

# Youth Aflame

by Winkie Pratney

---

*Winkie Pratney's sermon 'Youth Aflame' calls young people to embrace their spiritual calling and ignite change in a world filled with darkness through God's fire.*

**Duration:** 57:40

**Scripture:** Jonah 3:4, Matthew 5:14, John 8:12, Acts 1:8

**Topics:** "Faith And Courage", "Godly Leadership"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a movie he watched where a man had to make a life-or-death decision to ride a rocket into space. He relates this to the idea that God may call some people to go to 'the regions beyond' without any guarantee of return. The speaker then mentions a childhood experience where he had to defend himself against a bully using a lunchbox. He goes on to talk about two young men in history, George Whitfield and John Wesley, who were both called by God and had significant impacts through their preaching. The speaker concludes by sharing how he personally experienced a transformation in his own life and married a woman who inspired him to live for Jesus Christ.

---

## Transcript

And I want to talk about what it means to be a young person of flame. I've always been fascinated with fire, I really have. When I was younger and much less wise, I decided to do something very freaky.

Now, we don't have 4th of July in New Zealand. We have 5th of November, which is a little different. 5th of November came about when a guy by the name of Guy Fawkes, which is why we call it Guy Fawkes.

They have this in Britain too, I understand. Do they have that in Scotland? Alastair, is he here? Yeah, they have Guy Fawkes there too. Apparently Guy Fawkes was a guy who tried to blow up Parliament.

And so we celebrate this because he nearly made it. And what we do actually is we, in New Zealand, we form a big bonfire and then we dress up a dummy made of straw to look like what's called a guy. Like this, see? And we just stick this dummy on top of this big old straw pile.

And it's all covered with, you know, everybody brings old rubber tires and wood and things they need to burn. And we put this dummy up on top of the thing, he just sits up there. And then when the night time comes, the kids set fire to the bonfire and then we dance around like banshees with fireworks and stuff

and watch the guy burn up.

And that's where we get our kicks in New Zealand. Now I, for the first time, our school decided to have a bonfire at school. They also had a guy competition where the kids were allowed to make guys and put them up on the bonfire during the week, time for Saturday night when the guys would all be burned, which was Guy Fawkes night.

Well I decided I'd give our school a bonfire night they'd never forget. And so what I did is I dressed up as a guy. I put straw out the back of this mask that I bought, these old floppy clothes and old boots, stuffed them up with straw.

And then I had my sister drag me to school on this little soapbox cart. And then she dragged me all the way across the field until we got to the place. And when I got safely behind, and it was quite early in the afternoon and nobody had even been near the school by that time.

And I climbed up on top of the pile and found myself a rubber tyre up there and made myself a nice seat among all the other guys that had been put up there facing the crowd. And I had about two or three hours to wait before everybody began to arrive. And that was pretty uncomfortable sitting up there.

I was sitting up waiting. Finally it began to get dark and people began to arrive. And then they ran around with some cans or something throwing it all over the bottom.

I didn't know what that was. Well I said this big wet grass there and if I caught fire I'd just roll over and put myself out. I had it all worked out.

I'll never forget the time when they began to light it. They lit it behind me back here somewhere. And I was just sitting up there with all the other guys.

And I remember this lady looking up at the guys. And I might have moved or something because I remember going. I remember looking at like this see.

And she really started, look I think the light was glimpsing in behind my mask into my eyes. And she's looking like this see. And my sister, my silly sister.

She's a year younger than me at that time, still is. She got a bit freaked out because these flames started coming up from behind. She was dead sure I was going to catch fire.

She didn't know I had all this worked out with the wet grass and everything. So she sort of started going ooh, ooh. And everybody was sort of wondering what she was doing there.

But I remember this lady. I figured my stupid sister was going to give me away anyway in a second. So I've never forgotten this lady's face.

She's looking like this. And then I remember I lifted up my hands like this and went. That lady went wide as a sheep.

Top to bottom and nearly passed out. Then I stood up. And I fell over and rolled around in the grass.

And that was the last time our school ever had a bonfire in school. I've always been fascinated with fire. I remember in Disneyland, sometimes we used to live in Anaheim for a while, I'd see every Saturday night

they'd fire rockets up.

And a shell of patriotic stars and sparks would hit the night sky. But this afternoon I'm thinking of another star. The red star.

And this afternoon millions of young people are marching under its banner. I'm thinking of that banner unfurled around the world. I'm thinking of a movement which is in 15 years going to be the single largest youth movement.

Signing over 20 million people. 20 million young people. I'm thinking of Makeda Khrushchev.

He stood in a vast parade in Red Square one day. And those thousands and thousands of disciplined young Russian Communist young people gathered around there. Makeda Khrushchev stepped up to the microphone to address the young Communist lead.

And he looked out and he said, You are all dead men. Now go out into the world and prove it. I believe that we're living in an era of imminent violence.

Chain of explosion tension. The world is a chain of explosions apparently without any way to stop them. Exploding passions.

Populations leading to famine. Exploding diseases. Exploding prejudices.

And the world seems to be sitting on a powder keg so awesome that tomorrow could witness the destruction of the world. Which is why Barry McGuire wrote that song, Eve of Destruction. We see the shadow of atomic clouds and hydrogen bomb clouds and all this.

And it seems like, remember the Atomic Energy Commission published their little paper. And over the years they've put the clock five minutes to midnight. And every time a significant nuclear advance has been made, they move that little hand closer in towards the final hour.

And I believe that most of us here will probably see the end of the world in our lifetime. And I ask us this afternoon, are we ready? Are we ready to see that kind of fire? I would like to see God's fire flame across this nation. I would like to see not the fires of tension, of riot or revolution, but I'd like to see God's flame burn.

And to that end I've dedicated my life. To see spiritual awakening take place in nations just like this, before revolution takes place. Now, we've had some pretty rotten days before.

Every time it's dark around a nation, it seems people want to light fires in it. And I think we've got a choice. We can light God's fire or we'll see the flame of hatred and the devil and of revolution lit.

In England in the 1700s it was a very dark day. During that time, 1700s, for two cents you could get dead drunk. Absolutely smashed, right out of your mind.

And they'd even give you some straw to sleep on, to sleep it off the night. It was a nation filled with unconverted ministers. Men stood behind the pulpits and preached garbage, said absolutely nothing.

They quoted from Time Magazine and Life Magazine, but they never said the Bible. And England was sitting at that time for a bloodbath just like the French Revolution. And God's eyes searched the nation

without light.

Searched up and down. There on a college campus, he found two men. One was a lying, stealing, service-breaking, foul-mouthed phony.

And another young man was the young man who'd been kind of an ascetic during his day. He was a spooky kind of kid because he'd only been the youngest member of his family and his house had nearly burned down. And somebody just remembered in time that he was up there, rushed in, dragged him out just before the roof fell in.

And he called himself a bran plucked from the burning. And God's eyes searched that nation and there on the same campus, he found two men. One young man's name was George Whitfield.

The other young man's name was John Wesley. And this young man, George Whitfield, began to study the word of God on his knees. He received in his own words a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost.

He stood up and preached in an Anglican church. His very first message. Fifteen people went stark raving mad under his first message.

George Whitfield was 21 years of age. And the scriptures tell us you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you. Time we had some young people who not only believe in the gifts of the Spirit, but who demonstrate power in their ministry.

Bristol, an entire city stirred and riveted to the spot by the fire of the anointed word of God. And Kensington, 50,000 people came out in the snow to listen at 6 o'clock in the morning to that young man preach. And they asked George Whitfield near the end of a fruitful life, Do you have any hope of getting to heaven when you die, Mr. Whitfield? He said, I've been there for 20 years already.

It was a dark day for the city of Nineveh. God had already pronounced sentence against Nineveh. God had his eyes on that man called Jonah we began this week out with.

A man he had called who was running away from the call of God. And I believe it's possible that there is Jonah sitting here this afternoon. If you've got a call of God on your life, you'll never shake it off.

You may go to the grave shaking it, but you'll never get rid of it. It will always be there in your life. God will always be haunting you with his call.

You'll never be able to sleep properly, knowing that God has put something in your heart that you've turned your back on. And God found Jonah out in the surging green waters of the Mediterranean. Jonah found out he couldn't fight God.

Fish came back, threw up. Jonah came out. And that weird prophet with his face white, permanently scarred by the stomach juices of that fish, must have walked through that city looking like a man from out of the grave or from outer space.

He walked through 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed. 39, 38, 37, 36. Must have taken him a full 40 days to go through the city.

He scared the people so much they believed the word of the Lord. They began to repent. They even told the cows to repent.

They said put sackcloth and ashes on the cows too. Maybe God will spare us. And Nineveh was shaken with conviction.

And you know the story. From president to prostitute, from the top to the bottom. Shaken by the greatest mass awakening ever recorded in the scriptures.

120,000 people gave their lives to God. The greatest mass move in the Bible. And God reversed his judgment.

Now we've had dark days before. But God has always found a way to find a man. And I believe God's answer to darkness is light.

People who can shine. The Lord Jesus said as long as I am in the world you are the light of the world. But in Matthew 5.14 God issues a challenge to those who are called to world conquest.

He said you are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.

And the call of God this afternoon will only rest on men who are willing to be exposed to the flame of God. You can be used to change your world. I'm convinced of that.

Everywhere I go I believe God is looking for a man, for a woman. As part of the great mass move he's going to do. Whenever God gets set to shake a nation he always looks for men.

He always looks for women. He looks for people, for individuals that he can call into places of responsibility, of leadership, of challenge and of inspiration. And everywhere I go I look for that man.

I look for that woman. There could be here this afternoon sitting here a little unknown Christian that nobody ever heard of before. And you're sitting down there and you're taking notes and you're reading a Bible that God is preparing you.

You may be a David and all you've done is take a few lions on here and there. God is getting ready to shape you up to take on Goliath. You may be a Ruth.

Maybe all you've found in your life so far is emptiness. You followed back somebody and God is about to open up a brand new door for you. You may be Esther.

She was a beauty queen, Miss International Israel and Babylon and everything of her time. And God had her all set up to save an entire kingdom. I don't know who you are.

I do know that God uses some very freaky people. The pin challenge of its generation was the Salvation Army. And God's man for that era was William Booth.

He was worn and he was haggard. His eyes were baggy and his clothes were baggy and everything about him looked like he'd just been dragged right over the garbage can. But he stood behind that pulpit, that ragged, haggard, baggy man, and his eyes lit up like blow lamps.

And as his eyes swept, the audience, it's like, raked them with coals of fire. And people fell under such tremendous conviction that they felt literally lifted out of their seats and dumped at the altar by the presence of the Spirit of God. And that man who one day walked through Thames, nicknamed the Big

Stink because of the filth that had been pouring into it, walked through the city.

He saw little nine-year-old kids walking up specially designed stairs up to the counters of the gym houses. He saw seven-year-old kids getting their stomachs pumped out. He saw nine-year-old kids dying of cirrhosis of the liver from alcoholism.

And he saw these little girls being sold into prostitution at nine, ten, and eleven years of age. And William Booth came back and he said to his wife, I have found my destiny. And he put together a little rag-tag army that he got out of the gutters of the streets.

He got different people of different races. He got people that were twisted and broken that everybody laughed at. And he put them together into a little rag-tag army.

And that little rag-tag army, he put uniforms on them and they marched proud and straight. And they played tunes that were too radical for any church people to listen to in those days. And they went into the cities and they marched.

And they went to the very center and people as they walked by would throw dead animals at them and they would have to catch them and hold them in their hands so they wouldn't pick them up and throw them again. And they threw eggshells filled with paint at them. They threw rotten fruit at them.

Somebody came up and spat at William Booth when he walked past. And a solicitor said he was going to try and brush it aside. And Booth said, leave it alone, it's a medal.

And they marched into cities. And I don't know if you know, you may think the Salvation Army was just soup and suds and a little bit of salvation. But in those days there were teenage girls in there.

And they got armies together to turn the Salvation Army out of cities as high as five thousand people. They roped them with ropes and poured burning sulfur on them to turn them back. They took those teenage girls and fired ship's rockets at them to turn them back.

But the Salvation Army marched into the center of the city, knelt there in the middle of the city and the leader would say, Lord Jesus in your name we take this city for God and take it. I think of a young man walking a lonely night in a golf course near his Bible school. In his hands is a corsage, his steady girlfriend has just curtly refused for the last time.

And in this young man's ears ring these words, it's better we don't see each other again, you're just not spiritual enough for me. And alone in the silence he fell on his knees. And he said, it's no good, I may as well give up the ministry, God has failed me.

And finally after a great struggle of life, he says, what a fool I've been. And I told God, I promised him I'd do anything, I'd go anywhere. And he said, here I am, just because some girl that I've liked a great deal drops me, I'm ready to quit, I'm ready to give it all in, I'm ready to pack it all in.

And then on his knees in that golf course he prayed this prayer, Oh God, take all of me there is. And I've determined that I'll never have a girl, a career, anything will come between you and your call for my life. And his friends went out to look for him in the morning.

And he was still there in the golf course lying down there, his face glued to his Bible with tears and with the view of heaven. And they shook him and woke him up. They said, get up, get up.

The young man got up off his knees, and his name was Billy Graham. And I think of a skinny country preacher, who just went to Bible school, and was keen, and spent a lot of time in the prayer room, but was never particularly the boy voted most likely to succeed, and never was student body president or anything. A young man who just was faithful in his classes, and didn't seem to have much going for him.

I'm thinking of that skinny country preacher, who one day did give up his television set to make himself available for God. And he hears a voice in his heart, as he stands with an unknown burden swirling over him, from the face of a young killer in Life magazine. And Team Challenge was born from the answer of the heart of David Wilkerson.

Are you here this afternoon? Has God put something in your heart? Because if you're here, you're going to need to learn the lessons of what it costs to be a man of flame. And I'll tell you some things I've learned about light and about fire. You may be a failure.

God can do a lot with failures. You see, in this world, where men are judged by their ability to do and to be superstars. A. W. Tozer, in his book, *Born After Midnight*, says, they are rated according to the distance they have come up the ladder of achievement.

When we come to Christ, we enter a different world. The first are the last, and the last are the first. The greatest man is the one that best serves others.

The one who loses everything is the one who will have everything at last. Our Lord died an apparent failure, discredited by the leaders of established religion, rejected by society and forsaken by his friends. The man who ordered him to the cross was a successful statesman whose hand the ambitious hack politicians kissed.

It took the resurrection to demonstrate how gloriously Jesus had triumphed and how tragically the governor had failed. The true Christian, especially the minister of the gospel, should search their own hearts, look deep into their inner motive. No man is worthy to succeed until he is willing to fail.

No man is morally worthy of success in religious activities until he is willing that the honor of succeeding should go to another, if God so directs. God may allow a servant to succeed who has disciplined him to a point where he does not need to succeed to be happy. Are you a failure? I think of a man who was a failure.

He came onto the scene when Israel was losing its faith. Israel needed more than a few meetings for deeper life conventions. They were backslidden and not only backslidden, sold out to the powers of darkness.

Feet of hell stalked through the land. They had all their platform personalities and their programs and their little church games, but there was no flame in the land. There was no fire.

And gloom had gone up. Fear and trembling filled the whole nation. And idolatry stalked through the land.

And into the horror of all this hell stalked God's fireball, a lonely desert commando by the name of Elijah. He comes out of nowhere. He had no pedigree.

Ask Elijah what his qualifications for preaching are. He had no pedigree. He had no background.

All you know is suddenly he appears. God's prophet of fire. And he puts that challenge up before the whole of Israel.

And you know the story of the finger of light that dissolved the sacrifice. Burned up the water that was in the trench. Licked everything up.

The people fell on their knees and said, The Lord, He is God. And we look at this man, Elijah, and we think, What a tremendous man you are. The Bible tells us he wasn't a tremendous man.

He was a man of like passion. A man of like passion. And this same man, see him just a few chapters on from there.

And this woman who invented Revlon makeup, Jezebel, she got mad because he had killed the prophets. She said, I'm going to cut his head off just like he cut off the heads of my prophets. And here's Elijah, this man who had seen the flame of God look down out of the sky.

And what's he doing? He's sitting in a cave. And he's sitting there muttering to himself, Well, guess it's all over for the ministry. Somebody went and picked on me.

Jezebel's going to get me if I go out. Sitting there. I told him I'm going to write a book called My Hateful Hymn Book.

Hymns I hate most. Well, I got a few for that. One of them is called Hold the Fort for I'm Coming.

I don't know what you think of when you think of Hold the Fort for I'm Coming, but I know what I think of. Think of a bunch of chicken disciples, all scared, hiding from Rome, all up there waving flags saying, Jesus, please hurry up and come home. The nasty, wicked world is killing us all.

Hold the Fort, my eyeball. That's about as bad as prone to wonder, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.

Have I tried singing that to my wife? Prone to wonder, yay I feel it. Prone to leave the wife I love. And Elijah had fallen into the spirit of self-pitying.

Sitting there. I'm the only one left. He's in a cave, full of fear.

And the voice of God comes to Elijah. What do you want? He said, what are you doing here, Elijah? And then he saw a wind, and he saw an earthquake, and he saw a fire, and the wind, and the fire and the earthquake. The Lord was not in any of them.

Now for me, my testimony, my story, begins way back there. I guess, I had sat for a long time, seen my mother's life change, seen my dad's life begin to change, and I said, well, that's very nice. They can be Christians because they're 40 years old.

When I get to be 40, I might even think about becoming Christian, even a missionary. But I never saw anybody my age do it. And for me, the wind, and the fire, yes, I heard those things.

For me, the earthquake was a rocking sound of bass and treble guitar. Thunder was a set of sticks on skins that my best friend Dougie, name was John Douglas, used to sit there surrounded by a string of Ludwigs, and he'd drum until the sweat rolled off his face. He'd fling his sticks up and drum his head up.

The fire was the flame of a Bunsen under a bubbling retort filled with organic chemicals. And the Lord was not in the fire or the earthquake. And I remember, I had thought to myself, well, everybody else in their family's religious, I might as well go too.

So, I found out a slot I could put in for God. Whole Sunday. Now Monday through Saturday was my part of the week.

That's the week, and I knew that I could take out my halo, polish it up, put it away on the shelf, and save it for Sunday. Come Sunday, I'd have that halo all ready. Could fix it on, brush my teeth with religiously sex-appealed toothpaste, go out and smile, and I went to church sometimes five times a day.

Taught a Sunday school class, led the congregational singing, sung some of the special music, especially just to close the walk with thee. Just to walk as close to hell as I possibly could. But since our church was about 15 miles away from my school and my home, and I never let my parents know what my friends were like, and I never let any of my friends ever know that I was going to church, especially there in town, never the twain did meet.

And so for many years, I just lived two separate lives, and it was very simple. Monday I'd go back to school, I'd put my halo away, horns would start to go, and my tail would come out, start wagging. For a whole week, I'd do this.

Saturday we had our rock band, and we'd do our thing, and then Saturday night, the convention would start to set in, so that I'd repent early in the morning, get up in time to have a little penance, and then put my halo out, clip my horns for the week, stuff my tail into my suit, and then off I went to church again. I'll tell you something about that. Miserable.

Miserable. And I had a rotten life. For six years, from the time I'd first made some kind of decision to be vaguely Christian when I was 12 years old to the time I was 18, I held back from giving everything I had to God.

I said, that's all right, I've given Him enough. He's got a whole hour, church, five hours, different hours a day, that's enough for anybody. There was only two things I didn't want to give to God.

He could have had anything else. I'd even given him some of that. I probably borrowed it back following camp, but he couldn't have two things.

He couldn't have my career, and he couldn't have my band. Anything but that. I didn't mind what else he took, but he couldn't have those.

He said, that's mine. I've been good at these things. Let him take all the lousy things.

It would wreck my life. Not these. These are the good things.

Now, I don't know, but you may have wanted to be a policeman, and now you're a garbage collector or something, or you may have wanted to be a garbage collector, and now you're a policeman. I don't know what you wanted to be when you were a little kid, but I always wanted to be a scientist. I never remember a time when I wanted to be anything else except a scientist.

When I was seven years old, I got my first laboratory. When I was six years old, I remember getting some bottles of colored water. I couldn't find any real chemicals, so I found some crepe paper, and the running

crepe paper, and the stuff that, you know, all the dye runs out when you put it in water.

And then I filled up all these jam jars with crepe paper water, and I mixed them all in a different color, put it alongside a wall, and that was my first laboratory. That was when I was six. When I was seven, I found my first real chemical.

My dad had a bicycle job, not a motorbike, but the other kind, and he used a bottle of hydrochloric acid to clean up the iron and stuff like this. And I found this bottle, pulled the top off it, smelled it. It was concentrated hydrochloric acid, and it smelled all, you know, weird and fizzy, and then I poured it out on the concrete, and the concrete started fizzing and going yellow, and I figured, wow, this is a cool chemical.

It dissolves concrete. So I ripped it off my dad's shop, stuck it on my lab, and then I had my first chemical. When I was seven years old, my birthday, my parents gave me a first chemistry set because they realized it was kind of interesting.

From then on, I made friends with all the local chemists and chemical warehouse supply places. I remember walking in when I was nine years old and asking for a chemical a dude had never even heard of. And it blew his mind so much, he said, what are you doing? I said, I'm going to be a chemist.

So he took me out the back of his vast warehouse, and he gave me all their broken beakers and flasks, and I took on the whole car full of stuff. And I was in business. By the time I was going to high school, I had a better lab than the high school did.

In my first year in university, I had a better lab than the university did. And I told some of you, seven years old, I got a microscope, and I was looking for a cure for cancer. I got this cheese, this old furry cheese, blue furry cheese.

Have you seen that blue cheese with fur through it? You know, that kind of stuff? And I figured, if Alexander Fleming found a cure for cancer, you know, penicillin, if he found that in cheese, if you look hard enough, you start early enough, I could find a cure for cancer in cheese. So I was looking at this cheese under the microscope, and that cheese walked right off the slide when I was looking. And I've never eaten cheese since, raw, unless it's been irradiated.

This interest only changed in degree. When we were in primary school, we made plans to launch rockets on our unsuspecting city, devised this chemical to color our swimming pool, bright iridescent crimson. And when we had our gang wars, I told you we didn't do the usual trip with the brass knuckles and that.

I was always skinny, I couldn't use the brass knuckle thing. So we devised this thing to look like a little contact pill. And you just drop it in the back of a dude's pocket you didn't like, and he sat down and broke it, and five minutes later, when he walked away, the back of his trousers burned out on him.

I love chemistry. And in all this search, I'd work about 18 hours a day in this lab, and I was, I was in love with chemistry. It was my whole life.

My parents knew, they'd want to get me something for my birthday, they'd buy me a chemist's dictionary or something like that, and that's what I lived in. And then, there was this weird emptiness, though. And I thought, well, your problem is, you're working 18 hours a day in a lab, you don't see anybody, you need to go out and meet some people, you want to go and, it's people that you're missing.

I thought. So I thought, well, what's the best way to meet people? So we started putting together a band. Now, I'm not a musician, I used to play drums once, and my teacher told me to beat it.

Finished me off. We got together a band of kids that absolutely loved music. Most of them were friends of mine, I got to learn to know them.

And we put together a band, there was Kerry, who could make electric music, play with all his fingers, this way, this way. There was Squash, I don't know why we called him Squash, but he was our rhythm guitarist. And the only redeeming feature about Squash was that he was an electronic genius.

He could rig an amp to do things that nobody had ever heard before. And there was Dougie, my friend, who'd lived on these drums. And then there was Rod, Rod was our bass guitarist.

He never smiled, he just played bass. And that's the band. And from the start, there was a success.

It got off well, and we didn't have television very much, just starting to find out what it was in New Zealand at that time. We were very backward over there. And radio and that was a big thing there.

And it started to go well, and there were a lot of kids, and they came, and I thought, well, this is really it. A lot of kids, they're looking up there and everything else. But the thing that bothered me was this, that when the lights were switched off, and everybody went home, and you turned the amps off, and you packed everything up in the truck, and we headed out, that same all-emptiness came back again.

That same inner, aching loneliness. And I'd had, I'd done everything that I knew. We were well-known.

I had a career. I had everything fixed. I had all the money I wanted, and when I didn't have it, I could steal it, and I knew everything I wanted was there, and yet there was still nothing.

And it just bothered me. I didn't know what. And I remember the day that God began to speak to me.

All the time, my mother had been praying for me. She didn't come and say, oh, that nasty, horrible rock music, well, let's take this stuff out of here. She'd just come in there and look at her music, and go like this, and walk out again, and she prayed for me.

All those years, she prayed for me. I remember the day that God really spoke to me. We're having a rock practice, and we're practicing in our garage.

We'd set our recorders up in the garage, because there's a wall of sound effect that could happen. And we'd set up the thing, we're practicing, and creating this wall of sound thing, and suddenly, right in the middle of practice, I heard this, BAM! Which ruined the recording, and practice, and everything else. I go out to the front of the lawn, and there's my idiot friend, underneath this tree, with a brand new motorbike.

That's a Triumph, big black and shiny chrome thing, so big he sat on it like this, you know. And he'd just bought this thing, brand new. You know, he loved motorbikes, and this was a big bike, and do 100 miles an hour without even trying, and he usually made him try.

He pulled up, he pulled up on the lawn, slammed on his brake, and carved a big groove right through the lawn for my dad to see when he came home. I went out to talk to my idiot friend. Spent about half an hour, we talked about things.

He showed me his bike, he was proud of it. And I got excited, because our band had its first real big appearance. We'd just broken into, what was us, big time.

And I talked for about half an hour about the band, and what we're doing, what we're going to do, and where we're going to go from there. And he talked about his bike. As a matter of fact, we talked about our God.

And then, he said, listen, he said, I'm just going to go and visit my grandparents. He said, would you like a ride out to the country? And I looked at the bike, I knew he wanted to give me a ride, the pillow on the back, and I said, well, yeah, and then I thought, no, we've got to finish the practice off. And I said, look, I'll tell you what, you go out now, I'll take a ride later on.

Come back some other time, we'll do it. He said, you sure you don't want a ride? I'm going to be out about 15 minutes out there, 15 minutes back. I just want to show my grandparents it's only three miles out, and then we'll come back here and he can finish it off.

I said, oh, no, I'd better not, I'd better get it finished. I turned around and went back inside. And he backed his bike up to the dirt, you know, ah, ah, ah, ah, boom, dropped it, and his back went up, boom, boom, boom, boom.

I saw him go around, it's always cool when you lean, you know, as you go around the corner. And I could still hear him accelerating about five minutes later. I finished off the practice.

It was late, late that afternoon, my dad ran down to get a newspaper. Now, we live only about 150 yards from our local press. My dad, your dad, usually ran down and got a first pull copy.

They have a little thing in the front page called Stop Press, it's printed in red, it's last minute news, you can put it on in the last hour. And I remember my dad came back, it was a very beautiful day, late afternoon, came out onto that lawn and he showed me a newspaper. He said, did you see this? And I picked it up and he pointed to this little red Stop Press column.

And I read there how a young man had left my hometown of Manurewa in Auckland, New Zealand and had headed out to visit his grandparents on his new motorbike. And out in the country, just a few minutes out into the country, there's a blind road, curves around, he'd been around it many times before on many other bikes. And he came around well on his side of the road, which is the left hand side of the road, New Zealand, and a kid who was drunk who was running from the police in a stolen car came barrelling down the road and didn't know it was blind.

He came in at about 100 miles an hour. He came into the corner, he realised it was a blind corner, he realised he was going too fast and he chopped the car down, he got it down through the gears and he got it down to about 60 miles an hour. But he came around the corner on the wrong side of the road and he hit a boy on a motorbike travelling 60 miles an hour head on at a combined impact of 120 miles an hour.

He hasted the two ends of the bike to go and the observer said it seemed like the bike was just pushed together and it somersaulted twice in the air and blew up. And when the ambulance came to collect the body they couldn't find enough parts. And I've never forgotten because I'd read there the name of one of my closest buddies Alan Charles Dawson.

Suddenly it didn't seem such a bright sunny day and I remembered a verse that had been buried down there from my summer school days. What is your life? It's like a mist. It's here and then when the sun comes up it's gone.

And suddenly God spoke to me that still small voice that came to Elijah and he said what are you doing like this? And I said God I don't know. I'm certainly not serving you. And I saw before me two roads.

I saw a road a road that I was heading a broad road a road where all my friends had been going and I saw beside that road a little skinny road and a man standing there with holes in his hands. And I remember choose you this day and you'll serve. And I knew what it would cost.

And here's something you better learn about fire. It purifies. It purifies.

I realized that if I was going to really be a Christian it was going to cost me those two things I'd held on to all my life. My career and then this band. And I want you to know I didn't just simply say oh joyous ravenous joy I'll do this.

I had to I felt like somebody just said would you like me to cut your arm off and take your eye out. I just there was no way but I knew there was only one God spoke to me and said if you'd been on the back of that bike do you know where you would be. And I knew it.

Alan and I had talked about our God. He went to church I went to church. And I remember I was supposed to be the Christian one out of the two.

After all didn't I lead a Sunday school someplace? Wasn't I a song leader in a church? What did I tell them about Jesus Christ? Nothing. I talked about the thing I was most interested in which was me. And that's when God began to deal with me.

It was only a short matter after that that I said goodbye to the band. I took them out it was the evening of this big meeting. And I'd seen a girl just before that that helped me because I saw her really live for Jesus Christ.

And I said it's possible you can do it. Somebody's done it. Seven years later I married that girl.

But it helped. She was leaving for England the following day. She was going to spend two years there in Bible college.

She'd been the first Christian I'd ever really met. And that night I decided I'd say goodbye to the band. So as I dropped them off just prior to picking them up and taking them out for this engagement I explained to them what I was going to do.

And all of them with the exception of one of them said, you're nuts. We have spent three and a half years putting together this thing and now you're going to drop it. The guy who took over when we left went on to make their band the number one rock band in New Zealand.

Larry and the Rebels. And they all laughed. Except my friend John, Dougie.

He was the guy who used to help me break into houses and stuff. And Dougie said, listen Winch, he said, I know what you got is real. Something's happened in your life.

But he said, I don't want to do that because I know it would cost me my drums if I gave my life to God. And the friendship there that we'd had ever since primary school was finished. I'd only seen him twice in my life since then.

He left and went to New Guinea. And he's on a plantation today still playing his drums and drinking. And I said goodbye.

Now I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing. I've already told some of you the way God called me to come over to this country. But I do want to share with you another thing about fire and that is it energizes.

Now, I am not a very brave type of person. My wife says, listen, there's a big bug in the bathroom. I say, oh really? Well, let's open the door so it can escape.

I'm not exactly built like Tarzan. Now, this is the body the Lord gave me. It's the best one I got.

And you wait till the resurrection, brethren. I hope the Lord gives us bodies according to our desires. But this is the only one I got.

So you put up with yours and I'll put up with mine. I have never been a very particularly strong person or a brave person. When I was a little kid, I was skinny.

And there's something about a skinny kid that everybody wants to pick on. Primary school, the big dudes, there was a guy there, he had three eyes. One right in the center of his forehead.

Two others. Here's the one who always picked on me. His name was Ross Wibley.

He came from a children's home and I was skinny and I remember this dude, I'd seen some movie somewhere with Douglas Fairbanks or somebody was being attacked by some dudes and he swung on a raster and kicked them. You know, kicked his way right through the hole. I thought it was a cool movie.

And this guy, these guys were chasing me and I waited till this guy came running up. I went and swung on the tree. I pulled myself off too far and I kicked him right in the mouth.

And he was so mad, he chased me all around primary school and he finally chased me into this classroom and I had this little lunchbox. My mother gave me a little lunchbox with a handle on it. And I was so scared, I rushed in, I grabbed my lunchbox, he came down and I grabbed my lunchbox and I beat him over the head with my lunchbox and busted the lunchbox right over his head.

He was about to eat me and then this teacher came out because there was all these screams and beats and weird sounds and she came out and she said what's happening here? And I pointed at my lunchbox and I said he broke my lunchbox. And I beat that dude up, see. But there's something about a skinny kid everybody picks on.

Now I have known, I believe my only similarity with Elijah is that I'm a man of like passion. I know what it's like to be scared. I remember one time we were in Detroit, Troy, my wife and I, and we were going to work on the streets and boy we were praying.

We were sitting, praying away in this room. Oh, we were praying and I told some of the kids in the university about this. We were praying in this room and we were sitting and the director said you better get

close to God because it's going to be rough out on the streets tonight.

And I was praying and singing and I felt the presence of the Lord come really close and as I was praying somebody put hands on the back of my head just like this and they were going to pray for me. And I thought oh it's this dude behind me thinks he's Earl Roberts or something. And I have my head down like this and the hand went off and I said well thank you you know and I began to turn around and you know we segregated in Teen Challenge they put all the girls on one side and the guys on the other.

And I turned around thinking this guy behind me would be the one that was praying for me. I turned around and the seat behind me is empty. And I looked over and he's way over in the corner like this.

I thought boy if he prayed for me he must have really got over there fast. And then I looked in the aisle I thought it must be somebody walking looked in the aisle and nobody in the aisle. And I thought well that's kind of weird because I felt somebody put their hand on my head and I turned around and I thought if he didn't pray for me and nobody in the aisle put their hand on my head then who did that thing? And I turned around and just as I did I felt that same hand back.

And I tell you brethren I didn't say anything. I didn't say oh hello Lord or something. I felt like climbing under the carpet.

And right next door this girl went vroom off in unknown language and I thought boy this is the supernatural thing I've ever seen. I thought maybe the Lord wants me to enter but I've never done that before. And I didn't know what.

All I knew was that the presence of God filled our room with a stove. And then I got up and we went out. My wife was sitting right up the front here and we walked out and as we were walking out I said do you know something weird happened to me.

She said what? She said I think the Lord touched me. And she looked at me and she said you too. Same thing happened.

We went out in the streets and there we were in the equivalent of Black Panther territory. And I saw, I've been walking on the streets this guy who was with me so scared he decided he'd split immediately. He just got there.

Half an hour later he said look man I just got to go. And we just arrived there. Jumped in the car and drove off.

Here I am standing around with my Bible trying to look like a spiritual superstar or something. I'm out in the streets looking and I keep an eye on my wife over there with her girlfriend because they're witnessing to these girls and I see a whole bunch of black Muslims follow, surround them. And I'm looking over there.

Uh oh, now what are we supposed to do if guys surround girls? Two guys are supposed to go across and begin to talk to the guys and then the girls excuse themselves alright but I don't have this other guy. And I'm looking around for some guys and everybody's gone and I'm the only boy in the whole, you know, twelve miles it seems. And I'm standing there and here's these guys and I said well how would David Wilkerson do this? So I put my Bible and I walked across the street, picked this guy who had the loudest mouth and started talking to him.

I figured he must be the leader. In the middle of this talking and suddenly in a sweet, kind, gentle voice this car pulls up. Some guy says, Get off the road! I look up, I see the meanest policeman I've ever seen in my life.

He had no neck, the Lord just stood his head boom right on his shoulders, two little blue glassy eyes like diamonds, glinting and there were three other guys in the car with him and I learned this is the tech squad. It's the toughest, roughest police squad in the whole of Detroit. As they get out, that's bad news.

They have sawn off shotguns and machine guns and tear gas and the whole thing in their car. So I figured, well, you know, they don't want a big crowd gathering because there was one gathering. So I took this guy and we took right off the street, we went back into this gas station and I'm starting to talk to him and I look up and suddenly I see these two bright lights.

I hear a car accelerating and I just see these two lights and if you can believe it, a car horn being hit at the same time as brakes being hit right in front of you. Like that. And I saw these headlights.

I went, ah, I jumped this way, he jumped that way and then I looked up and here's the big four. Dude gets up, grabs me, lifts me up, said, what's your name? I forgot my name. My name right here, this name right here, this name, see.

Not a kid can remember his name either. I go, here we go, we go to jail and they're preaching the gospel and then they take this kid, this black kid, throw him in the street, in the car, drive him down the road and leave me standing there and of course all his friends come all over. And I'm standing here alone, the only white boy in the whole of the black community.

And I see all these kids come down and then his friends surround me and they said, you know what they're going to do with him? I said, no. They're going to take him down the road and beat him up. I said, I wouldn't do that.

So I'm waiting. I look down the road and here he comes. And I saw him walking.

This is the way he's walking. And I don't mind when people talk or anything but nobody's saying anything. They're just standing there waiting.

He comes up this far away. He says, you know what they did to him? I said, no. They took him down the road and beat him up.

And I said, shhh, now what do you say? You know all that prejudice and hatred and anger? Just because a white guy is talking to a black guy about his soul. And I tell you what I remember. I remember the hands.

I remember the promise. Hello, I'm with you always even to the end of the world. And I preached.

I preached like I never preached before. I preached to the whole street. I preached for an hour and a half.

And we finished almost friends because of the Holy Ghost. You don't have to be brave. You don't have to be smart.

You've got to be available because fire energizes. And listen, fire burns. And this is something I'll finish with here.

Fire burns up everything except the eternal. I remember the day I got a call to the mission field. I was sitting in a meeting.

It probably couldn't be very much larger than this. The guy was preaching on the launch of the first man into space. He'd never gotten his message because nobody had ever gone up into space at that time.

And he's talking about this guy who's sitting in an astronaut's couch and he's locked in there. And he's looking at the clock and that automatic clock, it'll tick round and then when it hits zero an automatic firing sequence starts and it's right out of his hand. And this guy is sitting there like this and any time before that touches its automatic sequence he can hit the abort button and cancel the whole mission.

Now understand nobody's ever been up to space before. He doesn't know whether he'll make it. He's going to be sitting riding an explosion out into the furthest reaches man has ever been.

And he's sitting there. He's probably got a girlfriend or a wife or kids. And he's sitting there and he's watching that clock in his mouth getting dry and he's starting to sweat and he's watching that thing tick off at final seconds.

If he wants to tick it out he can hit that button and abort the whole mission. He said I can't go, I can't do it. But once that button touches its automatic sequence he's committed.

It's no longer in his hands. He's going to ride a tail of fire out into space. And if he doesn't come back it's out of his hands.

And he talked about that man that God could launch him to a place he'd never been before. With no guarantee that he'd ever come back. And then he made a decision.

He said listen there are a few of you in this room that God is calling you to the regions beyond. And he said there's not many of you but God has a few of you in this room. And if you feel the call of God in your life to ride the rocket then I want you to stand.

There was no music. There was no real music. There was no real invitation.

But I felt God speaking to me. And I stood with two or three others across that big hall. And I walked down the front and I said oh God here I am.

He didn't really counsel us very much. I can't remember what else. Nobody gave me a super packet of literature that showed me how to be a Christian without being religious.

All I simply had was the fact that God had called me. And one and a half years later the reality of that decision was confirmed. And I stood on the steam and waved goodbye to my family and my friends.

Heading out to a country I knew nothing at all about with no provision or no promise that anybody would support me other than the sure call of God that called me. And I remember I was going out to this country called the United States of America. I didn't know anything about it.

And I remember coming into San Francisco. There was a fog in the harbor. And this was the first visit to the United States proper after Hawaii.

And I was getting rid of the stuff that I had in my pocket. I was getting rid of this tape recorder that I had. I had some nice packing and boxing and stuff for it.

And I was throwing all my junk overseas. I couldn't really sleep very well. It was about two o'clock in the morning.

And I remember going out to the thing and I was just about to throw this. It was a very pretty box. I wished I could have kept it.

But I said well you're going to be doing a lot of walking around. You don't want to be sleeping in practice. No sense lugging this box around.

I'm just going to throw it over. And the Lord spoke to me. And he said, son, you make that abandonment of the box the abandonment of your body to me.

And I said, alright Lord, here's my body. And I threw it in. And then there was a packing inside.

He said, I want your soul too. I want all of your personality. And I threw that in.

Splash. Then I stood there and I had two little pieces of metal. One was shaped like a boomerang.

The other one was shaped like the letter L. And as I stood there with those two pieces the Lord spoke to me again. And he said, son, that boomerang represents your return home. And that letter L represents the one earthly love you have.

This girl that you really love. The one that you first saw. That everyone challenged you to give your life to me.

The girl had moved from England now to the United States to continue us going over there. The one girl I felt if I was ever going to marry at all I was going to marry her. And the Lord spoke to me and he said, son, if I asked you from this day on never to go home again and never see your family again.

Would you be willing to do it? And if I asked you to say goodbye to that Christian girl you love so you go on from this day alone and you never marry. Would you be willing to do that? And I tell you, I hang on to those two pieces of metal for a long, long time. And then I remember that little verse.

A poem. Except you make him Lord of all. You cannot make him Lord at all.

And I remember taking that piece of boomerang metal and I threw it in the water and I held that letter L for a long time. And then I dropped it in the water and I remember it seemed to shine. And I seemed to see it go all the way down the water.

I could watch it was still glittering going way, way down. And finally it passed out of sun. And I remember straightening up from the side and as I did I felt a sense of the presence of God cover me and it's not left me to this day.

And now I've had one desire. Preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible in the most effective way in the shortest possible time. Bow your heads in prayer please.

Lord Jesus, you have not called us to an easy task, but you have called us to be faithful. We thank you that you have said you are the light of the world. Deliver us from the fear of God of being set aflame.

We love you, the flame will burn, the oil and not the wick. Help us Lord to expose our lives to the light. You are the cleanser of the world.

You are the light of the world.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3779.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/winkie-pratney/youth-aflame/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**