

“Where has the Fire Gone?”

Written September of 2009

Scripture Reading: John 14:10-16

***Opening Song:** “Motions” by Matthew West <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHUppFNjy5E>

Introduction

The Message I bring for you today is not only for our Youth and those who are visiting; but mainly for those who form the “Body of Christ”. Before we enter into the message this morning and begin with an opening prayer; I want to make sure that everyone understands what the title means, so that by the end of today’s service we can ALL answer and reflect upon the question the title of this message is asking each and every one of us: *“Where has the Fire Gone?”*

Now, I am not talking about the recent fires in California, nor am I quoting Smokey the Bear (*“Only you can prevent forest fires”*); because I am not talking about forest fires, my dear Brothers and Sisters.

What I am referring to is: when was the last time you witnessed a miraculous healing, someone casting a demon out, someone prophesying? Or on a simpler level when was the last time you had a Holy Ghost Party? When was the last time you had the Holy Spirit come over you in such a way that it brought tears to your eyes? When was the last time you couldn’t wait to get to church, so you showed up at 8AM? When was the last time you couldn’t wait for the weekend service, and you came to a Tuesday or Wednesday night service to get filled by the Holy Spirit?

My dear Brother’s and Sister’s are we just going through the motions of “Christianity”?

Today’s message with the help of the Holy Spirit will bring answers to these questions if we dare to open our minds, hearts, and spirit to hear God’s words; not who is speaking to you today, but His Words through this humble sinner that stands before you today; that is being used as God’s mouthpiece & His instrument. Let us pray and invite the Holy Spirit to be here before we begin.

Sermon

We are going to start off today’s message with a visual illustration; but for that I will need the help of a volunteer, a young person, to please assist me...

Illustration:

I am going to give you this envelope which contains a card in it. This isn’t a magic trick or something like that. But this is definitely not an ordinary card, this is a **Power Card** and whoever carries it has Power that is out of this World. Let me give you some examples of the POWER I am talking about:

- With this power you can see the future.
- With this power you can walk on water.
- With this power you can heal the sick and raise the dead.
- With this power you can understand any language ever spoken.
- With this power you can break through the strongest of chains.
- With this power you will never go hungry again.
- With this power you can communicate with a different dimension.
- With this power anything that you need will be given to you.

I could go on and on with this list for hours, but these are just a few examples of the awesome Power that I am going to open your eyes to. There is something written on the card inside this envelope which is the secret to all this Power I have been talking about. There **are two words written on this card, that unlock this out this world Power**; and any of us sitting here right now at this moment can have this power. The only thing is you have to understand the two words written on the card, don't worry they are written in English, this isn't some kind of trick, this is very real my dear Brother's and Sister's.

Volunteer can you please open the envelope and read the card....and it says **“Holy Spirit”!!!** Brother's and Sister's, the power doesn't come from the card itself but from the Holy Spirit; it is a Power that each and every one is given (*or receives*) when we are Born Again. Thank you to my volunteer.

In our Scripture reading found in **John 14:10-16, verse 12** tells us:

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.” NLT

This Verse is telling us that we can perform the same Miracles that Jesus did and much more, in the name of Jesus, through the Power of the Holy Spirit. Brethren we sometimes forget that the Miracle's that Jesus performed while He was here on Earth were not because He used His Divinity. Every single Miracle Jesus performed was because He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and through the communion (*connection*) He had with the Father.

This is the reason why He carried out that important part of baptism as an example to us, so that we could understand the Power that comes from being Baptized of the Holy Spirit. Christ told Nicodemus in **John 3:3, 5** ***“You must be Born Again; of water and of the Spirit”***. It was only through the Power of the Holy Spirit that He did everything that we listed in the illustration earlier and much more.

It's a two part equation; it is these two acts which lead us into the New Birth in the Spirit, but most self-proclaimed **“Christians”** only focus on the first part, receiving the Free Gift of Redemption (*which the water represents*) and never bother to submit to the second part, the Conversion Power of the Holy Spirit (*which the Baptism of the Spirit creates & provides*).

When Jesus ascended to the Kingdom of God (*Glory*), His Disciples were all worried. What were they going to do, who was going to Teach them, Instruct them, Guide them and reveal to them the Will of God? **But Jesus told them that He would send the Comforter (*The Holy Spirit*) who would take His place and Teach them, Instruct them, Guide them and reveal to them the Will of God.** Let us read **John 14:16** again.

This was important because when Jesus died on the Cross, He not only sacrificed **His Body** (*in the Physical Dimension*) for all of us to see, but He also sacrificed **His Omni-presence** (*in the Spiritual Dimension*) for the entire Universe to see...**But to see what?** Simple my dear Brother's and Sister's **“TO SEE”** God's infinite Love for us, that He gave His only Son; and to see the result of satan's rebellion (*Sin*).

Jesus Sacrificed His ability to be at all places at once, so it was necessary for Him to ascend back to the Father and leave the Holy Spirit which **IS** Omnipresent (*all places at once*) to be here in His place. It is through the Holy Spirit that the Saving Blood of Christ can be carried to the entire World. The Spirit of God is here right now, at this moment, it is speaking to a large part of you, trying to minister to you, are you willing to open your Heart, Mind and spirit to receive His Admonition.

Jesus Christ left the Holy Spirit as the means that we could tap into the Supernatural Power of God. The Holy Spirit is how we can see, hear, touch, smell and taste God in our lives (*but that's a whole different sermon*). **The Gospel of the Kingdom that Christ proclaimed wasn't only to preach the Redemption for sins, but to Proclaim the Glory of God by the works which would be made manifest by becoming One In Christ and One with the Spirit.** Mark 16:15-18 illustrates that for us when Jesus reaffirms our Mission.

15 "And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.

16 Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

17 These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages.

18 They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed." NLT

All throughout the Gospels Christ shows us the Power of the Holy Spirit through exercising the "Gifts of the Spirit"; the Gospels are full of examples of the Power we can have through the Holy Spirit. My goodness just look at the book of **Acts**. The shadow of **Peter** had such an anointed power that it could heal the sick, the lame and all other kinds of ailments. Peter brought Dorcas back from the dead. **Paul** casted out demons left and right, healed and also brought people back from the dead.

These are examples of men just like you and I, who wrought Powerful and Mighty Miracles in the Name, who is above all names, "Christ Jesus". The name of Jesus has Authority my dear brethren; there is POWER in the name of JESUS. Christ wants us not only to go Preach the Gospel, He wants us to Truly live the Gospel of the Kingdom. He wants us to stand in the Authority HIS BLOOD has given us, He wants us to stand with our heads up high, knowing that the Power of God dwells in us and works through us by the Holy Spirit, because we are Children of the Most High God (*Jehovah*). This is what Christ intended for His True Church; that we could bask in the Glory of God. And glorify His name by producing True Fruits of the Spirit.

Where has the Power of The Holy Spirit Gone in our Churches?

Where Has the Fire Gone that the early Christian Church started off with?

Where???????

Beloved, I ask you now have we substituted: Denominational Faith, Religious Faith, Doctrinal Faith, for the Faith of Jesus? Why don't we hear of healing miracles, of the casting out of demons, of people speaking a Prophetic Word, Words of Knowledge, Discernment of spirits? WHY???

Paul tells of the **Gifts of the Spirit** in **I Corinthians Chapter 12**; why don't we teach of these powerful Spiritual Weapons Paul talks about. We don't speak of these things because somehow/someway in our religious culture these things have become taboo. **We are afraid of what we don't understand; and it is that lack of understanding, it is that lack of knowing who the Holy Spirit is that has led us to start losing the Spiritual Battle on certain fronts (battlefields), mainly our Youth. Paul tells us in: Ephesians 6:12**

“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” NLT

Yet we are not equipping ourselves, new believers and our Youth with these Spiritual Weapons. We don't speak of the Holy Spirit, we don't teach of the Holy Spirit, and sadly most professed “Christians” DO NOT live their life out of the Power of the Holy Spirit.

*****Members of the Body of Christ if you have ears listen, if you have eyes, see and perceive; we need to STOP sending our Youth naked and unarmed unto the Battlefield of Life. Thus, Saith the Lord...**

Come on Brethren wake-up and look at the statistics of our own denomination. They are heartbreaking and startling. I was one of those statistics that left the Church and danced with Satan for (11) years; smoking, drinking, getting high, doing hard core drugs, nightclubs, you name it, I have battled with those demons. But brethren, not all of us make it back from the gates of hell. **Not everyone can trade that “high” the world offers, for the “High the Spirit of the Lord” offers.** I believe many Youths are leaving our churches in large part because the Holy Spirit is absent inside our Church dynamic and structure. I praise God that His Mercy and Grace was poured over me and that for (4) years (from August 2005 to) now I have been making up for LOST time and faithfully serving the Lord. Beloved when are we going to wake-up and see what is right in front of our eyes.

Where have our Young people gone in our Churches, why aren't most of our Youth, who are the Future of the Church, on Fire with the Holy Spirit? Why aren't most of them burning and yearning to do the work of the Lord?

I will tell you one of the reasons why. **We have not shown them how to have a REAL RELATIONSHIP with Christ; we have shown them how to have a RELIGION with Christ.** So, the first opportunity they get (normally when they turn 18) they fly out of that cage (religion) and like a wild bird they go see and experiment what this new found World has to offer. **Why can't we see what is right in front of our eyes, Brethren??**

We have to first help them to change their inside before we can change their outside. We are so focused on changing their outside appearance (how they dress and how they look, what foods they eat, who their friends are) so that they can fit into our religious ideals and manuals; but we have completely lost focus of their inside (their heart); being Born Again!

We have forgotten that Jesus said, **“Come As You Are”**. Come with all your hang-ups and burdens, with all your bad habits, with your weaknesses, come all those who are heavy laden and rest in Christ. We have forgotten that Jesus looks at the Heart. It is our job Brethren, it is our mandate Members of the Body of Christ, to plant the Seed of Christ, and let the Holy Spirit water it and cause it to grow in its due season. How many times have I seen Zealous Believers kill that seed before it even has a chance to grow, all in the name of following the **“status quo”**?

“Man’s rule books (*church manuals and customs*) have started to dictate our actions instead of God’s rule book (*the Bible*) which is based on loving Him and our Brethren as the Greatest Commandments of all.”

It’s time for the Body of Christ to stop focusing so much on discipline (*which has its importance*) and focus more on Discipleship. Our focus needs to shift my dear Brother’s and Sister’s to becoming True Disciples of Christ. We need to Teach, Talk and Breathe the Holy Spirit every single second of the day. Don’t let the Holy Spirit be a stranger in your life as Jesus said in John 14:17.

We need to realize that God dwells in us through the Blood of Christ Jesus, and the Power of God is manifested in us through the Holy Spirit. (*Repeat Twice*) We Cannot and Should not separate or alienate a single part of the Deity (*the Holy Trinity Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*) in our lives. All of THEM working together give us the Supernatural Power the (4) Gospels reveal to us. But there are many who ignore the Holy Spirit...

We must teach our Youth how to have a Relationship with Christ, how to become ONE in Christ Jesus (*which is a True Christian*). **If they were to truly understand the Honor and Responsibility the name “CHRISTIAN” holds; then we wouldn’t have to be as focused on changing their outside because the “Light of Christ” will burst out of every seam of their lives.**

Where there is Light, Darkness must go, must flee and run away. All the worldly things our Youth have gotten caught up in will flee, because those demonic forces cannot handle the Glory of Christ. They will run when they hear the name of JESUS, because they understand the Authority that name has; but sadly, most of us have lost sight of that.

Isn’t amazing how so many people say they believe in God; but the interesting thing is so does satan. So many people pride themselves on knowing Scripture and certain denominational books; but sadly, satan knows the Bible better than most of us. Brethren just Believing isn’t enough, just knowing Scripture backwards and forwards isn’t enough. **We MUST live the Word of God, but in order to do that we must allow the Holy Spirit to manifest the Power of God in us. Focus more on living the Gospel, than preaching it.**

We have forgotten who we are (*we are children of the Most High God*), we have forgotten the Holy Spirit; and in doing so we have forgotten our Lord God. It’s time we start Glorifying God with the Fruits of the Spirit that we bear, as Christ told us in John 15:8, **“so that we can prove that we are His”. God’s power should flow out of every seam of our lives and Testify of Him.**

In Closing

I am reminded of a text in...**John 7:38** which tells us:
“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water” NASB

I would like to illustrate this text for you as my closing illustration for today. Back in July 2009 my Wife and I were invited to go with some good friends of ours, to a Family Retreat at a place called Camp Kulaqua. This Verse that the Gospel of John wrote about, reminded me of this place, because the highlight of Camp Kulaqua was the natural spring, in which water flowed so much out of it, that it looked like river rapids. When I was a kid we use to go there once or twice a year and my favorite part was to see the amount of water that flowed out of that spring.

The water was crystal clear, full of fish and other aquatic animals, and the sound that the flowing water made, and the speed that it traveled always amazed us. Everywhere you looked there was life, all kinds of different animals (*Birds, Raccoons, Possums*). It always looked fresh, alive and full of life.

Imagine my surprise and disappointment this past July when I told my friend of the grandeur of this spring, and when we got there it looked like an algae filled stinky lagoon. The water was so dirty you couldn't even see to the bottom. The only animals we saw were four turtles on a log, but I think if they would've had a choice they would've been somewhere else. The water was so slow it couldn't even drag away a single dead leaf. It was sickening and heartbreaking to see this river reduced to a Body of Stagnant Water, and the deafening silence was scary to experience. I left there asking what happened to the life force of this river.

Though it was still the Camp Kulaqua spring, I had seen two completely different rivers flowing out of that spring. These two rivers remind me of the two types of Christians: One who is joyful, active and fruitful in his or her calling; and the other, a secret closet Believer afraid to step out of the status quo (*their box*), who outside of church no-one can tell if he or she is a True Christian (*Follower*).

****We all believe in the same God my dear Brother's and Sister's, but the question is what kind of river are we going to be?**

In **Romans 15:13** Paul tells us: ***“May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the Power of the Holy Spirit.”*** NIV

Let's stop going through the motions of Christianity and fight this Spiritual Battle with the weapons the Holy Spirit gives us. It's time for us to be overflowing with the Power of the Holy Spirit; with God's Mighty Power Brethren, with the Water of Everlasting Life, Jesus Christ. Let's start as of today being RAGING RIVERS of the Power of God with the Holy Spirit as our Life Force, let God flow out of area of our lives. Say no to stagnant water.

Altar Call

I am challenging you today to be on Fire for God, as we play this video clip as our closing song, I will be making two Alter calls: one for the Body of Christ and the Second to our Youth. Please focus on the lyrics *“How can you stand here and not be moved by Him”* (*Lifehouse Drama Clip*) and remember what Paul tells us in **Ephesians 6:12**; Body of Christ open your eyes to the Battlefield our Youth have to navigate in their everyday lives. May God Bless you all!!