

Keepers of the Fire

Text: II Timothy 1:1-14 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,² To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³ I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; ⁴ Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; ⁵ When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. ⁶ Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. ⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ⁸ Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; ⁹ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ¹⁰ But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: ¹¹ Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. ¹² For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. ¹³ Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ **That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.** ¹⁵ This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

Leviticus 6:13 (GOD COMMANDED MOSES)--The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

Introduction: In the Old Testament Offerings – the altar fire was commanded to always be burning!

Note: It was the responsibility of the High Priest and the Levites to keep the fire burning at the altar.

5 Types of Offering in Leviticus:

- (1) **The Burnt Offering** – (memorial offering) - lamb burnt by priest at sunup and at sunset
- (2) **The Meal or Meat Offering** – (symbolized the sweetness and favor of God) no blood offered – no animal sacrificed—consist of fine flour, frankincense, and olive oil burnt upon the altar
- (3) **The Peace Offering** – (symbolized peace between God and man) part of the animal burnt upon altar – part given to the priest or prepared as a private feast for a family to eat at the temple
- (4) **The Sin Offering** – (symbolized Christ's Crucifixion) part of the animal was burnt at the altar – part was taken to a designated area and burnt outside of the camp
- (5) **The Trespass or Guilt Offering** – (atonement for sin against holy things or sin against other people) animal was burnt upon the altar or restitution damages paid to an offended party

THE ALTAR AND THE FIRE WAS NEEDED FOR ALL OF THE SACRIFICES LISTED ABOVE – THE FIRE WAS TO BE ALWAYS BURNING (day & night) UPON THE ALTAR!

I. New Testament Applicability: The Holy Ghost Presence inside the heart of the Believer

–The Inner Fire of the Presence of God & The PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

*****TODAY'S CHRISTIAN CHURCH Attitude---**

- Let us train others such as PASTORS, or SPECIAL PRAYER WARRIORS to be our SPIRITUAL PROXIES. Let some go to seminary and become TRAINED SPIRITUAL MEDIATORS between us and God. Let others become spiritual giants within the church and we will let them pray for us!
- We will worship God but at a lower position. We don't need the same level of commitment to God!
- We will even pay the Pastor a salary -- he will be a spiritual PROXIE for us-- so we can REMAIN Immature Babies in Christ!

**The New Testament Teaches another way other than OUR Modern Church Concept! - IT TEACHES
***The PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER as a FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURAL TEACHING
for all:**

***** THERE aren't TIERS of SPIRITUALITY or HIERARCHY within Christ—There is simply only
one level of BELIEVERS ---Those who are SAVED and JUSTIFIED by their faith in CHRIST!**

I Peter 2:5, 9-10 ⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, **an holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. ⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood, an holy nation**, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; ¹⁰ Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

II Timothy 1:8 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that **thou stir up the gift of God**, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.: **NOTICE THE WORD: — THOU—THOU Stir up the Gift**

II. Notice the Source of the Power to assist us in maintaining the Inner Fire of God –

II Timothy 1:11 I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that **he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. GOD IS OUR SOLE SOURCE OF POWER!**

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, *he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

II. Please Notice: two things that Christians are to guard against in our relationship with God ---

- **The spirit of FEAR --** This spirit is not of God but of the devil!
 - Fear is the enemy of God's Work and the enemy of our Work for God
 - Fear is cold water poured upon the inner fire of the Holy Spirit working within the heart of the Believer
 - Fear paralyzes us and makes up ineffective – we must counter it with prayer, with faith in God's Word, and help from the Holy Spirit of God – **I John 4:4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.
- **Neglect -- TODAY'S CHURCH GREATEST ENEMY!**
 - We are too busy today to PRAISE GOD or OFFER THANKGIVING TO GOD
 - We are too busy today to PRAY
 - We are too busy today to STUDY the BIBLE
 - We are too busy today to WORK for the CHURCH
 - Remember in our service for God—**Mary & Martha – one thing is needful**

Luke 10:41-42 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. **** DON'T NEGLECT TIME ALONE WITH JESUS****

II Timothy 1:6 Wherefore **I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee** by the putting on of my hands.

II Timothy 1:14 That good thing which was committed unto thee **keep by the Holy Ghost** which dwelleth in us.

**III. Please Notice: three things the Holy Spirit has given to help us maintain the Fire of God---
POWER, LOVE, and a SOUND MIND --**

II Timothy 1:7 ~~For God hath not given us the spirit of fear;~~ but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

- **Power (dunamis) -force or miraculous power, ability, and strength**

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- **Love (agape) – charity, love that is affection or benevolence, a love feast**

II Corinthians 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (*without love*)

- **Sound Mind (so-fron-is-mos') discipline that is self control, spiritual maturity, & sound doctrine**
Ephesians 4:14-15 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

IV. CLOSING — ALSO, Especially, Notice the Season – no longer the season of Holy Ghost Revival or multitudes being born into the Kingdom of God – **A Season of Apostacy and of Turning Back from the Truth!**

II Timothy 1:15 This thou knowest all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogene

II Timothy 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of **me his prisoner**: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God--- **A Time of Afflictions**

The Prophet Jeremiah's Season of Ministry right before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylon Empire!
Jeremiah 9:1-3 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! ² Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all *adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.*³ And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but **they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.**

The Season is no excuse for us to do what many are doing today – **WE MUST KEEP THE INNER FLAME OF GOD BURNING IN OUR LIVES -- NO MATTER THE SEASON** – just as PAUL as JEREMIAH kept it burning in their Day of Ministry through Times of Great Apostasy!

Revelation 2:1-5 Unto the angel of the **church of Ephesus** write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; ² I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: ³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. ⁴ **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.** ⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Special observation of more than 40 years of ministry:

- ❖ *I have witnessed multitudes of fellow Christians who have allowed their "Fire" or their Relationship with God to grow cold and go out Most of them are no longer a part of the church!*
- ❖ *I have seen many past Christians who committed suicide, become alcoholics, broken up their families, lost everything to drugs, destroyed their own children's faith, ruined the faith of others who had confidence in them, and split churches due to this very issue!*
- ❖ *No group has been exempted: FELLOW PREACHERS, PREACHER'S WIVES, DEACONS, BOARD MEMBERS, SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, MUSICIANS, along with REGULAR MEMBER, and EVERY OTHER GROUP from within the church!*

**LET US CONTINUALLY BE ATTENTIVE TO THE FIRES OF OUR REALATIONSHIP W/ GOD
LET US BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN IT AT A "BLAZING or ROARING FIRE LEVEL"**

LET US BE WARNED—LET US STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD--(THE FIRE OF GOD)!

I Corinthians 9:24-27 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.²⁵ And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.²⁶ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:²⁷ But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: **lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**