

The Fire Burned

Introduction

1. Can it be said of us that we have a burning desire to serve the Lord?

A. The Psalmist wrote:

Psalms 39:1-4 I said, "I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me." I was mute with silence, I held my peace even from good; and my sorrow was stirred up. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue: "LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.

1) The FIRE BURNED in David's heart!

B. Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name." But 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.

1) The FIRE BURNED in Jeremiah's heart!

C. Luke wrote:

Luke 24:32 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?"

1) The disciples developed a burning spiritual passion upon learning the resurrection story.

2. Most of us have had that fire in the heart. We have had a burning desire to work for the Lord and to advance His cause. But sometimes we let the fire go out as they did back in the first century.

**A. In Revelation, the Lord addressed the church at Ephesus.
Revelation 2:1-4**

B. He observed many commendable attributes regarding it:

- 1) Were working in patience**
- 2) Abhorred Evil**
- 3) Tested their teachers for the truth**
- 4) Had borne hardships**
- 5) Had not grown weary in these good things**

C. However, Jesus said: "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love" (Revelation 2:4).

D. It is estimated that the church at Ephesus was more than 40 years old at the time this was written.

- 1) From its beginning it had manifested a spirit of enthusiasm, activity, and devotion to Christ.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: Enthusiasm is one of the most powerful engines of success. When you do a thing, do it with your might. Put your whole soul into it. Stamp it with your own personality. Be active, be energetic, be enthusiastic and faithful, and you will accomplish your object. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

- 2) Jesus perceived a decay or deterioration in their love!**

3. May we learn a lesson from these examples. May we all ensure that the "fire continues to burn within us."

How to Recognize When the Fire is Going Out

1. **Reduction in involvement (quit teaching, quit being a part).**
 - A. **Spiritual energy cannot be replenished by less involvement.**
 - 1) **Story of the "LOG ON THE FIRE" (the poker)**
 - a. **Energy and persistence conquer all things.
(Ben Franklin)**
2. **Reduction in Spiritual hunger ("I have to" instead of "I want to").**
 - A. **Blessings only come to those who hunger and thirst!**

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

1 Peter 2:1-3

- B. **When worldly things choke the word, and the hunger is gone, then you know that you have drifted - the gospel dies out.**
3. **Lack of Will and Motivation.**
 - A. **When you no longer feel motivated - that it has left you, then you know that the fire is going out.**
 - 1) **To be successful at anything in life, we need to take the "CPR" Approach: **Consistent in our actions,** **Persistent in our drive,** **Resistant to setbacks** and all those who may tell us we can't do it.**

Why We Need to Keep the Fire Burning

1. We desperately need it for ourselves.

- A. Our past performance will not count in judgment if we quit now.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- B. The fire is needed to endure the race before us. If our fire goes out easily, how will we endure trials and tribulations?

2. We need to energize the local church here.

- A. This church and every church needs energy.

- 1) Are we givers or takers - ideally we should be both. Many are only takers.

3. We need to influence the salvation of our family.

- A. Children need good examples. Quitters are not respected.

- B. Children do not naturally drift toward heaven - but rather toward hell.

- 1) It is the Christian family unit that continues to inspire them to reach toward heaven - as the example of parents show.

How Do We Keep the Fire Burning?

1. Fuel the fire!

A. The source - the Word of God.

1) Prayer, Communion, Meditation.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- **meditate on these things.**

2. Involvement with spiritual people.

A. One must walk with the wise to be wise. Look to the heroes of faith to ignite the fire again. (Hebrews 11 and our own members).

3. Examine yourself daily.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. **Test yourselves.** Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?-- unless indeed you are disqualified.

A. Learn to catch yourself before you enter the dying stage.

1) Measure the fire, press for the mark - keep the fire burning!

Philippians 3:13-14

Conclusion

- 1. May we all keep the fire of faith, hope, and love burning within us.**
- 2. The more we learn of and know of Jesus, the closer we will become to Him - we will love Him.**

A. Read Poem "What Happened to Your Hands"

1 John 4:19 "We love Him because He first loved us."

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

A. Jesus did that for us - what have we done for Him?

- 1) May we all strive to keep the fire burning within us by staying tuned to our first love!**

