

Feeding the Spiritual Glow

Scripture Reading: Romans 12.1-21

Key Verse: "Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord." v11 (RSV)

After eleven chapters of deep doctrine, the apostle Paul encourages his readers with two and a half chapters of helpful suggestions on effective Christian living. In verse 11, the word 'fervour - be fervent in spirit' comes from a word meaning 'to boil', 'to be hot'. Kenneth Wuest says, "The presence of the article ('the' in the Greek) here points to the Holy Spirit. It is locative of sphere, that is...fervency in the Christian life which is engendered by the Spirit, not produced by the flesh (self effort)." The Amplified version renders it, 'Be aglow and burning with the Spirit.' It is the life of the Lord Jesus burning within us by the work of the Holy Spirit that makes us warm and responsive to God, and an encouragement to others. The Christian life is not what we may do for Jesus Christ, but is only what Jesus Christ can and does do in and through us. Are we glowing with the life of God? Are we boiling for the Lord? What lessons can we learn from this theme?

First, make sure that the fire is alight.

We cannot build the fire if it has not been lit. When we come to the Lord, receiving Him as our sin bearer, confessing our sinfulness, and asking Him for His forgiveness, He receives us, He forgives us, He cleanses us, and He by the power of the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. He, Jesus becomes our life. He is able to live the life in us that we cannot. He is God. The Bible says in 1 John 5:12, "*He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life.*" So simple! Say, reader, has this happened to you? If not, you have not had the fire lit. Take time right now to take this most important step. Open your heart to God, take Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Here is what the Bible says in John 3.16, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Take God at His word. Act on what He says. This is faith in God. This is where the life starts. Galatians 5:24 "*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*" (RSV)

Second, the flame can burn very low.

Take heed of 1 Thessalonians 5.19 and do not 'dampen, hinder or extinguish' the Holy Spirit's working. Many do. Like young Timothy they need to fan up the fire. See 2 Timothy 1.6 The word 'stir up' here means 'to rekindle a dormant fire' It may be burning very low. Many Christians want to be on fire for God, but have not yet come to Romans 12.1&2. The problem may be that our fire is choked with dead matter that not only will not burn, but retards the fire. There is soot, ash and clinkers which must be raked out, the sins and weights of this world. See Hebrews 12.1, the love of self which defeats our best endeavours. See Romans 7.18-23.

In this chapter Paul lists a few of these clinkers. We will know of others:

There is the ash of pride v3. How we love our own self importance, but it needs to be brought to Calvary.

There is the ash of hypocrisy v9. The word 'sincere' in this verse comes from a word meaning 'without hypocrisy'. This is pretending to be what we are not, saying one thing but doing another,

play acting. We must be real about our Christian standards and practice, especially our expectation of others.

There is the ash of laziness v11. A literal translation of this verse is "in diligence, not slothful. . ." In service, in witness certainly, but first in study of God's word, and in the practice of Christian virtues. See verses 13-15

There is the ash of haughtiness or arrogant superiority. A literal translation is "not high things minding, but with the lowly going along". Who do we think we are anyway! All sinners are saved by God's grace alone. There is the ash of ill will v17. Christians ought to return good to those who do evil to them and thereby breaking the vengeance cycle. In those days, people travelling would take some fire in a carrier on their heads to kindle their new hearth., thus heaping coals of fire on the head of our enemy is not an act of hostility, but of hospitality, providing for the their needs. We can help to start the fire in the hearts of those who are against us, not of hatred but of love toward God. This is the intent of verses 17 to21.

Third, Feed the Fire with the right fuel.

Some timbers burn hot, some flare up

Some Christians are more smoke than fire. We sometimes put on a show for those who stand around, but it is all smoke, not heat, and people move away to escape our influence, when they really want to come in and be warmed. Does this study find you with a low glow. Be encouraged, "*A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking (or, dimly burning) flax shall he not quench,*" Isaiah 42.3 speaks of the low profile ministry of Jesus and His followers, (See Matthew 12.20) Be encouraged, the Lord is anxious to restore His people to the place of fellowship See Isaiah Isa 57:15 "*Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*"

fast, some are slow and can hold the heart of the fire over a time The Christian needs to feed on the word of God. A rousing sermon may stir our imagination, a daily devotional can keep things going, but our heart also needs consistent, solid feeding on the word to hold the flame. We must not sell ourselves short. Christian, read Luke 24.32. Let the Holy Spirit take the Word of the word and stoke your heart.

Fourth, there must be a constant draught of air.

If the fuel is clumped too tightly, the fire tends to go out, it must be opened up and leave room for a draught of air. The Christian's air is prayer. What a difference it makes. Prayer is interacting with the Lord directly as we bring our needs and hopes and joys to Him, as we seek Him for his direction in our lives and His blessing on our ministry.

How did Jesus say the joy of the disciples would be maintained in the days of difficulty during and just after His crucifixion? Look up John 16.23&24. We know the answer, but do we put it into practice?

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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