

FIRE FALL

Day Eight: Connecting to Our Heritage

*And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob...
And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD... 1 Kings 18:31-32a*

We are not the first ones to seek God for revival fire. By pursuing God's fire we are connecting with Azusa Street, Shearer Schoolhouse, the Cane Ridge camp meetings, as well as the preaching of Moody, Sunday, Spurgeon, Wesley, and Edwards (to name only a few). Countless other connections are made as we pray for another Great Awakening, stretching across the ocean, around the world and throughout time all the way to Pentecost.

As Elijah was the physical seed of those whom the stones of the altar represented, so also we are the spiritual descendants of those whose lives became living stones in the altar of revival. We rebuild upon the faith of generations before us, and expect nothing less than what they received.

Revival is like a concerto composed and orchestrated by the Spirit. The chords and melodies flow through different measures, hitting different highs and lows, yet always leading to the eventual big finish...the crescendo of Christ's return. As such we anticipate our season of revival to be nearer the crescendo than were the awakenings of old.

Whether the outpouring we receive is deemed greater or lesser than those before us, we do not look upon our position as the revival to end all revivals. We are one section of the orchestration, one thread in the tapestry, one stroke of the brush...and we cannot experience the final design without our connection to the whole.

It has never been about religion. By and large religion has been the byproduct of man's attempt to maintain revival. Thus we do not look to resurrect tradition, nor do we look to create new tradition, but instead we connect with the active faith of the generations so that we may look upon the face of the One who revives His people throughout the ages.

And so we pray:

Father God... Thank You for the ways You have moved among Your people in the past. Help us to remember our spiritual heritage, not to turn the altar into a monument, but to allow it to be a catalyst propelling us into Your manifest presence. As You have answered the prayers of the generations before us, so also hear our prayers. Revive us Your people! Revive our nation! Let the altar of your presence be relit with Your glory!

In Christ Jesus name we pray! AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Nine: Preparing the Sacrifice

*...He made a trench about the altar...And he put the wood in order,
and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said,
"Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the sacrifice, and on the wood"*

...1 Kings 18:32b-33

The reason the Northern Kingdom was willing to meet with Elijah for this showdown, was not because they wanted fire, but because they needed water. The drought and subsequent famine had been underway for three and a half years. There was no end in sight. The government (Ahab) had exhausted all of their resources in trying to combat the problem with no significant improvement.

Now, with God's name on the line, Elijah prayed for fire before praying for rain. He sacrificed the desire for water and replaced it with a desire for God's presence. Even after rebuilding the altar and arranging the agreed upon sacrifice, he went even further, requiring twelve barrels of water to be poured over both sacrifice and altar. He was willing to sacrifice the very thing the people so desperately needed if it would mean God's glory being revealed.

Sometimes we forget that the focus of our prayers is not simply for the fire to fall, but is instead that the drought will end with a manifestation of God's glory. Poverty, joblessness, poor health, drug addiction, exploitation, and all other manner of scars within our land are the fruit of failing to glorify God as a people. If our prayers are focused on only the problems, and we fail to invite God's glory to be revealed, then we spend our entire ministries treating symptoms instead of healing sickness.

When God's presence erupts, it changes the climate around us. His manifestation will turn the tide and open up the portals of Heaven to pour out the end to our drought. But are we willing to be faithful in the pouring out? Even when we feel as though we have no reserves, are we willing to spend our entire self in preparation for God's manifest presence in our lives?

And so we pray:

Father...I sacrifice my will and desires in order for Your glory to be seen. Good, bad or indifferent, I release all my intentions and declare my earnest desire to see Your glory revealed in the earth. You alone can heal Your people. You alone can end the droughts in our land. And so it is to You alone that I pour out all that I am in preparation for Your outpouring. Reveal all that You have intended for this season in my life, and in the lives of those around me, as I humbly pour out myself on the altar of living sacrifice.

In the name of Your holy Son, Jesus, I pray...AMEN

*And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice,
that Elijah the prophet came near... 1 Kings 18:36a*

There are natural seasons, and there are spiritual seasons. We understand distinct moments in time, and we understand general periods of time. The problem we often face is a lack of understanding what hour we are currently in. It may be a winter season, but there may be hours of spring preparation that will either benefit or hinder the future harvest. At the same time, when harvest abounds, planting the seeds is out of place. We must discern the times.

As Elijah began to pray, he was aware that approximately 70 miles due south, there would be an evening gathering at the Temple in Jerusalem. Even as the priests would be preparing to offer up fire at the altar on Zion, Elijah was asking for fire to fall down at the newly rebuilt altar on Carmel. The timing of this encounter was important. It was a moment in which chronos time and kairos time would intersect.

While the original text does not indicate a specific time of the sacrifice, it is understood that, in the natural, the day was rapidly coming to an end. Whether darkness was hours or minutes away, there was a time of distinct contrast about to manifest. In their minds, the beginning of night was viewed as the newness of the next day. With a release of the past, they would step into the unforeseen future.

It is within this context that the fire would fall. The fire will always fall in God's perfect timing. The same God who led Israel with fire by night, is the same God who stirs our hearts in this hour of sacrifice to be expecting His fire to once again fall, and illuminate our place in His kingdom. As the previous season ends, the brilliance of God's fire will once again contrast so greatly with the darkness of the world that man will see His glory and be drawn to Him.

And so we pray:

Father of Light...we ask You to stir our hearts for the sacrifice of the hour in which we live. As living sacrifices, may we pursue the fire of Your presence with all that we are. No matter how deep the darkness that seems to surround us, we ask for the ever increasing brilliance of Your flame to burst forth both within us and all around us. Make us aware of the hour that is upon us. Give to us wisdom like You gave to the sons of Issachar who knew not only the seasons, but knew also what to do within them. Teach us to redeem the time in the midst of evil days so the contrast of Your glory may be seen more clearly.

In Jesus' name we pray...AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Eleven: Proving God is God

Elijah the prophet came near, and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel" ... 1 Kings 18:36b

How does a people go from being "Israel" to being "Samaria?" The people of God had cut themselves off from the Temple in Jerusalem. Politics and rebellion had severed them from Judah and the priests. Along the way, idolatry permeated their culture. Finally, they had replaced the God who brought them out of Egypt for the plethora of gods offered in culture. God never ceased to be the God of Israel...but Israel ceased to be the people of God. Eventually, Samaria became a byword and Samaritans became outcasts...something only Christ was able to remedy.

Yet, Elijah asked God to prove He was God. The first focus of his prayer was not the need for water. Nor was it the request for fire or the necessity of a national revival. His top priority was for God to prove Himself to a generation that had long since forgotten Him.

In our own society, we are so far removed from past awakenings that the predominant mindset of culture is leaning toward agnosticism. This is to say that our people don't know, nor do they believe that anyone can truly know, whether there is one true God. Faith is important to them, but not as important as knowledge. As a result, many can say they believe in God, or gods, but yet don't believe He/they can actually be known.

Because the intellectualizing of faith has largely replaced the experiential faith of former generations, we find fewer and fewer in Western society expecting God to be actively involved in our livelihoods. We anticipate meeting God someday, but we fail to see the point in living for Him today.

Can we see ourselves...our nation...becoming a modern day Samaria? If so, we need to cry out for God to reveal Himself once again. We want Him to show His glory in such a way that is categorically undeniable. At the same time we recognize that we are to be living proof of His existence. Through power filled love we should represent Him to the world.

And so we pray:

Father...You have created us in Your likeness. You have prepared us in Your image to demonstrate who You are. Many times, and in many ways, we have failed. We have not demonstrated your unconditional love as we should. Nor have we been consistent in living the empowered witness that Your Spirit gifted to us. We repent for all the times we have reduced Your glory to an argument instead of being conduits through which Your glory could be seen. We acknowledge our need for You to prove Yourself to our nation once again, and ask that You will use us to that very end. Let it be known that You are still the God of our people, and that there is no other god but You.

In Jesus' name we pray...AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Twelve: Prove We Are Your Servants

And (let it be known) that I am Thy servant... 1 Kings 18:36c

Integrity should be one of the bench marks in the life of a believer. Without it, the motivation behind our loving acts of kindness will be questioned. Unfortunately, we live in a day and age when the integrity of believers is sorely lacking. When the church communicates a “For Sale” gospel, it begins to embrace the “error of Balaam” (2 Peter 2:5; Jude 1:11; Revelation 2:14). This doctrine corrodes the integrity of prophecy... Balaam had actually correctly prophesied (Numbers 22-24; Deuteronomy 23:4-5; Joshua 24:9-10; Micah 6:5), but his name is synonymous with one who sells out for financial gain, and for such he lost his life (Numbers 31:8; Joshua 13:22).

The error of Balaam is only one reason that the church has lost integrity, and therefore credibility, in the view of the world. Self-righteousness, judgmentalism, man-made tradition, political snobbery, faithlessness and vain philosophy are among the countless other reasons that so many believers are no longer believable. By and large, our message is no longer in alignment with the mission of the Body of Christ in the earth. Discipleship has become a series of arguments instead of organic livelihood. Institutions have therefore replaced movements, and no one knows who the true servants of God really are anymore.

Elijah wasn't asking for God to endorse his office, affirm his calling, or impart anointing. Instead Elijah wanted only to be known as a true servant who was simply fulfilling the mission his Master had called him to. Endorsement, affirmation and impartation are all incredible aspects of the Body of Christ in the earth... these must continue. Yet, when all is said and done, our office, calling and anointing will have meant very little. Only the evidence of loving God and man... the fruit of our servitude... will remain. As Paul told the Corinthians, there are three evidences that live on, “faith, hope and love; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Only when God's glory is revealed will the genuineness of our servitude be accepted by the world around us. All motives behind our charitable deeds will become evident as the fire of God's presence empowers true love to be demonstrated.

And so we pray:

Father in Heaven... Restore integrity to Your Church in the world. Let us not be known for our charitable deeds nearly as much as we are known for the power of Your love, and the depths of our love for You.

Shift the emphasis of our attention away from us as recipients, and toward You being the Lord and Master whom we serve. Prove to this world that our motives are not from the flesh, but are simply out of a desire to please You with our loving service.

Let it once again be known that there are men of God and women of God... servants who deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow You.

In Christ Jesus name we pray... AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Thirteen: Prove We Follow the Truth

And (let it be known) that I have done all these things at Thy word... 1 Kings 18:36d

Christ taught us to use the Word to overcome the devil. Whenever the enemy comes near to us, we can quote the Scripture in rebuttal and command him to leave. Essentially, we can tell the devil, "God said it, and if you have a problem with it you need to take it up with Him." Satan may be the father of lies, but he knows enough of the truth to be forcibly bound by it. Can you fathom that? The very truth that sets us free binds our adversary!

Nevertheless, telling the world to "take it up with God" is not the best way to advance the Kingdom. Too many people have abused faith telling the church world, the secular world and society as a whole "if you have a problem with the Bible, take it up with God." How many wayward evangelists have told their followers, "what I'm telling you is directly from God," and refused any form of accountability on earth as a result? Jamestown may have been the extreme, yet the phrase "drinking the Kool-Aid" is now a universal term for brain washing.

This is why the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:20, "for the Kingdom of God is not in words, but in power." He was dealing with an individual in Corinth who believed to have superior truth and revelation. Because Paul was enduring so much hardship, the church at Corinth was beginning to believe the fallacies being promoted by this seemingly enlightened individual. Paul contended with (and for) the Corinthians, stating how God was demonstrating His power through Paul's ministry...not how compelling his words had been (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Overall, Paul argued with the Corinthian elitists that the philosophy (wisdom) and the manifestation (signs) were both meaningless if used to promote the teachings of men. Wisdom and signs...philosophy and manifestation...can only be truly relevant when they are confirming the message of the cross of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:22-25).

In this age of agnostic darkness, we stand out as those who not only proclaim the truth, but follow it as well. Can you imagine what it will be like when God infuses our faith with His fire, not to demonstrate "we were right...they were wrong" but to create a greater platform for the message of the cross to be preached? We are not seeking a demonstration of God's presence to alienate anyone; we are seeking His manifestation so all may know that we simply follow His word...the truth that can set everyone free.

And so we pray:

Father...Thank You for the message of the cross! Thank You for sending Your Son as the living embodiment of Your word and truth! Thank You for providing demonstrating of Your power throughout the eons to confirm Your word!

Now, even as the early church prayed in Acts 4, we ask You to "grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

It is in His holy name we pray...AMEN

FIRE FALL

Day Fourteen: Turn Our Hearts Back

“Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again” ... 1 Kings 18:37

God’s heart has always been for His people. We often turn away our hearts from Him, but the heart of the Father is always open for prodigals to return.

The prophet Malachi connected the account of Elijah’s past with the coming of Christ. He pointed both backward and forward to declare three basic concepts. First, God uses individuals to prepare a way for Christ’s presence to manifest. Second, the process of preparation is all about the heart... “turning the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the sons to the fathers.” Finally, without a reconnecting of the hearts, the curse on the land will be perpetuated. (4:5-6)

Nowhere in scripture do we find Elijah turning the generations toward each other. We find him receiving words for future generations, anointing his own successor, and raising a dead son back to life...but the only place where hearts are turned is on Mount Carmel. The working of the Spirit on top of the mountain turned the hearts of all the generations toward the heart of the Father in Heaven.

Elijah understood that the greater power was not going to be in the fire, nor in the rain that would follow. Instead, the true power was a loving Heavenly Father doing whatever it took to move the hearts of a nation...His children...back toward His heart!

Elijah didn’t call on Israel to repent on Mount Carmel. He simply asked God to turn their hearts back toward the Father as they realized there is no God but Him. Elijah’s call for the nation to follow the God who brought fire represented a call to change direction for Israel.

Repentance is not about saying “I’m sorry.” It is a 180 degree turn in the right direction. Confession in repentance is not just about admitting our sins, but even more so, it is a declaration of Whom we will follow. At its core, repentance is a work of God...turning our hearts towards His. Repentance thus becomes a lifestyle of dependence upon God’s grace to transform us as we daily choose to follow Him. Without continuing in the direction of God’s heart, we perpetuate the drought...the curses...over our people and all that they possess.

And so we pray:

Oh Father... We long for Your heart. Our hearts, and the hearts of those around us, have become overwhelmed with desires that are not from You. As a people, our passions... the drumbeat of our hearts... are constantly at odds with the desire to draw closer to You.

We confess both our need and dependence upon You, and ask You to change our hearts! Turn our hearts to You! Your heart is perpetually toward us, but our hearts have wandered so far... Please hear our cry and turn the hearts of the generations in our nation back to You!

In the name of Your Son, Jesus the Christ, who is the manifestation of Your heart toward us we pray...AMEN