

The Spirit Told Me, 'My Baptism of Fire Was Never Meant to Stop'

There's nothing like a quick spiritual trip down memory lane where, years ago, you had an encounter with God that you tucked deep into the recesses of your heart. I have one of my own that I would like to share with you.

I sat, completely soaked with bubbling, hot water surrounding me, physically unable to get up. In actuality, I didn't want to move at all, nor did our deacons, the married couple sitting across from me. We were all sitting in a hot tub—our makeshift baptismal tank—located in the corner of the small church that I pastored.

What started out as a Sunday baptismal service ended later that day with a baptism of fire. During the baptismal, we began to immerse a heavyset man, one of us on each side of the tub to support him, when he was instantly hit by the power of God. It was like a live electrical wire was plugged into the bottom of the hot tub. My other deacon tried to pull the man up out of the water, and he got pummeled by the power of God! Into the tub he went—as “drunk” as one could get. I jumped into this little four-person hot tub to save them both, and I got struck by the power of God too.

There we were, the three of us under the heaviness of the Spirit in a hot tub on a day that was supposed to be a normal Sunday baptismal service. Other people began to feel led to be re-baptized while the fire of God was present, and by the end of the day, my wife was in the water along with other church members, as “drunk in the Holy Ghost” as you can imagine. I specifically remember one man who jumped up out of the pew in their Sunday best, kicked off his shoes and practically dove

into the tank. The Spirit of God began to move over this man, and he wept as his body was shaking under the power of God. Hours passed, and with carpet soaked and mounds of wet towels all over the church sanctuary, the Spirit of God was still dousing us with His power while we were driving home—completely amazed at what we had just experienced.

“John answered them all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water. But One mightier than I is coming, the strings of whose shoes I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire’” (Luke 3:16).

Fast forward to a few days ago:

I heard of the recent tornadoes that ripped through Alabama and Georgia, killing several on its way. (Our hearts and prayers go out to those who lost loved ones in those storms.) I have pastor friends in both states, so I texted some of them. My good friend, evangelist Johnny Taylor, responded, and this is how our conversation went:

My text: Johnny. You OK? Tornadoes in GA?

Johnny’s Text: Just left speaking and awesome service. Was in baptismal pool until 5:20 am this morning ...

It was about 6 a.m. when we were texting back and forth. The Spirit of God was dealing with me as I looked at Johnny’s text, recalling 20 years ago when I was in a baptism tank under the glory of God, unable to get up. At the moment God’s Spirit whispered to me, “My baptism of fire was *never* supposed to stop!”

Johnny had been speaking at the North Georgia Revival when this happened and, according to the pastor, this water baptism outpouring began in the beginning of 2018 through a 21-day fast. This pastor had been praying and walking through the sanctuary when he saw an open vision of fire burning on the water of the baptism tank, like gasoline on top of water. At

that moment, God spoke to him saying, "I'm going to baptize people with Holy Spirit fire." The fire came into the church building, and two and a half months later, they started spontaneous baptism. At the time of writing this article, they have baptized over 5,000 people, along with several documented cases of healing.

As I was on the phone with this pastor, he shared story after story of divine healings that had just been reported to him over the past several weeks. This is how it is supposed to be. The fire was never supposed to stop! This baptism of fire is supposed to be a normal walk of life for every Christian believer.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

This word power is from the word "*dunamis*," which is where we get the word "dynamite." Dynamite is designed to blast away heavy rock in order to unearth large sections of mountain or ground. Dynamite, however, isn't what Jesus was intending here. He wasn't referring to you receiving "dynamite power" when the Spirit comes upon you. Instead, He was referring to you receiving "locomotive power" when His Spirit rests on you. This is an ever-increasing, consistently growing, Spirit of the living God who transforms us from the inside out. It is this locomotive power, an enduring spiritual strength that starts out slow and consistently matures and grows in the supernatural to transform someone forever. It's not a dynamite type of blast that leaves a crater in the ground, just a memory or feel-good moment of our past. No. His fire is supposed to increase in power so the next generation can experience it themselves.

God never called us to live spiritually dry lives. He never asked His church to go through extended seasons of spiritual dehydration. He is longing for the days of fire to rest upon

His people. He is whispering sounds of refreshing all over the earth right now. God is calling His remnant forward, never to turn back. He is leading people into fresh baptisms of fire. Once touched by these flames, you will never want to go back! {eoa}

Andy Sanders *has been speaking for 25 years. He has traveled extensively around the U.S. and other parts of the world. He is a prolific writer who carries both a prophetic and leadership-type message to the church. Sanders has a B.A. from Central Bible College and a master's and doctorate in Christian education from Freedom Seminary, graduating with honors. He is married to Cathy, and their family resides in Syracuse, New York.*