

1. We began a series of messages last week taken from the book of 2 Timothy chapter 1. Turn there with me if you will.
2. The title of this series is... **Fan the Flame/Feed the Fire.**
3. Let's get everybody up to speed.
4. Timothy and Paul, who are like spiritual son and father to each other have been separated because Paul is in prison, and Timothy has been sent out to do ministry.
5. So, Paul writes a letter to young Timothy, and in chapter 1 Paul seeks to encourage Timothy, and lift him up.
6. In chapter 1 verse 5, Paul reminds Timothy of the sincere faith that has been passed on to him through the influence of Timothy's grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice.
7. Then in verse 6, which by the way is where the focus of this series will be, Paul reminds Timothy to "fan into flame" the gift of God which is in Timothy.
8. And then in verse 7, Paul reminds Timothy that the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid or afraid, but instead gives us power, love, and self-discipline. Or as some translations state it. A sound mind.
9. So, what we find, as it relates to Timothy, and as a result our lives, is that Our victory in the Lord is made possible by our cooperation with who the Lord is and what the Lord does.
10. And in this case the cooperation is to fan into flame the gift inside us.
11. Last week we focused on two truths about the reminder to fan into flame the spiritual intensity in our relationship with the Lord.
12. **Flames burn with different intensities.**
13. Paul's reminder would indicate that even though the fire of his spiritual walk had died down (probably as a result of the loneliness and hardship he was facing) there were still some burning coals that were hot.
14. Paul does not scold Timothy that there is no flame, only coals. Why? Because none of us can be on fire for the Lord all the time.
15. Sometimes our faith in the Lord is red hot, and sometimes not so much. That is ok.

16. Not only is it ok, but it is the reality of our lives that we can't change. Life is full of ups and down, and those ups and downs affect our spiritual intensity on a regular basis.
17. When I am sick, laying on the couch about to die, I can assure you I am not laying there thinking wonderful spiritual thoughts about how I could build the kingdom of God. Maybe you do, but I don't.
18. I do pray, but normally my prayers are focused on the Lord delivering me from this illness that is affecting every part of my life. Mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.
19. To act as if we don't have ups and downs not only in our life but in our spiritual walk is to be fake and phony. And fanning the flame of the gift of our faith is anything but that.
20. The second aspect of fanning the flame is in understanding that **fanning the flame is not passive, it is active.**
21. To fan is an action word.
22. Yes, our faith can feel like a roller coaster ride at times, but that doesn't mean we are powerless to do anything but be tossed around like a rag doll.
23. I do not believe it is God's desire to produce in us or encourage in us passive Christianity. No command or promise of God in the bible or otherwise has as its purpose for us to do nothing.
24. Even if what God promises us is completely and entirely outside of our ability to make happen. Meaning, in order for it to take place it will require the work of a supernatural God doing miracles on our behalf. God still doesn't expect us to do nothing with it.
25. At the very least he expects us to believe what he has promised. Believing is not passive it is active.
26. So, the flame of our faith varies in intensity, but we have a part to play in rekindling that flame.
27. Now, let's move on to two more aspects of this flame, or spiritual intensity.

TEXT: **2 Timothy 1:5-7 2 Timothy 1:5-7** I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. **6** For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through

the laying on of my hands. 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

TITLE: Not fire.

INTRO:

1. Now, in just a moment I am going to share with you the two main points of today's message.
2. But before I do, I want to warn you. When you hear them, you are probably going to feel the urge to roll your eyes and think, I already knew that. I could get up there and preach this message.
3. And you would be right. You most certainly could get up here and do better than me, and you already know what I am about to say.
4. But like Paul in the verses I just read to you, I think all of us need a reminder from time to time.
5. We need to be reminded of the truth because the truth helps put our lives back into perspective.
6. So here is the eye-rolling truth today.
 - We are not the fire.
 - We are not the fuel.
7. As it relates to our spiritual intensity. As it relates to the vibrancy of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is imperative that we know who is who, and what is what.
8. Or in this case who is not and what is not.
9. We are not the fire, nor are we the fuel that feeds the fire.

We are not the fire.

1. 2 Timothy 1:6-7 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For the Spirit God gave us...
2. Again, notice with me that Paul did not remind Timothy to become something. He reminded Timothy to do something.
3. Paul did not tell him to become the flame, he told him to fan the flame.
4. As it relates to our spiritual intensity, we are not the flame.
5. In the bible we are called lots of things.
6. We are called Christians.
7. We are called children.

8. We are called sons and daughters.
9. We are called the temple of the Holy Spirit.
10. We are called a royal priesthood.
11. We are called salt. And we are called light.
12. In the New Testament alone there are over 175 names, descriptive titles, and figures of speech referring to us as believers.
13. But in no place, at least not as far as I can find, there is not one instance where we as believers are called fire.
14. Fire is almost exclusively a word used to describe who God is, not who we are.
15. Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.
16. Deuteronomy 9:3 But be assured today that the LORD your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the LORD has promised you.
17. God is the fire; we are not the fire. We are not the heat. We are not the flame. We are not the thing that consumes. We are not the thing that burns. God is every one of those things.
18. And in just a moment I will reveal why that matters.
19. The second thing about this reminder to Timothy to fan the flame is this...

We are not the fuel.

1. Again, notice with me that Paul did not remind Timothy to become something. He reminded Timothy to do something.
2. 2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
3. There are several types of things that can fuel a fire.
4. The one fuel that all fires have in common is oxygen. Without oxygen all fires will die.
5. This action of fanning the flame would have introduced more oxygen to the fire which would have caused it to flame up or burn stronger.
6. But Timothy was not the oxygen. He did not create the oxygen. He did not bring the oxygen. He simply assisted in getting oxygen to the fire.

7. Beyond oxygen we could list many, many things that can be burned. In fact, nearly everything is flammable in one way or another.
8. But Timothy was not to become wood, coal, gas, or kerosene. There was not something about him, spiritually or physically, that would allow him to make the fire burn brighter and hotter.
9. I believe that is vitally important for us because it is a reminder that, all of us can have the fire of God burning in our lives.
10. The love of God. The power of God. The touch of God, is not reserved for a select few individuals that have it all together and that catch God's eye. The fire. The intensity. The passion is something that is available to all of us.
11. Not because of who we are but because of who He is.
12. You see if we are the fire of the fuel.
13. Or, if we try to become the fire of the fuel.
14. Or, if we mistakenly believe we are the fire or the fuel, then all the weight and responsibility lands on us.
15. We have to burn. We have to be this or that or some other thing so that the passion and the intensity goes on.
16. But if God is the fire, and if what God gives us is the fuel, then the weight to carry it all and make it all happen is on God and not on us.
17. If as John the Baptist says in **John 3:30** He must become greater; I must become less."
18. Is true, then while it is true that any cooperation, any work, any participation on our part will drain us, it also gives us the hope that we don't have to burn out.
19. Because we are not the fire and we are not the fuel anyway. God is. So as long as God is the fire and the fuel, though the things of this world affect us, the things of this world cannot destroy us.
20. If God is the fire and the fuel, then Jesus saying in the book of John becomes a reality.
21. **John 16:33** "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Conclusion:

1. As we close this morning, I want to point out a literal illustration of what this kind of lifestyle looks like.
2. A lifestyle in which yes, I cooperate with the Lord, but He is the flame and He is the fuel.
3. In the book of Genesis, God made multiple promises to a man by the name of Abraham.
4. Those promises included...
 - Making Abraham into a great nation.
 - That Abraham would be blessed.
 - That Abraham's name would be great.
 - That God would bless those who blessed him, and curse those who cursed him.
 - And finally, that all peoples on earth would be blessed through Abraham.
5. But on one occasion, God did more than just promise Abraham these things. He made a covenant with Abraham that he would do these things.
6. A covenant was more powerful and more intimate than a promise.
7. A covenant was an agreement that brings about relationship. Which is exactly what God wanted with Abraham, and us for that matter.
8. God is not interested in being our vending machine where we go to get things when we need them. His desire from the very beginning has been relationship.
9. And so, to seal the covenant, God engaged with Abraham in an ancient tradition. Obviously, God didn't need the tradition, but Abraham sure would.
10. **Genesis 15:9-10** So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other;
11. In the ancient tradition of the day, when two people entered into a covenant, they would cut and separate the two halves of the animal.
12. Then, one by one, the two parties would engage in a covenant walk where they would pass between the two halves of the animal.

13. By walking through the two halves, they were declaring to the other.
14. "May this be my fate if I don't live up to the covenant, if I don't honor the covenant, if I'm not faithful." May what I have be cut into pieces and taken from me.
15. It also meant. I will agree to this covenant to my death.
16. May I be killed and split in two if I ever break my promise.
17. Obviously, this was a series situation.
18. But in this instance, in the covenant between God and Abraham, God did something not so normal.
19. Abraham arranges the halves of the animals, but it is a while before God speaks to him again.
20. In the meantime, Abraham falls into a deep sleep. And while he is sleeping God does something to show exactly who holds the most responsibility in the relationship.
21. And would you believe it. God uses fire to illustrate his point.
22. Genesis 15:17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.
23. So, this smoke and fire, which by the way represents God, passes between the two halves.
24. But in the dream, Abraham does not pass between the two halves of the animals. Only God.
25. And the significance of that was immense.
26. Because only God passed between the two halves of the animals, he was saying to Abraham. Understand something Abraham.
27. You're not going to pass through, because you can't make anything happen.
28. In fact, in this covenant Abraham, you haven't even promised anything.
29. God says, I am the one who has made the promise and I am the only one who can make the promise become a reality.
30. And that my friend is the essence of our relationship with the Lord. We are not the fire and we are not the fuel because we don't have anything to offer. All we have to offer the Lord is our unrighteousness. All we have to offer the Lord is our sin.

31. And because of that, we aren't the ones who can make this relationship with the Lord passionate and intense.
32. Yes, we have to cooperate with the Lord, but God is the source.
33. There can only be passion and intensity and life and hope in our walk with the Lord because of who God is. Not because of who we are.
34. And when we understand that and live that kind of life, a life of victory not only seems possible, but it is probable.
35. You see, when you and I act like we are the flame and the fuel, every thing, every person, every circumstance can throw a bucket of water on our fire, and put us completely out.
36. When we pretend to be the flame and the fuel, we are at the mercy of whatever and whoever the enemy throws at us.
37. But when the Lord Jesus Christ is our flame and our fuel, our enemy has to contend with Jesus.
22. When the Lord Jesus Christ is our flame and our fuel, then Jesus' victory becomes our victory. **John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."**
38. One of the greatest things to strengthen our relationship with the Lord is when we humble ourselves and we put Him in his proper place.
39. Have everyone close in with Jesus. Begin to talk to Jesus as you would a trusted friend.
40. Admit to him. Jesus, I am nothing, but you are everything.
41. I am weak, but you are strong.
42. I know nothing, but you know everything.
43. Surrender to His Lordship in your life.
44. Surrender to His direction in your life.
45. Surrender everything you have to him.
46. Salvation call.
47. Closing prayer.