

Bridgeway Community Church
Pastor Eli Hernandez
October 24, 2021

In Need of the Fire

INTRODUCTION

I recommend reading Acts chapters 27-28 so you can comprehend the context of the passage we will be looking at today

Acts 28:1-6 ESV

After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all because it had begun to rain and was cold. When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

"To many, this journey was an awful experience. It included fear, hunger, imprisonment, bad weather, and of course, being shipwrecked."

Romans 8:14 NASB

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons *and daughters* of God.

"But to those that understand...that there is PURPOSE behind every experience in our lives, good or bad. If we truly believe that God orchestrates everything, we must also believe that even the smallest details of life are orchestrated by the Lord. Some of the most profound truths in the Kingdom are hidden in the small, little details of the word of God. Nothing just happens."

Romans 8:28 NKJV

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

“The ‘when’ of this event was significant; they had just survived what had to be one of the most traumatic events of their lives. They were caught for weeks in a terrifying storm and finally shipwrecked on the shore of this strange island. It was not by chance that they landed on this island because history teaches us that this island was full of pagans who had never met Jesus Christ and didn’t know of his name.

Acts 28:2 ESV

The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all because it had begun to rain and was cold.

“They were tired, weary, cold, their strength was spent, they were in a confusing place and situation, but they took time to go to the fire. The fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of the presence of God.”

Matthew 3:11 ESV

[John the Baptist speaking] I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

On the day of Pentecost

Acts 2:3-4 ESV

And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them [the disciples] and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Moses and the burning bush

Exodus 3:2 ESV

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

“Fire is not always bad. Fire is what separates the good from the bad. Fire is what separates...the boys from the men. Fire is what tests you and fire is what makes things different, the fire of God.”

A scholar once said that the greatest mistake of the Old Testament was that they didn't accept God the Father as the Father. The greatest mistake of the New Testament is that they didn't accepted Jesus Christ as the son of God. But the greatest mistake of this generation is that they haven't accepted the Holy Spirit as the third person of the trinity.

“They haven't accepted the role of the Holy Spirit, how he transforms, how he changes, how he moves, how he's active, how he's doing something to intervene in your life and on your behalf.”

“Did you know that the presence of God dwells inside of you to give you direction, to give you inspiration, to guide you towards the presence of God.”

The HOLY SPIRIT is actively and working in our lives, our mistake is that we still don't believe that he exists and that He has a function and role in our lives”

Several lessons from this word

1. It was in the fire that they found comfort

“They had just gone through one of the most difficult situations of their lives. Yet they just had an experience that in that fire where they found comfort.”

“When you have a relationship with the Holy Spirit there is a level of trust and confidence that dwells inside of you.”

“I am not saying that you won't have problems and challenges that they don't exist the moment you serve the Lord. But what I am saying that when the Holy Spirit dwells inside of you, you can have peace and comfort in the midst of the storm.”

“At the end of the day, you have a confidence that those who don't know Christ don't have, and the confidence is the presence of God dwells inside of me...one way or another, I will get out of this situation and I will fulfill the destiny and the calling and the direction that God has for my life.”

John 14:18 KJV

[Jesus speaking] “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you”

John 14:16 ESV

[Jesus speaking] And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever

Often in the New Testament you see Paul boasts about his hardships

Romans 5:3 ESV

And not only so, but let us also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience

2 Corinthians 11:24-27 NIV

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

The fire transforms physical reality into spiritual truth

physical reality: they were shipwrecked, cold, in prisoned, a hard time

spiritual truth: there was a purpose and a direction and a destiny in their life in the midst of the storm

2. The fire had a purpose

Acts 27:22-25 ESV

[Paul speaking to the people on the ship] “Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you. So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.’”

Paul knew that at the end of the day nothing would happen to them because God said that there was a purpose behind this journey “*you must stand before Caesar.*” It is the Holy Spirit’s job to guide and direct us towards the will of God.

Proverbs 16:9, NKJV

A man’s heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

“...you may have a plan and your plan might take you off track at different times...God in his sovereignty just changed the situation around and worked it for his glory.”

I’ve said this before and I will say it again, you are immortal until you have fulfilled God’s plan and purpose over your life.

Isaiah 54:17 NKJV

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue *which* rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness *is* from Me,” Says the LORD.

3. The fire had to be fed

Acts 28:3, NIV

Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.

“Before we focus on the viper, because often times that’s what we do! We focus on everything that’s bad instead of focusing on what’s good. What’s good in here was that Paul gathered his own wood...Paul was putting in work...Paul understood that the fire wouldn’t last long unless it was fed.”

“You can’t depend on somebody else to pray for you. You can’t depend for somebody else to take you to your destination. You gotta go to your own destination! You gotta carry your own wood. You gotta put in your own work.”

Jeremiah 29:13 NIV

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

“If you’re waiting for somebody else to build your fire, you will be disappointed anyways. We need to stop waiting for other people to stir up the fire that should be inside of us.”

“Wherever I go, I understand that I am not called for just hand me down spirit. No!...I’m not waiting for anybody to do anything for me. At the end of day, it is my job to enter into the presence of God. It is my job to listen to the voice of God. It is my job to pray and seek his presence. It is my job to carry my own wood and put it into the fire.”

“It is also my job to have a positive spirit wherever I go. People shouldn’t feel disappointed when you walk into a room. People shouldn’t feel confused and frustrated and discouraged because you have a negative spirit because you complain about everything because you just walking around and waiting for people to do for you. Stop that foolishness! That’s a lie from the enemy. It is your job...to transform every scenario that you are in because you carry the presence of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own

“Wherever you go, it is your job to take the presence of God with you...that should change your attitude completely about anybody.”

“People should want what you have. The problem is we turn people off because we are so robotic and hypocritical too. You say you have God, but you complain about everything. You say you have God, but you have a negative spirit. You say you have God, but you’re always walking around victimized. Don’t you have the victory of the Lord?”

2 Timothy 1:6 NIV

[Paul writing to Timothy] For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

4. The fire brought out the serpent

Acts 28:3-5 NIV

Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.

The bible is very clear on what brought the serpent out.

The fire of the Holy Spirit exposes sin, it convicts us of wrongdoing.

Have you ever done something wrong and are instantly feel the conviction of God? You might ignore the conviction but that doesn't mean he didn't do what he was supposed to do.

"Pastor, what is conviction? You feel inside of you something that challenges you, something that tells you maybe you should do this, maybe you should do that..."

5. The fire was a catalyst for transformation

Acts 28:6 NIV

The people expected him [Paul] to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happened to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

Although physical, the fire was a spiritual representation of what was to happen next.

A revival that turned critics into converts... Verse 6

A revival that opened doors... Verse 7-8

A revival that transformed the Island ... 9-10

John Wesley - "I asked the Lord to set me on fire and let the people watch me burn."

Practical Applications

1. Join us for our 30 hour Revival this Friday
2. Read and Study on the Holy Spirit -- He's a person, get to know Him.
3. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal himself to you.