

Spirit-Filled Pastor: The Desperate Need for Holy Fire

I recently spoke in El Paso, Texas, at a large Hispanic church called Vino Nuevo. You can watch the message here with translation.

I appreciated the heart of the pastors I had the privilege of meeting. Their eagerness and desire for revival reminded me of the church where I pastor in Southern California, Westside Christian Fellowship.

Terrifying or Welcoming

My topic that evening was “Are You Desperate for God’s Presence?” As most are aware, God’s presence is terrifying for those facing judgment, but His presence is very welcoming, comforting, strengthening and encouraging in the life of a believer.

Throughout Scripture, the word “fire” is used two different ways—the fires of judgment or the fires of the Spirit. Malachi 4:1-3 is a passage where both are happening: The same fire that falls on that day purifies, refines and is “healing” for the righteous, but yet the wicked are turned to ashes under their feet.

Isaiah 66:16 says that the “Lord will execute judgment by fire,” while Matthew 3:11 says that Jesus will baptize believers with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

What fire will you experience? Are you playing games with God and just going through the motions? Are you like the prodigal, satisfied temporarily eating with the pigs, or is it time for you to change your direction and run to the Father?

Do you have religion but not a relationship with the risen

Savior? Have you surrendered your life to Christ and repented of sin that leads to judgment?

What a travesty it will be at the end of your journey to find that pride robbed you of the presence of God. Don't live your life with a question mark here.

The Desperate Need for Holy Fire

I've been saying for years that America's only hope, our only answer, is to be desperate for more of God and pray that He would fill us with His holy fire. We must cry out like the prophet Isaiah, "Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before You" (64:1, NIV).

Oh, that the nations would tremble again at the power of God. Oh, that Washington, D.C. would tremble again and fear Him. Oh, that the churches would once again tremble and desire the power and presence of God.

When you genuinely experience God's presence through full surrender, the demonic realm is crushed, and countless lives are changed.

It All Begins with Desperation

When God rips heaven open and comes down, His presence changes everything. The Bible comes alive, and we can't stop worshipping. Hearts are set ablaze for more of God. It all begins with desperation! Desperation! Desperation!

Jeremiah 29:13 reminds us that desperation ushers in the presence of God, and that if we seek God, we will find Him when we search for Him with all of our heart. Jesus also speaks about the power of *seeking* and *asking* in Matthew 7:7 when He say, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

A desperate parent does whatever it takes to find a lost

child. A desperate soldier does whatever it takes to win the battle. A desperate person does whatever it takes to find God.

Are you desperate for more of God? Are you hungry for righteousness and holiness? Is God an all-consuming passion? It all begins here. There must be desperation.

When the Fire Fades

Over time, if we're not diligent and disciplined, the fire of God fades. Maybe that describes you. Maybe you've lost your passion for God and left your first love. Or maybe you've never experienced God before.

When we're told to seek God, it's not half-heartedly. We also can't be passive or apathetic. Seeking is an all-consuming passion to find something. An illustration that I've given many times before is that of a child who is lost. If it was your child, would you search for them half-heartedly? Would you search for them later when your schedule permits? Of course not. *Desperate people do desperate things.* Finding what is lost is now their sole priority.

God, Would You Rend My Heart?

Those who are desperate for God starve the flesh by praying and fasting. They fully surrender their lives to Christ. They stop playing games with God. They pray fervently that God would rend the heavens and come down. God is not many things on their agenda; He is the agenda. God is not one of many priorities; He is the priority!

I ask again, are you truly desperate for God's presence? Are you hungry for more of Him? As David MacIntyre points out in his book, *The Hidden Life of Prayer*, when the prodigal son was hungry, he ate with the pigs, but when he was desperate and starving, he ran to his father.

Is your fire fading? Have you grown cold and callous? Then run

to God and cry: “Oh God, would You rend my heart?” Return to the Father and experience the tremendous joy of revival. And when you lay hold of Him, never, never, never let go! He hears the desperate cries of His children.

Are you truly desperate for more of His presence? Listen to more here. {eoa}

Shane Idleman *is the founder and lead pastor of Westside Christian Fellowship in Southern California. More can be found at and free downloads of his books are available at . Visit him on Facebook and subscribe to his podcast.*

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.