

FIRE FALL

Day One: Gather Us Together

Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel... 1 Kings 18:19

During times of national disaster, it is not uncommon for a country to rally together for the common good. The day after the September 11 attacks of 2001 we saw firsthand what a united nation looks like. While that unity eroded in the weeks, months and years that followed, the memory of a nation united in our grief still stands out in the minds.

In like manner, the people of Israel found themselves without water for three and a half years before they were called upon to gather. Over time, the economic and physical effects of such a drought had taken their toll on the nation. Everyone knew something had to be done, but only one man had the solution. Thus, Elijah called the nation together at Carmel to witness the revelation of God's glory as well as His intervention in their national dilemma.

As we begin our twenty one day journey through Carmel, we begin by setting our sights on a high and lofty goal...the uniting of a people who have been divided from each other, and estranged from their Creator. Our goal is not to maintain a pocket remnant of holiness on the earth, as some Christians seem to unwittingly communicate. Instead, our goal is to restore Kingdom rule of the nations to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We call upon the followers of Christ to gather, but we also call upon the rest of our nation to come and observe. We have been given the answers to the world's problems, all stemming from the single answer to the problem of our sin and its consequences. That answer is Jesus, and the world is waiting to SEE HIM displayed THROUGH US.

What we are asking God for is a national appointment with the Divine...an opportunity for the nation to witness His undeniable glory.

And so, we pray:

Heavenly Father... Gather our people together as one on the mountain of Your presence! Let our people leave behind the spiritual drought and dive into the refreshing of your glory!

We, the Bride of Christ, join our voices with the calling of Your Spirit over our region and nation crying out: "Come...Come all who thirst! Come all who desire! Come and drink Living Water freely!"

*Bring us together we pray, for Your name to be praised by all!
In Christ Jesus name we pray! AMEN*

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Day Two: Drawing the Line

*And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him. but if Baal, then follow him."
And the people answered him not a word ... 1 Kings 18:21*

The sides are constantly being redrawn. First, it was in the garden...the choice between walking with God or giving in to self-indulgence. Later, it was with Noah telling the world that a flood was coming...only he and his family made the right choice. Yet another time, it was Moses calling on the Levites to choose...those who were on the wrong side didn't live long enough to express their regret. There are multiple times throughout history that these sides have been clearly delineated.

Some say the choice is between good and evil. In reality the choice is between God and our own sinful desires. These two sides have a line in between. Elijah called this place "between two opinions." The prophet Joel called it the "valley of decision." It is in this place that judgment falls upon the earth and thus it is from this place that blessings and curses are decided upon.

In every revival that has ever been birthed among the people of God, this line has been emphasized. There has never been a nationwide Divine manifestation, nor even a communitywide Divine transformation, in which men were able to continue in their sinful pleasures while experiencing the depths of God's presence. Always there is a cry for man to choose the Creator over the creation.

Many times individuals get lost on the line. They refuse to surrender to Christ's lordship, but still see themselves as being a spiritual people. What they do not realize is that not deciding is the same as the wrong decision. When they refuse to answer to the King of kings, they are still choosing the death promised for all followers of Baal.

Many churches have forgotten that the Gospel is about the line. *The Good News is that we can come back to the side of God*, both for this life and for the life to come. Yet, instead of preaching the cross of Christ and the life of a follower, we have presented a comfortable, non-confrontational, Christ and the lifestyle of a fan. The line has become less distinct as grey areas have become more pronounced.

BUT WE WANT TO SEE GOD'S GLORY! We understand our need to cross the line. We understand that the veil of separation has been torn and we can all enter in! We want to experience God, displaying His glory in such a way that the world around us runs into His outstretched arms!

And so we pray:

Heavenly Father and Righteous Judge, we ask you to redraw the line! First, redraw the line in us as individual followers. Second, redraw the line for your Body of believers. Finally, redraw the line for those around us to see You as the only right choice in this valley of decision. Give to all of us the grace we need to run into Your arms afresh and anew!

Draw us into the Holy of Holies! Draw this nation into Your glory! Draw us to that place where our want for You is noticeably far greater than any desire in this world!

In that name above all names, the name Christ Jesus, we pray! AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Three: Outnumbered

Then said Elijah unto the people, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men"... 1 Kings 18:22

When the people of God give in to "living on the fence," it doesn't help the cause of Christ. Instead it creates an atmosphere in which wickedness is allowed to prevail. As blatant sin moves to the forefront of culture, the gap between God's design and carnal desire only widens. Finally, society turns against all those who speak the truth while actively seeking to silence them.

In times when darkness is predominant, we often feel as though the magnitude of the enemy's influence is greater than our own. Too quickly forget that even in the darkest of places one single small flicker can bring the greatest of illumination by simple contrast. As St. John wrote in his Gospel, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it." (John 1:5)

We must remember that God's strength is made perfect in our perceived weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Though we may feel outnumbered at times, we truly never are. Jesus taught us that one Kingdom seed will bring great harvest and a little bit of Kingdom leaven causes the whole loaf to rise. One spark starts a fire! One reformer starts a reformation! Don't be afraid of numbers! As Jonathan and his armor bearer realized, "Nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few." (1 Samuel 14:6)

Elijah's statement was intended to display contrast. 450 to 1 are not the best of odds...in fact they are anything but. However, Elijah knew his God personally while the 450 had never seen their god perform anything outside of the abilities of man. Elijah had heard his God's voice, but Baal's prophets had never heard one word from Baal. This shifted the odds entirely into Elijah's favor...knowing God always changes things!

Still, there another aspect we need to address in Elijah's statement. Elijah actually believed he was the only remaining prophet of the LORD. It is one thing to be outnumbered, but it is another thing to be alone. We need to be able to look beyond the momentary emotion, while trusting God to have a remnant reserved. When the tide changes, the remnant always comes out of hiding!

When God won the victory through Jonathan, the remnant returned to the battle! (1 Sam. 14:21-22) In like manner, God corrected Elijah days later...God had reserved 7,000 worshippers in Israel, at least 100 of which were prophets protected by Obadiah! (18:3-4; 19:18) One understanding of the correction of Elijah is that all 7,000 were prophets whom God had protected...7,000 times better than what Elijah believed! In other words, while the odds on the mountain were 450 to 1 against Elijah, the odds in the nation were actually almost 16 to 1 in Elijah's favor! Better than that, in God's economy the odds were infinitely in Elijah's favor because he chose the side of Jehovah!

And so, we pray:

Father in Heaven...You always have been and will always be greater in us than those in the world! Help us not to shy away from shining in dark places! Help us not to back down in the face of popular opinion! Grace us with the knowledge of Your presence, even before we see the manifestation of Your glory!

We choose to rely on You! Remind us always that since You stand by our side, You always guarantee there are more with us than those who rise against us! Let us never forget, this encounter belongs to You and You will receive the glory!

In the name of Your precious Son Jesus we pray! AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Four: The Showdown

*“Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD,
and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.”*

And all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken” ... 1 Kings 18:24

Popular culture, led by celebrities and political super stars, continues to declare that there are multiple gods and/or multiple ways to get to know God. This is what happens when a nation no longer anticipates the supernatural manifestations of the Omnipotent. If God is viewed as a distant, non-involved deity, then the playing field is leveled for anyone, and anything, to be worshiped and deified.

What we would call a godless society, more times than not, is actually a society with multiple gods. Atheism and pantheism are two sides of the same coin. In this type of culture, you cannot merely change the mindset by superior arguments. Only a supernatural encounter with the power of the One True God can give definitive proof to His existence.

What if He doesn't respond as we *think* He should? All that matters is that He displays His glory in the way *He desires*. The real test on Carmel wasn't going to be the fire. The real response they were looking for was rain... Fire was just the preliminary manifestation that day. If God had not first sent the fire Elijah asked for, then no one would have believed it was God who brought the prosperity of rain.

Some would say a need for proof is the antithesis of faith. James, the brother of Christ, reminded us that faith is displayed by works. While this definitely applies to our good deeds, it also goes beyond us. James touted the works we are enabled to do as perfection of our faith (James 2:22). The truth is that we as Christians are supposed to be living proof of who God is. Loving God and our neighbor is evidence that we are Christ followers. Yet, the farther away we go from moments of divine encounters, the less love, works and faith that will be pronounced in our lives.

Revival encounters of the past emptied out prisons, removed drunkenness, and changed both policy and perception on regional and sometimes national scales. The great awakenings of yesteryear were not just localized phenomenon, but became worldwide floods of God's supernatural presence that influenced entire continents! Still there are many who refuse to believe that God can do it again.

As Elijah did, so also we will let the world call upon their gods but we will call upon the name above all names! Let the world turn to its own creations... we will turn to the Creator! Let the One who spoke through the burning bush speak through us again! Let Him who led Israel with fire by night, lead His people once again! The creature cannot respond with supernatural fire... only the Creator can!

And so, we pray:

Almighty Father, our nation may depend upon it's multiplicity of creations, but we rely upon You! You are all we need!

Jehovah Jireh, provide the fire! Jehovah Rapha let a healing fire fall! Jehovah Nissi, rally us behind the banner of Your fire and lead us into victory! Jehovah Tsidkenu, let Your righteous flame burn in our hearts again! Jehovah Shalom, let the warmth of Your flame eliminate our fears and soothe our hearts with Your peace!

*Answer us again with Your fire we pray!
In Jesus holy name! AMEN*

FIRE FALL

Day Five: Useless Prayers

*They called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us."
But there was no voice, nor any that answered ... 1 Kings 18:26*

In 2010, a Pew Research Study found that 57% of Americans pray every day. An additional 19% pray at least weekly, and another 11% pray occasionally. Only approximately 13% of Americans never pray. If so many people pray in America, then why is wickedness and antichrist behavior becoming so widespread? The answer is that while 87% of Americans pray, only a fraction of those individuals are faith filled believers expecting the presence of God to manifest.

However, useless prayers are not confined to non-believers. James, the brother of Christ, taught us that there are two things that hinder prayers. First, doubts make prayers useless (1:6-7). Second, wrong desires negate the power of our prayers (4:3).

The author of Hebrews expounds on these factors a little farther in his treatise on faith: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (11:6). *Answered prayers are always directly related to the faith of the believer.* Faith cannot work properly when doubts rule your heart, and without faith you will seek only your own desires instead of seeking the Creator.

No matter how much you pray, if you don't know who you're praying to, your prayers are useless. If you don't believe in the God who wants you to seek Him, your prayers are useless. Useless prayers may make you feel better for having prayed, but they will never become the catalyst for God's glory to manifest nor for His will to be accomplished.

And so, as Christ has modeled for us, now we pray with expectant faith.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen.

FIRE FALL

Day Six: Let Them Come

*And Elijah said unto all the people, "Come near unto me"
And all the people came near unto him ... 1 Kings 18:30*

Throughout the ages, God has been crying out to us, "Come!"

Through Isaiah, He cried out, "If you are thirsty, come! If you are hungry, come!" (55:1) Jesus reiterated these words multiple times. He even went a step further saying, "If you are tired, come to Me" (Matthew 11:28). The author of Hebrews even goes as far as to say we can "come boldly" before God's throne of grace (a parallel to the Holy of Holies) to obtain mercy and provision.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is first and foremost a call to "come near." While motivational self-help and programmatic instruction for success may benefit those who listen, they are not the Good News which Christ came to share. The Christ who taught servant leadership and the witness of martyrdom never guaranteed carnal prosperity.

Christ did, however, promise an abundant life to all who come to Him...the sheep who respond to His voice. They come in and out as He calls. Trying to come in by some other carnal means is thievery, according to Christ, and those who try to circumvent Him are on par with the thief who steals, kills and destroys. *(For more on Christ the Shepherd, see John 10).*

If coming to God through Christ is at the core of the Gospel, then why have so many stopped inviting the world to come? Perhaps more importantly, if the power of the Gospel is received by coming to Christ, *why have we stopped coming to Him for all things?* Too many say, "I came to Christ years ago," but they forget that the sheep continue to come to Him whenever, and wherever, He calls.

We must return to the heart of the Gospel, both personally and corporately! We cannot effectively invite the world to come to Christ, if we ourselves are not coming to Him "without ceasing!" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

And so, we pray:

Father God, as You have called to us, so we come! We come to you with our brokenness, our infirmities and our imperfections. We come with our giftings, our talents and our abilities. We come to You with all we are, as sheep running to the voice of the Shepherd.

We know You have patiently called and are calling our nation to You. Continue to call our people, and raise up that call within us. Let Your Spirit within us cry out louder than ever before for the people to come to You!

In the name Jesus...our Immanuel who came to us so we might come to You, we pray! AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Seven: Repairing the Altar

And he (Elijah) repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down ... 1 Kings 18:30b

When you use the word altar in most churches, most people think of a kneeling bench where individuals bow their knees to pray, or of an area of the church devoted to praying. Nearly everyone responds with thoughts of prayer. While this is normative in modern Christianity, and is totally appropriate, this is not the Biblical concept.

To the Jew, and even to the early church, the altar was an image of sacrifice. Upon the altar, the sacrifices were roasted, and sometimes consumed. One type of altar was for food sacrifices, and a smaller altar was for incense. In both cases, there was some level of cost involved.

The disciples were the first to understand that Christ was our ultimate sacrifice. Instead of going to the Temple for sacrifice, they gathered there for prayer. Afterward, they went house to house breaking bread and studying the Word. The concept of the altar then became replaced with a lifestyle, in particular, the lifestyle of the cross.

Paul the Apostle emphasized the lifestyle concept of the altar in the life of the believer in his letter to the Romans. While Christ is our sacrifice, Paul said we are a “living, holy, acceptable sacrifice” and that presenting ourselves as such is our “reasonable priestly duty” (12:1). In many ways, Paul would later reiterate this point in his own testimony while teaching the Galatians, “I am crucified with Christ...it is no longer I that live, but Christ through me” (2:20).

In this light, rebuilding the altar is not an easy task. Rebuilding the altar means recognizing the sacrifice of those who have gone before while acknowledging that we now are called upon to lay down our lives in like manner. If revival fires of days gone by required yielded vessels of prayer, then it stands to reason that today’s rekindling will require no less. If the reformers paid a price for reformation, then we too must be prepared to pay. If the voices of the great awakenings had to live as sacrifices, then we must live such lives as well. A living sacrifice does not detract from the sacrifice of Christ on the cross...to the contrary it has always, and will always, illuminate His perfect work at Calvary.

And so, we pray:

Father, You gave us Your Son at the greatest of cost, so that we might receive freely that most expensive gift of Your grace. Teach us to live as sacrifices presented to You. Help us to live as sacrifices holy before You. Remind us through Your grace we are acceptable and cherished sacrifices unto You. Let us always serve You, no matter what the cost.

In the name of the Lamb slain and risen, our Lord Jesus Christ we pray. AMEN