paul declared that "our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." The Greek word *zelotes*, translated 'zealous', means to burn with zeal, to have a deep commitment and eager devotion to something, to be an uncompromising partisan, to be an ardent follower of someone.

God wants to put a fire in our belly: a burning desire for Him and everything He stands for. A hunger and thirst for righteousness. A passion for lost souls. A longing to know Him. A craving to live in His resurrection power. The apostle Paul exemplified the fire of holy desire when he cried, "I long to know Christ and the power which is in His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10).

Repent and get on fire!

In the Book of Revelation chapter three, the Lord Jesus spoke to the Church of Laodicea, the largest church in the world. Wait a minute! Isn't the largest church in the world located in Seoul, Korea? No! Unfortunately, the Church of Laodicea, the church of material prosperity and spiritual compromise, boasts more members than any church in history. And its current membership is more extensive than ever.

Jesus said, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16). He then said, "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire..." FIRE! FIRE! FIRE! Jesus wants

to put the fire back in His Church!

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent” (Revelation 3:19). The Greek word zeloo, translated ‘zealous’, is the same word that is used in 1 Corinthians 14:1 (see above) in reference to the desire for spiritual gifts. Jesus is saying, “Repent! Turn to Me with all your heart. Get hungry and stay hungry. Burn with spiritual passion. Pulsate with spiritual intensity. Open your heart and receive all that I have to give. And I will fill you with My glory.”

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