



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: OCTOBER 2022

by Lee Shipp

THE BURNING HEART AND THE GOD OF FIRE

History has recorded the power of those who were living sacrifices, who gave God their worship, and God gave them His fire. They were persecuted and threatened. They held prayer meetings and attended. They prayed for the courage to continue to preach and then preached. God worked with them. He was there. The Spirit of God demonstrated the truth of their gospel with miracles. The world did not love them, but God did! Persecuted and suffering, they continued to worship the Lord as living sacrifices. The only explanation for such people was that they were Spirit-filled; their hearts burned by the God of fire.

This burning heart continued until some theological smart man came along and suggested that their representation of Jesus should be calmer. They need not present themselves to Jesus with such zeal. Instead, they suggested a way to live that would be more acceptable to the world, a Christian lifestyle that was non-offensive to the world. They removed these believers from the altar of fire. They removed the passion. Tired of suffering and rejection, this new brand of disciple wanted the world to know they were friends; they had come to help.

They changed their worship from that which honored God to that which was non-offensive to the world. They exchanged the fire of God for the approval of the world. The Holy Spirit was sent to the corner lest He embarrass them. But with Him went the miracles, the love, the glory, and the power.

The key to worship is not worship. There is not a lack of worship today. Worship is possibly the most popular thing in the world. Worship is everywhere. Worship music is trendy even among secular superstars. I do not demean modern worship or the incredible worship leaders writing beautiful songs to Jesus. Remember that Saul, filled with demons, desired the rest he got from David's worship. My point is this – there is not a lack of worship, but a lack of appropriate worship.

Romans 1 calls for God's worship, which explodes with people glorifying and thanking Him. Worship that magnifies God as uncorruptible and holy, loves His truth, that loves to think and speak about God all the time. This is worship – to love God. It is not to look for the way out, the easy path, but the path of sacrifice and love.

God wants us to be alive to Him, not dead. He wants our lives to count. God wants to baptize us in the Holy Ghost and fire. I have witnessed people who once walked in and benefitted from the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire reject this gift later. They were not rejecting a doctrine. They were rejecting the person of

the Holy Spirit. They were rejecting Jesus' baptism. Immediately their lives changed. The fire went out in their anointing. They were calloused and hardened – lazy in their zeal for the Lord. Numbers would approach me, asking, "What happened to them? Something terrible has occurred."

You cannot offend the Holy Spirit and continue to live as usual. Once you have tasted this gift and walked in the power of this gift, you cannot simply say you no longer believe and think there will be no consequences. Things will drastically change for the worst in your life. You will lose your worship. You are not rejecting an event. You are not rejecting a doctrine. You are rejecting the person of the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ.

Without the Holy Spirit, you cannot worship God; without worship, you cannot recover the culture. The Father is looking for those worshipping Him in Spirit and Truth. Beloved, let your heart burn with the fire of the Spirit.

BELIEVERS NEED TO BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Why did the Church see the necessity to send Peter to Samaria? So they would be able to receive the Holy Spirit after they were already baptized in Jesus. Here is how it all started, according to Acts 8. Philip preached Christ to Samaria, and the people responded. Great miracles occurred. Demons were cast out of people, the lame were healed, those with paralysis were healed, and the city was filled with great joy.

They believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ and were baptized (Acts 8:12).

“WHAT GOOD ARE OUR BODIES, GIVEN TO GOD IN WORSHIP, IF THEY HAVE NO POWER?”

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard about the revival, they sent Peter and John so the believers in Samaria would receive the Holy Ghost: for He had not fallen on any of them, they were only baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. When Peter and John arrived at Samaria, they found the city and the believers in the state of salvation as it had been told to them; therefore, laying their hands on the people, they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17).

The point of this story: people who put their faith in Jesus need to have the Holy Spirit fall on them; they must be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Faith is not academic; it is supernatural. To live a life worthy of God then, that life must be filled with and led by the Holy Ghost. Jesus promised His followers that He would baptize them in the Holy Ghost and fire. This and nothing less is true worship. This is the presentation of our bodies to God as living sacrifices. Apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, how can we ever magnify the Lord as He deserves?

THE ANSWER TO THE CULTURE

If the collapse of the culture is due to believers failing to worship (Romans 1), then the deliverance of the culture is to worship God. Often, many think worship is music, notably slower-style songs. This is false. Romans 12 clearly shows that our true worship is to present our bodies as living sacrifices. God will receive this worship and manifest His power through these earthen vessels

to recover what is His. This power is demonstrated through His gospel.

Men do not send you into the harvest. Denominations do not send you into the harvest. The Lord of the harvest sends you into the harvest. Even if the harvest rots, the Lord of the harvest will only send those who are filled with His precious Holy Spirit. *"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).*

Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest. Though laborers are few, the prayer is not for increasing laborers. The prayer is that the Lord would send the few forth!

Why would the Lord not send them? For what reason would He not let them go? Without controversy, Jesus made it clear to His disciples that they were not to go forth into the world until they were endued with power (Acts 1). How could they go into a hostile world full of devils and ruthless men and effectively worship God without the power of the Holy Ghost? Jesus knew that without the Holy Spirit, His disciples would never be able to worship God in the culture.

The tragedy of the Church at the end of days is that men are content with a form of godliness. What good are our bodies, given to God in worship, if they have no power? Men are not filled with the power of God. Men who are not filled with the power of God have not the ability to worship. How can they bear God's excellent presence without the power of God? How can they walk with God apart from the Holy Spirit's power? That is why God is not sending forth some of the labor. That is the reason many do not know their calling and election. That is why many do not move in the gifts – they have no power. If they have no ability, they have no worship.

God wants our lives to worship Him. It is the Spirit-filled life that magnifies the Lord: a life of ability and power, a life that is alive and sacrificed for the cause of Christ. That is what you had in the upper room when Pentecost came. One-hundred-twenty believers presenting their bodies to God and waiting for the Holy Ghost to give them power. The Spirit came, gave them power, and they went forth and turned the world upside down.

Was this the pattern? Did this continue beyond these eleven apostles? Yes! Paul claims to have received the same anointing as did the believers in Samaria. Furthermore, Paul declared that he had the ability to preach the gospel with power; he claimed that he had a "full gospel." This means that the gospel Paul preached included mighty demonstrations of the Holy Spirit. *"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).*

The term "Full Gospel" is that gospel that is preached and demonstrated through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God. The life in the Spirit of God is the highest worship. Furthermore, the baptism of Jesus is promised to all who would believe on Jesus, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath" (Acts 2:17-19).*

DOES GOD NEED THE CHURCH TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WORK?

A question must be asked and settled. Does God need people to accomplish His work? According to the scriptures, the answer is yes! In 1 Corinthians 12, the Holy Spirit makes it very clear that for the body to be whole ... all must function in their gift.

1 Corinthians 12 declares that the body is one. The body is composed of many parts; all the parts make ONE BODY. This is the body of Christ, the Church. Now the Holy Spirit has placed a variety of gifts within the members of His body; there are different administrations; there are different operations and different manifestations of the Spirit, but all these functions are the result of the same Holy Spirit working in every man differently as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:4-12).

Does God need you to fulfill His will in the body? Absolutely. How can you deny this need for worship if you are a part of the whole, and the whole needs what the Holy Spirit desires to work through you? *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Corinthians 12:7).* Without you functioning in the Holy Spirit, the rest of the body cannot profit. We need what you have. Therefore, present your body as a living sacrifice to the Holy Spirit. Through you, let Him have His perfect work done. That is worship. Tragically, most of the Pentecostal world is not Spirit-filled. They had an experience, but they have no worship. They can speak in tongues, but they have no power. I don't care how your hand shakes when you pray; I don't care how you cry when you pray, I don't care how you preach, I don't care how you go to Church and read your bibles, I don't care how you are no longer "worldly" – I want to know how you love your enemies! I want to know how you are laying your life down for those who abuse you.

Worship is not seen in what you don't do – that is "Phariseeism" ... I want to know what you do. Do you have the power? Worship is life! Life is the New Covenant anointing. Do you have the ability that makes cities happy? Do you have the power to set people free from their bondage? Are you set free from your own bondages?

Two thousand years ago, a small group of unlearned men and women came out of an obscure room filled with the Holy Spirit. They turned the world upside down. That is worship. They had burning hearts. They demonstrated a powerful love for God and others. Their shadow fell on the sick and demon-possessed, and they were set free. They spoke to kings. They defied governments. They raised the dead.

Today, our world needs these kinds of believers. The Holy Spirit needs these kinds of believers. Our songs do not matter if we are not worshipping God. Our preaching does not matter if we are not worshipping God. The demonic confusion of our day will not be corrected by polite talk. The raging fury that drives masses of people to burn down cities will not be quenched by apologetics. If preaching were the answer, America would have never turned as dark as it is. Worship is missing. That means fewer believers are presenting their bodies to God as living sacrifices. Beloved, restore God's worship, and you will see the change you have been praying for. You are not waiting on God to move; He is waiting on your worship.