

Fresh Fire: Are You Ignitable for Christ?

As we approach the momentous Nov. 5 elections, there are plenty of people who can offer a more astute political commentary than I, so I'll defer to them right now. What I can do is help ignite a fresh spiritual fire in each of us, knowing that, as we burn bright, America will be changed. Revival in the church remains the only real hope of the nation. (If you are not a follower of Jesus, you may not find the rest of this article relevant. But you're free, of course, to read on.)

The Irish missionary to India, Amy Carmichael (1867-1951), once prayed, "Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God!" Inspired by this prayer, missionary and martyr Jim Elliot (1927-1956) wrote, "God makes His ministers a flame of fire. Am I ignitable? God, deliver me from the dread asbestos of 'other things.' Saturate me with the oil of Thy Spirit that I may be a flame. Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God."

Am I ignitable? Are you? Or are we too immersed in the dread asbestos of "other things"?

Make us wholly ignitable, Lord! We want to be living torches for you.

Speaking of John the Immerser (the Baptist), Jesus said, "John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light" (John 5:35, NIV). Speaking of all of us, Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947), known as the apostle of faith, said, "Oh, if God has His way, we should be like torches, purifying the very atmosphere wherever we go, moving back the forces of wickedness." How wonderful that would be!

Yet for many of us, this seems like a completely farfetched, unattainable goal. For others still, it is not even a

desirable goal, wondering, “Isn’t that a little fanatical?”

Not at all.

Paul called us to offer our very bodies as living sacrifices on God’s altar, which means the complete, unreserved consecration of our entire lives to Him. (See Rom. 12:1—and remember that sacrifices are burned on the altar.) Paul also exhorted us with these words: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11).

The Amplified Classic Edition Bible puts it like this: “Never lag in zeal *and* in earnest endeavor; be aglow *and* burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord.” And The Message paraphrases the verse, saying, “Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame.”

God really does want us to burn—with love for Him, with love for this dying world and with a passion that sets our whole being ablaze.

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Yet this is not something we can work up in ourselves. It is only the Lord Himself who can immerse us afresh in the fire of the Spirit.

That’s why Methodist leader John Fletcher (1729-1785), known for his saintly demeanor, prayed for more oil in his lamp. (The English is antiquated, but the spirit of his words will resonate with many of you as you read.) Fletcher prayed, “Lord, I stand in need of oil. My lamp burns dimly. It is more like a smoking flax than a burning and shining light. Oh, quench it not, raise it to a flame!”

Can you relate to these words? Is that how you feel in your own life right now?

He continued:

I want a 'power from on high'; I want penetrating, lasting 'unction of the Holy One'. ... I want a lamp of heavenly illumination, and a fire of divine love burning day and night in my heart, as the typical lamps did in the temple, and the sacred fire on the altar. I want a full application of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, and a strong faith in Thy sanctifying Word—a faith by which Thou mayest dwell in my heart, as the fixed object of my love.

And then this: "I do now believe that thou canst and wilt thus baptise me with the Holy Ghost and with fire; help me against my unbelief; confirm and increase my faith. Lord I have need to be thus baptised by thee, and I am straitened [constrained] till this baptism is accomplished."

Fletcher is talking about a fresh immersion in the love and reality of God. It is something I/we must have. It is not an option if we want to burn bright for Him.

As Paul wrote to the Philippians (and by extension, to us), "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life" (Phil. 2:14–16).

The Lord really wants us to shine. He is the light inside of us!

I had the privilege of becoming a close friend of Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994) the last five years of his life. He is best known for his classic, life-impacting book "Why Revival Tarries," but I remember him most as an incredible man of prayer, a man who carried a deep, broken heart for the state of the church and shared a beautiful, intimate love with the Lord.

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He used to quote the words of old hymns to me, which I share here with you as words of prayer. Perhaps you can pray them as well?

“O that in me the sacred fire/ Might now begin to glow,

Burn up the dross of base desire/ And make the mountains flow!”

And this:

“Breathe on me, breath of God/ Till I am wholly thine,

Until this earthly part of me/Glows with Thy fire divine.”

May God ignite a fresh fire of love for Him, a fire that will burn out everything defiling and unclean, everything unworthy of Him.

May we get the fresh oil we need (see Matt. 25:1-13), choosing to spend quality time with Him and yielding our lives to His will.

And may we encounter God anew so that we become living torches for Him “purifying the very atmosphere wherever we go, moving back the forces of wickedness.”

With human effort, this is impossible. But all things are possible to the one who believes (Mark 9:23, Luke 18:26).

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