

Our God Is a Consuming Fire

by G.W. North

The sermon emphasizes that God, as a consuming fire, desires a deep relationship with humanity, urging us to reflect His love rather than our lusts.

Duration: 1:30:02

Scripture: Isaiah 33:6, Isaiah 50:10-11, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 12:22, Hebrews 12:26, 2 Peter 1:19

Topics: "God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the book of Daniel. He highlights how God protected them in the fiery furnace and emphasizes that God is a consuming fire. The preacher then moves on to the topic of wars and conflicts, explaining that they stem from the desires and lusts within individuals. He emphasizes that Jesus Christ became a human being to bring forgiveness and a life and love union with God. The preacher concludes by emphasizing God's love for humanity and His desire for a complete and devoted relationship with each individual.

Transcript

A verse at the end of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews caught my eye afresh today. It's a very wonderful verse. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 29.

Our God is a consuming fire. Our God is a consuming fire. So now you know whether you know God.

Now you know whether you know God. You may remember, in the seventh chapter of Hebrews, we read a word like this, speaking of the Lord Jesus. Verse 24.

This man, that is, Jesus, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. If you keep your finger in there, we turn back and we see Jesus in chapter 2. Amen. In this chapter we could read what David, that is the one spoken of in verse 6, David in one of his psalms in a certain place testified, saying, What is man? I want to suggest to you that man is a fire too.

It doesn't say who is man, but what is man. You may recall that we read what God is, not who he is. God is what? A consuming fire.

What is man? A consuming fire. I'll show you what I mean. Keeping your fingers here, you may have to have a lot of fingers tonight to keep in your scripture.

But this is how we learn our Bibles and this is how we see that the Bible is just one book, though it consists of many. And it says one thing. And so, in James, I want us to read this.

In verse 1 of chapter 4, From whence come wars? Now you will know that we speak about wars in these days as hot wars or cold wars. Is that right? You have hot lines and cold lines between some leaders, directors, presidents, dictators, kings, queens, governments, or so on. All right.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not even, hence even of your lusts that war in your members? You lust and have not. You kill and desire to have and cannot obtain. You fight and war, yet you have not because you ask not.

You ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your lusts. Our God is a consuming fire and so are you, so are you, so am I. You are a consuming fire, but what kind of a fire? Love or lust? It's unavoidable. You've got to be a fire of some sort or another.

So we go back into the Hebrews letter and we read, if I may remind you, in that seventh chapter that this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. And we turn to the second chapter in which we read, what is man? That God is mindful of him, speaking to God, thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.

Thou crowned him with glory and honor and did set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet, for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus.

Now this is the man spoken of in the seventh chapter, this man, we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man, for it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Praise God, what a wonderful thing. We see Jesus, and this is the man spoken of in the seventh chapter, verse 24, this man, this Jesus, because he continueth ever, because beloved, he did not just come to the earth and die, he came to the earth to die, in order to rise again from the dead, continuing ever that Calvary was part of his passage through time.

It was in the will and purpose of God, he continued, he continued, you remember some of you who are familiar with your Bibles, how that in one passage we are told that he set his face steadfastly to go toward Jerusalem, and he went on, and on, and on, and at Jerusalem everybody thought he came to a full stop, or a dead end, but he didn't, he continued on, and he went through Jerusalem just like he entered and passed through Jericho, he entered Jerusalem and passed through it, and was crucified outside of Jerusalem, alright, you remember that's where he met Zacchaeus, up a tree, outside Jericho, and he went up a tree himself, the cross, and there he died, and there he met and fulfilled the conditions whereby he could with authority say to that man Zacchaeus, those months before salvation has come to thy house, Amen, yes, and he fulfilled the conditions, he never made empty talk, he never gave absolutions in the way that arrogant men do it today, do the thing they, or attempt to do the thing they can't do, he said it, and he did it, and he continued, and he went up to heaven, back home to his father, and he is still continuing, he is continuing the day of salvation that he began when he came as saviour to us, he came to be called Jesus in order that he should be known as the one who saves his people from their sins, in fact that is why he was called Jesus, and so he is continuing ever, glory be to the name, turn over your page if you need to in Hebrews 7 to verse 25, wherefore, because he is continuing ever, he is able also to say to perfection,

that's the word, I don't know whether they will translate it like that in the new versions, he is able to say to their perfection, that's the great power in the Greek, able to say to the perfection, translated uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, glory be to the name of the Lord.

Now, we started off by reading that our God is a consuming fire, amen, and the whole purpose of Jesus dying, redeeming us with his blood, and providing the ground whereby we could be righteous before God, and ascending to heaven again, having completed the great work, our God, Jesus, did it with the intention of bringing us to their consuming fire, did you know that? Did you know that this is the purpose of God? Not particularly to take you to heaven, or anywhere like that, but to bring us to God, to bring us to the consuming fire.

Now this is not a new idea, let me take the Old Testament in my hand, I hope you have a complete Bible with you, and we can turn here, and find the great prophet Isaiah, speaking like this, in the 33rd chapter, you know beloved, if you haven't got a faith that is absolutely biblically true, then you have a false belief, you must understand this, I talk to you like this because this is the way I faced it myself, many decades ago, as a believer of sorts, I was prepared to take this book, and face up to what it says, and let that be my judge, not some religion, or religious background, or whatever it is, but this glorious book, I was prepared to face up to that, Amen.

Are you? Are you prepared tonight to face up to the truth of God's word? You may remember, I pointed out to you the other day, that Peter calls it the more sure word of prophecy, much more sure than any prophetic message you may get in your little coteries, or in groups, or churches, or fellowships, it's much more sure than that, this is what Peter called it, the more sure word of prophecy, Alleluia, glory be to the name of the Lord, and so, I ask you, are you prepared to face up to it?

All right, I'm reading in Isaiah 33, here in verse 13, Here you that are far off, what I have done, and ye that are near, acknowledge my might, this is God speaking, the sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites, who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings?

There it is, Isaiah was saying the same thing, in case you think you're sort of going to heaven, you're gonna have a nice cool time, and it's all gonna be wonderful, no sweat, and all this business, you and I have got to see that we're not going up there to have a nice bed of flowers to lie on or something, you and I have got to live, we've got to dwell with the, with devouring fire, now understand that, when you start to think about God, this is the way you've got to condition your mind, I have to live with devouring fire, now you will know when I'm talking about fire, or I hope you do, that I'm not particularly meaning the element that we call fire, simply because when we are out of this body, as Paul says, when we pass from out of mere humanity and flesh, the element of fire won't hurt

us, not natural fire, you keep that very clear, the illustration of this is very simple, you will know it, if I turned you to the book of Daniel, and we read about the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were cast into the fire that was heated seven times hotter than usual, because of the fearful wrath of the king, so hot, that the champions of his army, Nebuchadnezzar's army, that is, who threw these three Hebrew children into the furnace, died from exposure to the heat, themselves, and they threw these three Hebrew children into the fire, and king Nebuchadnezzar, standing far enough off, so he didn't get his beard singed, though he didn't care about who died as long as his despotic wishes were

fulfilled, he stood well back and he said, I see, well, did you not

throw three men in the fire, he said, I see a fourth, like unto the son of man, and the three Hebrew children were all walking in the midst of the fire, and the king drew near to the mouth of the furnace, and he said, oh, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and I hope you know all the story, if not, you read Daniel, it's good bedtime reading, and come out, and they came out, and there wasn't as much as a smell of fire on them, that was wonderful, wasn't it, not a hair gone, nothing singed off them, nothing, you see, now you and I have got to live with the everlasting burnings, because we think about burning, you know, if you just sort of touch something with your finger, we dash for the cold tap, if we've got nothing else, and let that run on it for a while, to get the sting out, we do all

kinds of things, just a little thing on the tip of your finger, God wants us to conjure up that kind of idea, and then having got it into our thinking, turn from it, because we can only imagine it by the element that we call fire, we can only imagine it that way, that's the way we're to do it, but praise God, there is that fire which burns, and burns, and burns, as Moses saw, you remember, when he went to the backside of the desert, and he saw the bush burning, and wasn't consumed, the fire didn't live off the natural elements, like fire that we know does, you pile wood into a fire, and the fire lives off the wood, it is physical fire, that which we know, but our God is not that kind of fire, any more than your lusts are that kind of fire, they aren't, and you don't feed your lusts on

wood, and you don't feed your lusts on coal, you feed your lusts on spiritual things, and on souls, that's what you do, you don't feed your inward lusts on beef, or pork, or cabbages and beans, to George's delight, no doubt, but here is the great thing, beloved, our God, now listen, just think of this, can you look back in your time, when perhaps you burned, and you might feel shame about, you burned in your lusts for him, for her, for it, for that, for something else, can you remember that, now don't lie and say you can't, because nobody will believe you, nobody will believe you, and how to get what you wanted, you went all out for it, you didn't care what you did, but you got it, now God, not like that, he doesn't lust after evil things, he doesn't lust with seduction in his mind, he

doesn't lust with physical things in mind, but he loves, and loves, and loves, in order to consume the object of his desire, and wouldn't it be wonderful if the object of his desire was you, now all the great prophets of scripture, and all the great preachers have testified to this, as I pointed out, Isaiah said, who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings, are you ready to do that, are you ready to do that, oh, glory, our God is a consuming fire, and Jesus Christ became a man, that is, God the Son became a human being, in order to do this, it isn't come to the cross, dead stop, kneel there, get your sins forgiven, it's come to the Christ, who will take you through the power of the cross, and through the glory of his

resurrection, into a life and love union with God, that's what it's about, people that peddle forgivenesses, and penances, and I don't know what, they're deceiving the people that listen to them, this, that is not the gospel, the gospel of this bible, and this is what it presents to you, is the good news of a God who loves you, that the only way he can tell you he loves you, I love you so, that's right, I love you so, he can't describe it, how can you describe, even on a human level, how much you love a human being, you can't do that, unless you and I see behind, or through, all these glorious things of which we speak, say the incarnation, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, through his ascension, and his thronement, unless we can see through, on behind all this, a great big heart of

love, beating for you, throbbing for you, yearning for you, wanting you, and me, we've missed it all, if God has only sort of devised a means of forgiveness, what?

Glory be to the name of the Lord, he has come through it all, it isn't as if devised forgiveness, he's come to show you he is a forgiving God, that's right, he's come to show you that he is a justifying God, he's come to show you he's a redeeming God, he's come to show you he's a loving God, a gracious God, a tender God, a loving God, a powerful God, he's come to show you the original fire God, that's what he's come to show you, of course God isn't just to be thought of in an abstract sense of just, well, fire, oh no, you could become like a Parsi if you believe that, that's what they do, I can remember travelling on a train in India, and it's quite an experience, it really is, they tear along at about 40 miles an hour and so on, and I don't know how many days it might take you to get from one place to another, I believe they speed it up a bit these days, and I can remember as the dawn broke one particular morning, I had been asleep in this saloon place that they have at a certain price and so on, and I woke up and looked out into the corridor and there was a man standing just waiting for the sun to rise, and as soon as the sun arrives he sort of cleared everything and stood there worshipping the God of fire, the God of the sun and so on, they're the people you know that don't bury their dead, they have great grids and when they die they put them on these grids and let the vultures come and eat them, and their bones drop down through the grid, and that's where they stay, part of their religion.

You see, don't let us think of God merely in terms of the abstract of fire, but nevertheless it's only by telling us these things that God can begin to awaken us from this deathliness of not seeing what it's all about. He, our God, is a consuming fire, you who have read your Bibles carefully and will know the story of Israel, you will know that it all started with God meeting Moses at that burning bush, you know that's how it all started, and God, excuse me, sent him back to Egypt to bring redemption to his people and bring his people out of the land to what?

To a mountain that burned with fire called Sinai, Mount Sinai, you can read your Bible and this is exactly what you will find, and in order to lead them to Sinai, he sent a pillar of fire at night time to lead them to the mountain of fire, which became the mountain of fire because the God of fire dwelt on the mountain, the God who loved them, the God who sent the Saviour, Moses, as it was in those days, to save them and lead them out.

Amen. Moses says about that, but we can read about it in this Hebrews letter that we've looked at together, in this Hebrews letter we can read these words in chapter 12 where we were reading, all right, verse 18, speaking to the born again children called the sons of God, the children of God, in other words, just a slight alteration from what we read in the second chapter where we read that Jesus calls us his brethren, and not ashamed to call us his brethren, what a glorious thing that is. Well, here then, in this chapter, we read these words, you who are the Lord's brethren, by the miracle of a glorious new birth, subsequent to our natural birth, far superior to that natural birth, absolutely necessary to us if we are going to be the children of God.

Amen. Bless God he did not try to foist upon us a religion of any kind. Thank God he didn't try to give us a system of this or that or the other.

He offered us a great and glorious birth, clear from the heart of God, clear from heaven, absolutely by God himself, God the Holy Spirit. Amen. Oh, hallelujah.

That's what he brings us to. And listen, this is how we read in verse 18, you that are the Lord's brethren, you've not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated, that the words should not be spoken to them any more. For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart, and so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

See, that's what Moses said. This is what the writer to the Hebrews said. The mountain burned with fire, yet it was not consumed.

That's the thing to keep There was spiritual fire there. Hallelujah. The God that made you and I, the God that created us, made us in this measure somewhat like himself, that we are a fire.

We are a fire. Amen. And you know we don't have to get too hot physically before we die.

Did you know that? You call it temperature. You don't need, you don't have to get too hot physically but that you'll die. You knew that, didn't you? But you have to have a certain temperature.

You must have some heat. You must be a warm being. Isn't it wonderful when you reach and meet a warm personality? There are personalities I like to meet, you know, really warm.

You like to meet those, don't you? Especially if they're warm enough to melt you. And that's what God wants. And then you will know how this word warm and heat is using an entirely wrong sense altogether.

We're basically conscious of being warm, having fire in us, having drive in us. You know how easily you can work your own heat up by just losing your temper. Did you know that? Nothing's happened to you.

Nothing. You've heard something. You've met someone.

Somebody said something. Somebody's done something. You lose your temper.

If you stuck a thermometer in your mouth after about five minutes of that, you find how hot you've got. And yet you haven't been in physical fire at all. Now God wants us to understand that He loves us with a consistent and powerful and developing love.

That's what He wants you to know. And He wants you to know that His great desire is to have you utterly, completely, just as you are. And that He wants you spirit, soul, and body.

Wants you completely. He doesn't want you mixed up in all these other things. He wants you entirely.

He makes no apology for using words like this, I the Lord thy God am a jealous God. That's what He says of Himself. Amen.

Isn't that wonderful? I am a jealous God. You know, jealousy, real jealousy, pure jealousy, God's jealousy is a wonderful thing. You know, there are some people who like to think that other people are jealous over them.

You know, there's some women play on that. They like it and so on. And I guess some men do too, but they're scarcely men.

But here is the tremendous thing, beloved, to know that our God is a jealous God. Amen. Think of Him now, in all the love of His heart.

He wants to consume you. He's tried by every means to bring it over to us. Again, if you go back to the Old Testament in your thinking, you will know that from Mount Sinai onwards, where they came to meet their God.

This was the thing God commanded Moses. He said, when you come out of Egypt and bring those people out of Egypt, you're to bring them here and worship me upon my holy mountain. That's what He said.

Oh, and the sight of the glory of God in the eyes of the children of Israel was like devouring fire. Amen. Devouring fire.

That's right. That was the sight of it in their eyes. But God now wanted to bring this home to them.

How could He get over to the hearts of these people? What He was really like? Well, I'll tell you. He commanded Moses to make a brazen altar. That's right.

And He commanded that on that altar, sacrifices should be made unto Him. They were commanded in the beginning of it all. You can read it all in this book.

They were commanded in the beginning of it all when they've got the, what was first a tabernacle, and then was later became a temple, and God changed it in Solomon's day into the temple. He commanded them that they should, in the great inaugural occasion, you can read all about it in the last chapter of the book of Exodus, in that inaugural occasion they were to bring a whole burnt offering unto Him. And it was to be laid on the altar.

And there it was put on this altar. And then fire came down from heaven onto that altar. They didn't kindle the fire themselves, they weren't allowed to.

That fire came down from heaven, and before their eyes they saw that God is a consuming fire, for it consumed the sacrifice. There it was. Right before their eyes.

And that was the beginning of a great testament from heaven. The testimony and testimonial of God. Wherever they went, the fire came and consumed on the altar, and it was never allowed to go out.

Never. It was so powerful that if they had torrential drowning rains, worse than we've had through this summer. Pouring on the altar, the fire was so great that it consumed everything.

Nothing in that, you'll remember, that this is what happened in the great contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. When the altar had to be built and a trench dug all round it, and the offering was put on the altar, and water was poured over the offering over the altar, and ran all round and filled up the trench, and Elijah prayed, and fire came down from heaven, and consumed the offering, and consumed the altar, and consumed the water that was in the ditch. This is an indication, a pointer to the God you're dealing with.

And the God that's dealing with us. God of fire. Amen.

Now we read, as you will recall, there in the Old Testament, in the book of Isaiah, we read this, the sinners in Zion are afraid. Fear has taken hold of the hypocrites. All right.

And what made them afraid? Because in the end they knew that God was a God of fire. That's what frightened them. Because you can't live in sin and expect to live with the God of fire.

You can't do it. Frightened them to death. Oh, they'd known about fire.

They'd heard about fire coming down and judging the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah. They'd heard all about fire. How are you going to live with that? How are you going to live with that? Oh, one you don't know this, beloved, that when you get to heaven, you're not going to live on a series of going and kneeling before God as though he's some gigantic priest, and having him forgive you and then giving you your penance for the day or something.

When you get to heaven, you get this absolutely clear. There's nothing of that. Before you reach that heavenly land to live with God, you've got to have the fire of God already burning in your heart and in your life.

And this is the provision of God. It's got to be there. That taking the place of the burning lusts that drive you to sin, have driven you to sin, made you do things which you're now ashamed, or you ought to be.

That taking the place of that driving fire in your life that drove you to do all sorts of terrible things. In place of that fire, there has to come the fire of God. Into your heart, blessed be the name of the Lord.

In place of that fire, there has to come the fire of God. Into your heart, blessed be the name of the Lord. You will remember that Jesus said this, or at least you will if you've read through Luke chapter 12, where Jesus said himself, I am come to send fire on the earth.

That's what he said. He didn't say, I've come to forgive people their sins. Notice, he said he had power on earth to forgive sins, bless him, and many thousands found it to be true.

But he said, I've come to send fire on the earth. Yeah. Praise the name of the Lord.

How about it? How about it? Come to send fire on the earth. Oh, God. I want this fire.

That's what I want. I don't want a pallid, pasty-faced God. I don't want that.

I don't want something that you can take up on Sundays and forget all the other six days of the week. I don't want anything like that. That's religion.

I don't want religion. I want God. I want fire.

Oh, blessed be the name of the Lord. You shall not long for fire, man or woman, if you really are real before God. If you got to the place where common sense tells you that you've got to have fire, where your own common sense tells you, where the very fact that you're a human being, you want fire as a human being.

That's right. Isn't that right? You call it all kinds of names. You call it passion.

You call it temper. You call it, perhaps you don't like the word, lust. The burnings that go on inside that really makes you, you.

Who wants to live with a cold fish? Who wants that? Nobody that's got any sense. There isn't a man or a woman in this room that wants love, needs love, must have love. That's right.

There isn't a man or a woman in this room unless you're terribly psychiatrically depressed and way out. You want love. That's what you want.

Beyond that, you would say, I need love. Of course you need love. God knows that.

But you can't have anything from God. You can't ask Him for it if you really need to consume it on your own lusts. You won't get it.

You say, God don't answer my prayer, don't answer my prayer. Thank God He doesn't. You've never understood God.

Amen. Never read the Bible properly. Got hold of some ideas, perhaps.

But when you turn this book up, beloved, it's as plain as plain as plain here. Look at the language of this twelfth chapter of Hebrews. Just listen to the language.

You needn't even try and work out the background of it. Listen to the language. Verse 16, lest there be any fornicator or profane.

Now you know what drives people to fornication, don't you? Don't plead innocence. This is the language of it. God's not afraid to use basic English and talk to us plainly.

He's not a la-di-da. He's not a sort of a Victorian prude. Lest there be any fornicator.

How about that? That's the way He's talking. And He's not particularly meaning fornication in the flesh. But think of the thing that drives men and women to commit fornication in the flesh.

Now switch it over into the spiritual world and you'll see how desperately sinful and wicked and what was burning in the heart of Esau that he preferred a mess of pottage to the birthright of God. That's right. That's what He's talking about.

And that's how He views it. You people, you choose this, you choose that, you choose the other. You've got to view this book and what God says as you value your soul, man and woman, as you value it.

That's why we have it. And this is why I started as I started. The more sure word of prophecy.

This isn't the treacle of a priest. You understand that? It isn't the funny idea of a preacher man like me. It's what God says.

You know what drives people to fornication, don't you? You say, I will sin. No, I'm talking in terms of fire. You know what drives a woman or a person to do this or do that or the other.

Don't you? Of course you do. Something burning inside. Something that won't be denied.

Something that's in you, of you, so that you identify with it and can't hold back from it. Now that's our God. He's identified with love.

He can't hold back from it. His heart yearns for men and women. When will we believe it? Our God is pure and holy.

It's the devil who's foxed everybody into the rottenness and stinking corruption of the flesh and what the world is. It isn't God. It's God who loves us.

Unspeakably. If you didn't hear a word from God. If you didn't hear one sentence from Him.

Think of Him now. If you have an imagination at all. Think of this great being.

Holding a slain son in His arms. His own glorious son. Mutely.

Sacrificing Him for people who don't care. And have never heard about it. Don't want it if you talk to them, so many of them.

Think of love. Think of the driving dynamism of our God. Think of the burning flaming of Him.

Think of it. And know what we're talking about. This is why He's pursued you.

This is why He's kept on. This is why He's got at you. Perhaps through your mother or your father or some group or perhaps your daughter or your son.

This is why He's got at you. This is why He keeps on. He loves you.

It isn't whether you're tired of the words of some evangelist or whether you get sick and tired of listening to some sermon. It isn't that. Pity the weakness of men and women who don't know how to do it better.

But know that God loves you. That's the thing. And He's consuming in love for you.

Believe that. And believe this. If you're going to live with God, you've got to live with the eternal burnings.

That's what you've got to believe. And see what it's about. Not some namby-pamby old dodderer that you can do this or that to.

The living God who loves you, respects you, and will never force Himself upon you. He'll never rape you if I may use the language we're talking about. He'll never do that.

He'll never abuse you. Never. Never.

He loves you. Loves you. Loves you.

What a glorious thing it is to be loved by God. Oh, that which burns in His heart. What a tremendous truth it is.

Eh? Jesus Christ died to bring you to God. And before He died, as I've already said, He said, I've come to send fire on the earth. He wants fire to reach men and women.

He wants fire to get out there in those people where you live. Rorah, Liverton, Bovee, Tracy, Newton, Abbott, or Plimpton, or wherever you come from. I'm sorry if I haven't mentioned your district.

I intended to. That's right. He wants fire to go there.

He doesn't want preaching only. The Bible calls the preaching this. The foolishness of preaching.

That's right. That's what He calls it in the book. And I want to tell you that the preaching is foolishness if there's no fire.

No fire? It's words. Like that? And this fire, the pure, holy, inextinguishable fire of God that cannot be put out. Floods cannot drown it.

Hallelujah. Amen. Nothing can.

Opposition cannot drown it. Amen. Persecution can't drown it or put it out.

Can't be done. Only today I've been talking with someone very interested in China, who should be nameless. Many of you wouldn't have to guess twice to know who it was.

But there it is, you see. And this person, he was all right, all right. He told me something which I already knew really, how that he'd been reading a book.

And this person then, however long ago the book was written, said, spoke of how many, listen, church fellowships there were in China. How many? To this day. And for everyone that was known, there are probably 50 that aren't known, you see.

That's in China. Communist China. But because it can't be put out.

You can't quench it. Communism can't quench the fire. Nazism can't quench the fire.

Fascism can't quench the fire. And thank God, Toryism can't. And socialism can't.

And what's the other particular queer lot? Here is the thing. Nothing can put out the fire, nor science, nor art, nor anything. There is no creature that can put out the fire.

Amen. They can put you in prison, and you only make the fire burn brighter. I should know.

I'd been there. It can't be done. If it's the fire of God, you can't, oh, he said this, or, oh, she offended me, and all that nonsense.

I'm not being noticed, or my powers aren't being used, all this kind of stuff that sounds so good. The fire, man, the fire. I heard a preacher once, a man of God, speaking to young preachers, and he said to the thing to do, if you really want to serve God, is catch fire, and the people will come to see you burn.

That's right. That's right. That's the great truth.

Amen. And God wants this. I've come to send fire on the earth.

Have you any intention that it should be you? Then doesn't it mean you've got to change a great deal? Amen, and amen, and amen. Lord, thou knowest our hearts, every one of us. Let's go to our twelfth chapter of Hebrews.

Hebrews. You, verse 22. In verse 18, we're not in the crowd talked about there.

You know, the crowd that came to the mount that might be touched and burned. Hallelujah. Praise God.

Verse 22. You are come unto Mount Zion. Look round here.

Doesn't look much like it, does it? That's right. Well, it doesn't, does it? You come to Mount Zion, friend, or else you aren't a child of God. If you don't know what I'm talking about now, you might not have heard this language before, but somehow it's got to ring the bell in your heart, even if you don't know it all up here.

Now, you've got to say, don't understand, like a young fellow I know. Actually, it was dear Fred's younger brother. It was, you know, dear Fred, that should be here tonight.

He's absent. His younger brother brought Fred first. You see? He'll give you his testimony.

Now, that young brother was in a conference and the preacher was preaching. All right. And the Lord was moving and moving over the congregation, you know, just like He was moving last night, if you were here at other times.

And this young David, his name is, this young David, just got up. He could shout even louder than Fred. Has he let you down again, sister? It's there if you want it.

Don't use those. If you sneeze, you'll glow right through them. They're no good.

Have a handkerchief, love. Give it to me next conference. Here is the thing.

And listen, he was in this conference, beloved, and the preacher was preaching. And God moved on him. And he said, Lord, I haven't got a clue what he's talking about, but I believe you.

How about that? That's what he said. You can ask him if ever you meet him. I was in the same conference as him.

Lord, I haven't got a clue what he's talking, what this man's talking about. Poor man. He said, but I believe it.

Now try it. And did he burn? For God, he burned so bright, he burned through all his brother's prejudices. And that's something, if you do that.

Yeah. What a glorious thing it is. Now listen.

You, you've come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. That gets you out of demons, doesn't it? I mean, people tell me that they're born of God, and they're mucking around in demons, and now and again they're dipping down under demons. I know they've never really been born out of that kingdom yet.

You've come to God. You've come to an innumerable company of angels, and angels are great company, I tell you. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.

And to God, the judge of all. And to the spirits of just men, made perfect. And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

And to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. You know about Abel's blood, don't you? How that he was slain? He was the son of Adam and Eve. And he was slain by Cain, the other son of Adam and Eve.

Alright. And Abel's blood was shed there by the altar. I expect somewhere near the altar where he'd shed the blood of the Lamb that he'd sacrificed on the altar.

Now listen. The blood of Abel was shed, and the Lamb's blood was shed, but for all their shedding, and the reality of the shedding, whether it be a lamb or a man, and you can associate them in your thinking, couldn't bring them past the flaming sword into paradise. Couldn't bring them in.

Hallelujah. What a glorious thing. Jesus' blood has been shed.

He's the Lamb. He's alive. He says, come, I'll bring you in.

You come to Jesus. He's the mediator. He'll bring you to God.

He'll bring you to the consuming fire right through. Are you hearing the terms of the Gospel? Are you hearing the reality of it? Are you seeing the incomparable Jesus? Are you seeing Him? Are you seeing that He's fire? Pure, holy fire. Are you seeing that He's the living flame? Are you? Are you seeing that God proposes to put this man that death couldn't destroy and the grave couldn't keep? Are you seeing that He's proposing to put Him in you? And not just through nibbling a bit of bread or drinking a drop of wine, or in any of the ordinances that the church has.

By sheer, naked faith in God. Hallelujah. Now this is the proposition.

And it says this. See then, verse 25, you see that you don't refuse. You see that you don't refuse.

Let him or her be a fool if they wish. But don't you. That's the glory of hearing the Gospel.

It will separate you and say, well, let them do it if they want. Let them go their way if they want. Let them reject if they want.

But don't you do it. You are hearing the terms of God. You are hearing the reality.

Don't you refuse Him that's speaking. Then He turns back to those people we read about in verse 18. Those people that came to Sinai and so on.

He said, not like those. They didn't escape. And all those sort of things.

And I want to tell you this, my beloved brother and sister. There's no escaping this truth. It may be unpalatable to you.

It may be new to you. But there is no escaping this. You are either the fire of God, or you are the fire of man.

And if you're the fire of man without the fire of God, then you're stoked by the fires of the devil. Keep that clear. We were sold out to the devil by Adam.

You have no choice in the matter. You have to hear the Gospel and associate yourself with it. And that association with it is called faith.

Bless the name of the Lord. And it's not faith unless it brings you to a direct and distinct decision where you break with everything and say, Lord, I'm yours. And I'm yours for now.

And I'm yours for eternity. Hallelujah. I'm quitting all the old stuff.

I'm done. That's right. That's what it has to be.

If you can look at Calvary. If you can see, I'm not now talking about gazing at a crucifix and muttering prayers in front of it. If you can look at the Calvary of the Bible.

If you can see Christ hanging there, bleeding there, dying there. If you believe in the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe that, how can you hang back? How can you want anything else but the fire that made Him do that? And where is the compensation unto Him for His deed and His love if you won't move into it? Where is it? Oh, God.

Let's go on. We'll leave all that, but these things except this. Verse 26.

Whose voice then, that is, when He spoke on Mount Sinai, when the mountain was burning, whose voice then shook the earth? But now, now what? Listen. He has promised, saying, yet once more, listen now, once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven, and this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made. In other words, you can't make anything up before God.

You can't make your own peace with God. What a stupid sentence that is. You can't make your peace with God.

Jesus Christ has made peace with God. Amen. Anything you've made will be shaken.

Hallelujah. The whole roar set up is going to be shaken when God speaks next time. So's the cliff set up.

We're here. We're gathered in this room tonight. It's no good me talking to people that go up into the Derbyshire Dales.

They're not here. Here's a tremendous thing, beloved. He says He's going to shake everything.

And that signifies the removing of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably. That is to His standards, not by roarer standards, your church standards or your group's standards.

That isn't to say that roarer standards are wrong. I'm only telling you that you must not get confused in this. It's what God says.

A thing is only valid if it be right by God. Whatever it is and whoever it is. Amen.

You receive a kingdom which cannot be moved, we're to have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire. It's not something that can be pushed about at convenience. It isn't what you accept.

It's what He accepts. Amen. Now I want you to notice that it is associated with service.

Let us serve God. Our God's a consuming fire. Jesus said, I've come to send fire on the earth.

That's service. Had we time, which we haven't got at the moment, not if I want to say all the things that's in my heart to say, we could turn back to Luke chapter 12, I've already mentioned it to you, where Jesus said, I've come to send fire on the earth, and you will see that statement comes directly after a parable of service. About service.

Oh, this lukewarm service. You're doing things but your heart's not in it. Then don't do it.

God doesn't want it. Amen. I've come to send fire on the earth, He said.

Oh, glory, glory be to God. Amen. Hallelujah.

Serve God. And serve Him as though you've got a fire burning in you. Serve Him indefatigably.

Serve Him beyond weariness or even beyond the point of pain. Serve Him. Glory be to the name of the Lord.

Serve Him. By some people's estimation, serve is almost a dirtied word. Everybody wants to be reigning instead of serving.

Well, we're not here to serve. We're here to love the Lord. The proof that you love the Lord is that you serve Him.

Well, I don't think so. What you think doesn't matter. It's what God says.

It's what's acceptable to Him. Amen. Praise be the name of the Lord.

I'm glad we've got a real God. I'm glad we're not left to beat out our own gods and make our own images and fall down and worship them. I'm glad that God is God.

I'm glad He comes to me. I know He loves me. I can't tell you how gently He's handled me through the years.

I couldn't begin to tell you of His sweetness and grace to me. I can't even really catalog one day's blessings from the Lord or rightly tell you about them. I couldn't tell you the hours, the days, the nights I've spent, if you like, lying in the arms of Jesus.

I remember one of the great last things my dear old mother sang. You've heard me say she had a coloratura soprano. She'd have gone great in opera.

Only God spoke to her and told her she was to serve Him. And so she stopped it all. But I can remember her standing up one Sunday night when she was even older than I am.

Yeah. Hallelujah. And she sang in a voice which was still strong then.

Safe in the arms of Jesus. How many of you know it? That's right. Glory.

I can remember her singing that. And I can remember her voice breaking. I can remember her voice breaking.

Because she still thought of my young brother Frankie who died well nigh in her arms. And that's what he asked her to sing, Mommy. Sing, Mommy.

Yeah. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you had recollections of a mother like that? Wouldn't it be wonderful? She may not have a coloratura soprano. That doesn't matter.

That just happens by accident of birth and what you receive naturally. I'm not talking about that. That's why I can still preach, because I inherited a voice from her, you see.

I still go out of my life. It's alright. Don't you think it's anything wonderful? It isn't.

I got it. I didn't even have to ask for it. But I've got to account to God for it.

Here's the thing, beloved. You've got to see what it's all about. God's bought you.

He's bought you to be fire for Him. Fire. And He's got to feel your fire.

He doesn't want your pallid prayers. He doesn't want that. He doesn't want that.

He wants something vital. May I say red-blooded? You'll know what I mean. It's about right, isn't it? You say, well, wouldn't He look upon a poor, broken-down thing like me? Yeah, but He won't let you stay like it.

Of course He thinks about a poor, broken-down thing like you. Of course He does. But He'll not let you stay like that.

He doesn't want you to be forever breaking His heart. Amen. I want you to get up, be good, and make nothing up of yourself.

Make nothing up. I'm going back into this book of Isaiah. All right.

Listen. One of the tragedies of ancient Israel was precisely this. The things they made.

You know, we read it in that section in Hebrews. He's going to shake everything that you've made, son, daughter, everything. Doesn't matter what you build up in your family, in your connections.

I've not made anything. Well, that's right. You may be like me.

I may have inherited a voice to shout or sing with from my mother, but I never inherited any art. I couldn't draw a pussycat to please our daughters. I knew more or less roughly the shape, and it was a rough shape too.

If I did, I had no talent along that line. Don't worry about that. But you've made something, and you have made yourself with the aid of a man or a woman, a mother and a father, a teacher, a lecturer, your taste.

You've made something of yourself, and perhaps of other people too. But everything that's been made, God's going to shake it. This earth too.

This book says, this very book of Isaiah, I'm not going to read that particular portion, it says, the earth's going to stagger. That's right. You say, well, of course you say that's figurative language.

Don't you believe that? Don't you believe that? It's literal. He's going to make this earth stagger in its orbit. You shouldn't have too great difficulty in believing that.

If you look at some stars, how they sort of stagger and go off, shooting off, it's gone to a black hole or something. You shouldn't have to. And listen, ah, I'm telling you the truth.

Now you listen, and they're probably a thousand times bigger than this earth. Don't get, don't get mixed up in your ideas. Now listen to this.

He's going to shake everything. He's going to prove what is Him, and what is you, and what is man, and what is everything. Here it is.

Look in chapter 50. I'm looking at verse 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, the servant here being Jesus, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

Behold, all you, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, religious fireworks perhaps, I don't know, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled, this shall you have of mine hand, you shall lie down in sorrow. That's what he said. You can make your own fire, you can compass yourself about in your own sparks.

God's going to shake it. God's going to shake everything. You've made it.

Don't deceive yourself to think it's God. And don't say God's helped you to make it. He has created the fire.

He has. And you come into that. When Peter went and warmed himself at other people's fires, he denied Jesus.

There it is written in scripture. He denied Him, sided with Judas that sold him. He wouldn't have said so on the surface, but what else is it? Somebody sells him and you deny him? What difference is the difference? What difference is there between? What difference is there? Here's the thing.

Oh God, I want your fire. I wasn't concentrating on this all the afternoon, but all the afternoon below everything else, this was going in my heart. I want your fire, God.

I don't let anything take up the whole of my attention. Nothing in this world. Nothing.

Underneath everything. Oh God, there'll be fire for you. Your fire.

I've come to send fire on the earth. And why pray, do you think? When he was risen from the dead, Jesus met his apostles and said, carry ye in Jerusalem. Why? Wait, he said, for the promise of the father.

Why? Because he wanted to send fire on the earth. We'll read it. Acts chapter 2. If you want the fire, if you want God's fire, if you want it burning in you day and night, though you may not always be conscious of it, I shan't be conscious of it when I'm asleep for the few hours sleep I expect I shall get during the night.

I won't be conscious of it. Here it is. Chapter 2 of Acts.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. In other words, they had disciplined themselves unto obedience to Christ. That's right.

They were there. If they had any other ideas about fishing for men or whatever it was, if they had any other ideas about doing this and doing that and going a Sabbath day's journey here and doing something else, they let it all go. In the end, though if I may use the picture, they burned their fingers about it before they got through to reality.

And when they were all together in one place, one place, oh you say it was an upper room, well F.F. Bruce suggested it could have been in the temple. I won't discuss that with you now. But here is the thing.

When they were all in one place, they had reached a spiritual place. They had reached a place of united decision. They had reached a place where they said, yes, he told us to tarry, didn't he? We're going to do it, shall we? And he said, yes.

That's right. That's the place you've got to get to when your heart is united within you to do the one thing.
And all of you's in it.

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them and they were all

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