

A Baptism by Fire

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[0 : 0 0] and all that we ask for the forgiveness of all many sins. It's in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. We shall now read the word of God as we find it in the New Testament in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12, and reading from verse 22.

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, neither for the body what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn. And God feedeth them, how much more are ye better than the fowls?

And which of you, taking thought, can I add to a stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow, the toil not, the spin not.

And yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothed the grass which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

[1 : 2 0] And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell that ye have, and give alms, provide yourself back which walks not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your eyes be good at about, and your lights burning. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Blessed are those servants in the Lord, when he cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meet, and will come forth and serve them.

[2 : 2 3] And if ye shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what doubt the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

But ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Of what truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But, and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.

[3 : 47] For unto whomsoever much is given of him, shall be much required. And to whom men have committed much of him, they will ask the more. I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?

But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and now I am straightened, till it be accomplished. Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth, I tell ye nay, but rather division.

For from henceforth it shall be five in one household divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

And he said also to the people, when ye see a cloud rise out of the west straightway, ye say, there cometh a shower, and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, there will be heat, and it cometh to pass.

Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not concern this time? Yea, and why, even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

[5 : 01] When thou goest with an exhortation to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence, that thou mayest be delivered from him, lest he hail thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

I tell thee, thou shalt not depart then, till thou hast paid the very last mite. May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word.

We shall now sing in Psalm 63. Psalm 63. Lord thee, my God, I'll early seek, my soul to thirst for thee, my flesh longs in a dry-parched land, wherein the waters be, that I thy power may behold, and brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee heretofore, within thy holy place.

Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands, and bless thee while I live. Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall filled be, then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee.

We shall sing these verses to the Lord's praise of Psalm 63. Lord thee, my God, I'll early seek, my soul doth thirst for thee. Lord thee, my God, let me see, my soul doth thirst for thee, my flesh longs in a dry-parched land, my soul doth thirst for thee.

[7 : 13] I have seen thee here to walk within thy holy place.

Since better is thy love, my soul doth thirst for thee.

I have seen thee here to walk in thy name, and bless thee while I am. I have seen thee where I am.

I have seen thee where I am. I have seen thee where I am. I have seen thee where I am.

I have seen thee where I am. O hungry fowl, my soul shall never be.

[8 : 28] Then shall my heart with joy for life sing praises now to thee.

Seeking the Lord's help and blessing, let us turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Luke and chapter 12 and we'll read at verse 49.

I am come to send fire on the earth and what will I if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptised with and how am I straightened till it be accomplished?

This chapter opens with the words, In the meantime when they were gathered together, a multitude of people, insomuch that they threw one upon another.

He began to speak to his disciples, first of all, when he is interrupted. And one of the companies said unto him, Then at verse 22 he assumes again his discourse with his disciples until again he is interrupted this time by Peter.

[10 : 03] Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us or even to all? And he answers Peter by another parable. Jesus is teaching his disciples about his second coming and said, Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.

And if he shall come in the second watch or come in the third watch and find so blessed are those servants. And let us know that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. He is exhorting them to be faithful as they watch and wait for his return.

And then he proceeds to connect his future coming with his immediate work of suffering and death. In these words that we have taken this evening as our text, I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I?

If it be already kindled, but I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how I am straitened till it be accomplished. What Jesus said, I am come to send fire on the earth.

[11 : 24] The fire has not yet come. So he is looking here at something that is in the future. Something that he is going to do in the future.

That is, to send fire on the earth. And what will I, if it be already kindled? Or as we have it in the ESV, would that it were already kindled?

He wishes that this fire were already kindled. However, he tells us that something else must take place before the sending of the fire.

But I have a baptism to be baptised with. What Jesus is really saying is this, I cannot send this fire until I have been baptised with my own baptism.

Now, what does he mean by this term, baptism? He obviously does not refer to his baptism by John that he received at the River Jordan, because he has already received that baptism.

[12 : 37] Here, he is obviously looking forward to something that is yet to be accomplished, and that not in the far distant future. He says, how I am strained until it be accomplished.

In other words, he is saying, this is my distress. This is, I feel as if I was confined and imprisoned and shut up and limited.

It was a remarkable thing for him to say. There Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples, and he says, I am in great distress.

I feel confined and imprisoned until this baptism be accomplished. This is how I would marshal, paraphrase it, he says, how I am totally governed by this until it be finally accomplished.

Although Jesus never told his disciples about the cross until after Peter's confession of him at Caesarea Philippi, the fact of the coming cross was always present to the mind of Christ.

[13 : 52] Here it is as if he was saying, I cannot complete my work, an essential part of which was to send fire on the earth until I have received this baptism.

He was speaking figuratively, of course, of his coming suffering and death. But why choose the imagery of baptism to characterize his approaching suffering and death?

What is there about baptism that lends it to being used as a figure for his suffering and death? The verb here to be baptized with is in the passive voice.

It is something to be done to him. Now we have already established that this baptism is a reference to his suffering and death.

And think of these words that we find in Acts chapter 2, the words of Peter when he says, Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know, been delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

[15 : 21] While his suffering and death was done to him by men, nevertheless, yet it was under the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God.

In other words, the death of Christ is by God's appointment. His sufferings and death was under the authority of God, although he was taken by wicked hands and crucified and slain, yet it was under the authority of God.

In John chapter 10, Jesus said, No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

His death was a commandment received from the Father. Let's see what our Westminster standards say about baptism.

What is baptism? Well, our Westminster Confession says, Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

[16 : 37] In other words, we baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. That is, that we baptise under the authority of God.

Our Westminster standards go on to say about baptism, that it does signify and seal our engrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Now, that is what baptism means to us. But what did it mean to Jesus? What does it signify and seal in his case?

Well, is it not a sign and seal of the engrafting of the church unto himself and the communicating to her the benefits of the new covenant and also his engagement to be hers as her Lord and covenant head?

Here he is bringing before us not merely the sufferings of the cross, but his relationship to those sufferings as the covenant head of the church.

[17 : 54] He died a covenant death, or to use the theological term, his death was vicarious. That is, he died in the place of others.

The New Testament brings this very clearly. In Romans chapter 6 we read, Know ye not that so many of us were baptised unto Jesus Christ, were baptised unto his death?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, and so on. Baptism is a symbol of the putting away of sin. And here he is bringing before us the nature of his death, not merely in its sufferings and all to which we have pointed, but also in that particular relationship in which his death stood with the church and the putting away of her sin.

How much of that they understood at the time? Probably extraordinary little, if any at all. But it certainly became a New Testament teaching after Pentecost.

There Jesus stands in the midst of a world full of sorrow and sighing and sin, and he's longing to cast this fire on the earth, this fire that should purify and remake.

[19 : 18] Yet he was unable to do it, until first of all he was baptised with this baptism. Jesus said, I have a baptism to be baptised with, and I am straight until it be accomplished.

John the Baptist baptised him, and there began his three years of ministry. And those three years of ministry will also end with a baptism.

If they had started with a baptism, they will also end with a baptism. The former baptism was in water, but the latter baptism is going to be in blood.

On the cross, both are deaths. The first baptism was an identification with a death to come.

The last is a reality, it is the death itself, which must be completed to the end. So his ministry began with a baptism by water, and in that baptism he was identified with the death that he was to suffer, the death that was to come.

[20 : 44] At the end of these three years of ministry, he is also baptised, but this time in the blood of the cross, where he comes to see the reality of death itself.

Here we, was Jesus with that burning desire to meet with the cross, not for himself, but for the church, and to be able to grant to her the benefits that the cross would bring, the benefits of the new covenant.

Jesus said, I am come to send fire on the earth. When did it begin to burn, and what is meant by fire? Well, some people think that Jesus is here speaking of judgment, and no doubt the Bible does use fire literally and symbolically as terms of judgment.

In the book of Hebrews we read that our God is a consuming fire. It is said that Jesus will appear in the midst of fire at his second coming in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flame, firing fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is coming to judge those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he will appear in flaming fire.

[22 : 20] In Psalm 18, verse 8, God's wrath is compared to fire. There went deba smoke out of his nostrils and fire out of his mouth, devoured coals were kindled by it.

So there are those who think that here he is speaking of judgment. But others, like John Calvin, thinks that it is a reference to the gospel.

Matthew Henry thinks it is the fire of persecution, although Jesus is not the author of it, that he permits it. However, here I would prefer to think of fire as a symbolic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

for the following reasons. In Luke chapter 3, verse 16, we have the words of John the Baptist. I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I come in.

The latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Listen to Jesus on the other side of the cross and the resurrection in Acts chapter 1, verse 5.

[23 : 30] For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And then in Acts chapter 2, For the day of Pentecost was fully come.

They were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

That was the historic fulfillment of the prediction of John when the Holy Ghost came or the Holy Spirit came. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and the symbol of his coming was fire.

Cloven tongues like as of fire. Between the prophecy of the forerunner, John the Baptist, and the historic fulfillment, there were these words of Jesus to which we have already made reference in Acts chapter 1.

So when did this fire begin to burn? And the answer is seven Sundays after the resurrection of Christ.

[24 : 55] The day of Pentecost, which was the most amazing day for the Church of Christ. the people of Jerusalem were on that day confronted by a people, some of whom they would have known just as simple fishermen.

And now something quite astounding had happened to them. And the people of Jerusalem, and so we'll read there in Acts chapter 2, now when there was noise abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in his own tongue wherein we were born?

The answer is given in verse 32 and 33. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses, therefore, being by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which he now see and hear.

There on the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of this promise. I am come to send fire on the earth. And that fire began to burn on the day of Pentecost.

[26 : 31] And note here what he is saying, I am come to send fire on the earth. The fire is on the earth meaning both Jew and Gentile. It's no longer is it going to be confined to a certain nation or a certain people.

But it was for the earth. It was for both Jew and Gentile. It was for the whole world. I am come to send fire on the earth.

Pentecost cannot precede the cross. The cross must come first. The baptism must come first. But after his baptism there cometh this fire.

There cometh this Holy Spirit. And the coming of the Holy Spirit was very important to Jesus. Listen on the discourse of the upper room that night when they were gathered together in the upper room when he instituted the Lord's Supper.

Listen to their conversation. In John 14 verse 16 and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter the comforter there is the Holy Spirit that he may abide with you forever even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not neither knoweth him but ye know him for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

[27 : 56] And later on in the same discourse she says but when the comforter has come whom I will send unto you from the Father even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father he shall testify of me and ye shall also bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning.

And again he says nevertheless I tell you the truth it is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away the comforter which is the Holy Spirit will not come unto you but if I depart I will send him unto you and when he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment of sin because they believe not on me of righteousness because I go to my Father and ye see me no more of judgment because the prince of this world is judged.

I have yet many things he said to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now howbeit when he the spirit of truth has come he will guide you unto all truth for he shall not speak of himself but for soever he shall hear that shall he speak and he will show you things to come he shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you.

So the coming of the Holy Spirit was important to Jesus. This coming of sending fire on the earth was important to Jesus.

Now when we come to consider the Holy Spirit and fire we are not to think of them as separate from each other rather we are to think of the fire as a property that belongs to the Holy Spirit.

[29 : 46] In other words that the properties that belong to the fire is very symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Well first of all what does fire give? Well first of all fire gives light.

Fire gives light. And the Bible clearly states that our minds are darkened in regards to spiritual things.

Paul writing to the Ephesians saying having the understanding darkened been alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart.

in the second letter to the Corinthians chapter 3 Paul is comparing and contrasting the Jews who remain unconverted with the Jews who have become Christians.

And he says that the trouble with the unconverted person whether Jew or Gentile by the way is that there is a veil over their hearts and over their minds and over their understanding so that they cannot see.

[30 : 53] In chapter 4 of the same letter Paul explains why some persons do not believe when he preaches.

Why do some people not believe when the word of God has been preached? Why do some people not believe when the gospel has been proclaimed?

Well Paul explains it. He says but if our gospel be hid it is said to them that are lost in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them.

The God of this world hath blinded the mind and he does so in various ways that shows you the power that he has of blinding the mind therefore what we need is light and the Holy Spirit provides that light for the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Again Paul writes for God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 30] Writing to the Ephesians he says the same thing that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him the eyes of your understanding been enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who are to believe according to the working of his mighty power.

The Holy Spirit gives light. I am come to send fire on the earth and what will I if it be already kindled.

We need that fire because our minds our understanding is darkened and it is the fire of the Holy Spirit and that only that can enlighten our minds and enlighten our understanding and the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

That is why we always say how dependent we are upon the Holy Spirit. Unless the Holy Spirit comes our minds and our understanding will continue to be darkened and will go to hell.

We need the Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding to enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ and in enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ the Holy Spirit enlightens our need.

[34 : 11] That is how he begins. He shows you your need and then he shows you Christ as sufficient to meet that need. He comes first to show you that you are a sinner. That you are a hell deserving sinner.

And then he enlightens you in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the saviour of sinners. The Holy Spirit gives light.

But another property that belongs to fire is warmth and heat. A fire not only gives light but a fire gives heat and warmth.

In Luke chapter 24 we read about two walking to Emmaus being joined by Jesus and known to them. And they came and they came to testify did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures.

Now it was the Holy Spirit that made their hearts burn within them as he talked to them through his own word. John Wesley describes his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ at a prayer meeting in London as he heard about the change God works in the heart through faith in Christ.

[35 : 31] He said I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ. Christ alone for salvation and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death.

That was his experience. have you ever experienced the fire of the Holy Spirit? Has your heart ever become strangely warmed as you hear the word of God?

When you trust in Jesus and each time you take his word, have you ever experienced your heart being warmed and loved towards him as you see his love and grace, perhaps in something new or something old about him in a new way.

The Holy Spirit gives warmth and heat into your heart as it opens your understanding or your mind in the things of God.

As the Holy Spirit enlightens you and opens your mind to the things of God, you strangely feel a warmth towards those things.

[36 : 48] the Holy Spirit produces warmth, towards everything that bears the name of Christ. You will have a warmth towards the Lord's day.

You will have a warmth towards the fellowship of God's people. John writes, we know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from how dwelleth the love of God in him. The Holy Spirit produces this warmth of love and tells the things of God whether it be his word or his day or his worship or his people everything that bears the name of Christ.

Christ. So fire gives light and fire gives warmth. Another property that belongs to fire is that it purifies or purges.

[38 : 10] I am sure that some may be acquainted with the story of the refiner fire. The story is about a woman who goes to a silversmith to watch the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were the hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver but he had to keep his eye on the silver the entire time it was in the fire.

If the silver were left a moment too long in the flames it would be destroyed. And the woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith how do you know when the silver is fully refined?

He smiled at her and answered oh that's easy when I see my image in it. Well in the book of Malachi in chapter 3 we read of God that he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.

[39 : 33] God will have no impurities in heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God and there shall no wise enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Yet there shall be a large multitude there and they will all have gone through the process of purification. This is the work of the Holy Spirit for it is by the Holy Spirit that we mortify sin.

Like the silver or gold that has been purified it is kept in the furnace until that which has been purified loses any resemblance to what it once was.

Paul writes to the church at Rome and he says for whom he did foreknow he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son.

That is the apex of our salvation to be conformed to the image of the son and the Lord will keep us to going through this process of purification by the Holy Spirit until his own image is imprinted upon us until we are conformed to the image of the son.

[41 : 03] Beloved now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him.

As he is. Well have you got the fire of the Holy Spirit in your heart? Has your mind and understanding been enlightened by the light of the Holy Spirit so that Christ is to you the power of God and the wisdom of God?

have you felt warmth in your heart as the things of God? Has the work of purification commenced in your heart? The work of sanctification has it commenced in your heart?

Beloved now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is and every man that hath this hope in him purify himself even as he is pure and that's one of the tokens or marks of Christianity of being in Christ one of the tokens or marks that we have that the Holy Spirit is working in us not only enlightening our mind and understanding and the knowledge of Christ not only giving us a warm tone of things of God but he implants in us a desire for holiness a desire to be pure even as he is pure oh yes you may be here tonight and you say oh what is a burden on me tonight is my impurities and that is true as

Holy Spirit works in you he shows you how impure you are and your great need of this purity that God gives to you and you have a desire for that purity you have a desire for that holiness maybe tonight that your greatest distress and anxiety is how low the flame is spawning in your heart there was a day and you say yes it was spawning brightly but now it is almost not perceptible or noticeable maybe the fear tonight is that the fire one day will be extinguished Paul in writing to the Thessalonians says quench not the spirit and

[43 : 57] Paul goes on to explain how this can happen he says despise not prophesying prove all things hold fast that which is good abstain from all appearance of evil prophesying here is a reference to the preachers of the New Testament message because before that message was recorded in writing this is the way it was referred to as prophesying this quenching takes place when we neglect God's word when we neglect prayer when we neglect corporate worship that is coming together to worship as a fellowship the quenching of the spirit takes place when we neglect or despise those things that's what

Paul is telling us despise not prophesying despise not corporate worship despise not the preaching of the gospel prove all things hold fast that which is good abstain from all appearance of evil the means to fuel the flame of God's spirit is to devote ourselves to the ministry of the word in personal reading in private and public prayer and in the preaching of the gospel incorporate worship in coming into a fellowship together around the worship of God and around the word of God either the word of God will shape our thinking or the message of the world will drown out God's voice and quench the ministry of the Holy Spirit that's why he says prove all things hold fast that which is good abstain from all appearances of evil from all appearances of evil

Paul excerpts to Galatians Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh if we live in the spirit let us also walk in the spirit you see the spirit can be easily quenched through the world and the flesh and the devil in Galatians chapter 5 also Paul lists for us the works of the flesh and the fruits of the spirit and we lay so much emphasis on these and rightly so but listen he goes on and he says but if you bite and devour one another take heed that ye be not consumed one of another let us not be desirous of vain glory provoking one another envying one another and that is just as important as the lists of the works of the flesh and the fruits of the spirit if we devour and bite one another we are quenching the spirit we are quenching the spirit if we are desirous of vain glory we are quenching the spirit if we are provoking one another or envying one another we are quenching the spirit we know that where the fire of the holy spirit exists there will always be a conflict between the flesh and the spirit that's why we need discipline in our lives the flame may at times be incredibly low but where the fire of the holy spirit exists the fire will not be extinguished however low it may become it will not be extinguished and we owe thanks to that only and purely to the grace of

God in John Bunyan's political progress you may recall when Christian came to the interpreter house one of the scenes that was set before him was the fire in the wall on one side of the wall there is a man standing throwing buckets of water upon this fire in an effort to put it out yet did the fire burn higher and hotter fire and fire and fire and fire and fire which burns in a believer heart pilgrim is told but see on the other side of the wall there is another pouring oil upon that same fire and that is why it burns and keeps on burning this is Christ the interpreter explains who continually with the oil of his grace maintains the work already begun in the heart he stands sitting on the other side of the wall the interpreter goes on but this is to show that sometimes it is hard for us to realize that

Christ really is still maintaining his work in our souls we all owe it to the grace of God to the grace of God yes sometimes the flame may be incredibly low but it will never be extinguished because of the grace of God and only because of the grace of God maybe tonight you are feeling cold but the embers are there and you know that things are not how they ought to be but there is the ember of desire well as a fire always need oxygen you apply the fuel of the word of God and prayer and fellowship and the embers will soon become a flame burning bright again let the fire that was once kindled in your heart by the indwelling of the

[50 : 20] Holy Spirit burn so brightly that it sheds light to the whole world that other people may be affected by it is that not what Jesus said let your life so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven well has this fire that Jesus was so keen to send on the earth after his baptism after his suffering and death an ascension to the right hand of the father in heaven he sends the Holy Spirit like fire on the earth the Holy Spirit that gives light to darkened souls like mine and yours enlighten us in the knowledge of Jesus Christ showing us that we are sinners that we are in need of salvation and that the only salvation is in

Jesus Christ has the Spirit given you that light the Spirit produces warmth in our heart warmth towards the Lord's day warmth towards prayer warmth towards the fellowship of God's people warmth towards corporate worship we have a desire to meet together one day in the week to meet as a fellowship around God's word to meet together in communion one with another around God's word that's the Holy Spirit work for the believer a work of discipline a work of making sure that he does not quench the

Spirit and where God has begun that work he will one day bring that work to perfection to perfection oh well let the fire that once kindled in your heart by the Holy Spirit may it burn in your heart so brightly that others may be affected with it that it will shed light to the whole world let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven I am come to send fire on the earth and what will I be already kindled but I have baptism to be baptised with and how I am trained till it be accomplished may the Lord bless our thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed

Lord we acknowledge tonight that we are dependent upon thy spirit and we pray oh Lord that thou would send thy spirit that it may blow upon our garden here at North Tolstair that it may blow upon our community bringing people under conviction of sin oh may it enlighten our people and may it bring that warmth of heart in the hearts of our people that their hardened hearts would become warmed towards thy day and towards thy cause and towards thy word and prayer towards Jesus Christ and we pray that that work of sanctification will begin even tonight in the hearts of many among us and planting that desire for holiness planting that desire for a disciplined life we pray oh lord that the work of thy spirit would be manifest tonight and in the days and weeks that lie ahead that would hear good news good news of thy spirit working among our people bringing a people to see and to value the preciousness of the salvation that thou hast made for sinners through thy son

Jesus Christ oh lord we are dependent upon thee come we pray thee and do that work which no one else can do we ask oh lord that thou would protect us during the coming days that thou would bless each one of us according to our individual needs bless thy people bless those who are housebound those who cannot be with us we pray oh lord that thou would be their companion and all that we ask with the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus name and for his sake amen we shall conclude by singing in psalm 43 psalm 43 and at verse 3 oh send thy light forth and thy truth let them be guides to me and bring me to thine holy hill even where thy dwellings be then will I to God's altar go to God my chiefest joy yea God my God thy name to praise my heart by will employ why art thou then cast down my soul what should discourage thee and why with vexing thoughts that thou disquieted in me still trust in

[56 : 15] God for him to praise good cause I yet shall have he of my countenance is the health my God that doth me save we shall sing these verses to the Lord's praise of Psalm 43 at verse 3 O send thy light forth on thy truth let them beguile to me O send thy light forth on thy truth let them beguile to me and bring me to an holy hill in which I dwell in thee then will I do God on your road to God my spirit shine yet of my love thy name to praise my heart by will employ why your blood in cast my soul for true discourage thee and host high

Te n■m Because I yet shall have, He of my commandments is the hell, My God that will be saved.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.