

Keep Burning
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Garden City Church

Intro Verse

Leviticus 6:8-13 - New International Version

The Lord said to Moses: 9 “Give Aaron and his sons this command: ‘These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, **and the fire must be kept burning on the altar.** 10 The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. 11 Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. 12 **The fire on the altar must be kept burning;** it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. 13 **The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.**

Summary

What do you bring to God?

The gods of the old world and today say, “Give me what’s yours.” The God of the Bible says, “Give me what’s mine”—He alone lays claim to all things.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

Psalm 24:1 (ESV)

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

When we realize that all we have is not under our ownership but our stewardship—even our very souls—we might be more inclined to surrender ourselves to God. God is not saying, “Give me what you have,” but “Give me what is mine.” I want to talk about fire today. God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29), and He is lighting a fire in the life of all believers that must be well-tended lest it goes out.

Main Message

1. **Keep the Fire Burning**

- Three times the priests are told to keep the fire burning. When God repeats something three times, it represents fullness, wholeness, or completeness.

How does the fire start?

The fire is ignited by God.

Leviticus 9:24

Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

How is the fire tended?

The fire is tended by wood and sacrifice.

Wood:

The Ark was constructed by wood, Solomon's Temple was built with fine wood, and Nehemiah was granted access to the king's forest to use wood for constructing walls. Throughout Scripture, we see wood—from the Garden to the cross.

- Wood is not the glory of the temple but the means to construct it.
- Wood is not the Ark but the means to salvation.
- Wood is not the cross but becomes it when men fashion it.
- Wood is not the wall but the material for defense.
- Wood is not what pleases God but the means to maintain the fire.
- Wood represents labor, word, and raw material. Your works play a role in the fire of God in your life.

What is the fire for?

The fire is not for the wood; it is for the sacrifice. The sacrifice is stewarded by man and given back to God. When you give back to God from what you have, you step into the realm of being a true worshipper.

Isaiah 33:14-15 (NIV)

The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: “Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?” Those who walk righteously and speak what is right, who reject gain from extortion and keep their hands from accepting bribes, who stop their ears against plots of murder and shut their eyes against contemplating evil.

Isaiah 58:5-7

Is this the fast I have chosen: a day for a man to deny himself, to bow his head like a reed, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the LORD? Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and tear off every yoke? Isn't it to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your home, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Your sacrifice to God demonstrates the type of life you live in the community. The zeal we have for God should not burn others; it should burn brightly and compel others.

2. **Your Fire is Not Acceptable**

Leviticus 10:1-2 (NIV)

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.

God does not want your fire burning; He wants His fire burning.

- Have we taken liberties to engage in things the Lord never commanded?
- Do we walk in our zeal or the zeal of the Lord?
- Do we walk in our passions or the deep passions of the Lord?
- Judges tells us that there came a day when every man did what was right in his own eyes/heart.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

3. What is the Acceptable Fire?

Jeremiah 20:9

But if I say, "I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

**With the word and presence of the Lord (Jeremiah), our obedience becomes our sacrifice.
Whose fire is on the altar? Do you have a fire and altar of convenience or obedience?**

(1) Effects of Fire

The fire of God has at least three primary effects:

Cleansing - from chaff, useless works, and sin.

Matthew 3:11

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

The baptism of the Holy Ghost comes with fire, cleansing, sanctifying, and making us a sacrifice before God.

(2) Activates Gifts

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.

This is the gift Timothy received through laying on of hands. It is the recognition and sanctioning of his authority as a prophet (1 Tim. 4:14) and a recognized evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5).

(3) Comes with Revival

2 Chronicles 7

When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."

When one birthday candle lights another, it never loses its flame.

It should be fragrant through your prayers and intercessions to the Lord on behalf of others.

It should be demonstrated through a life of purity and holiness—putting away sin, unrighteousness, and ungodliness.

Closing

What are you burning for? What is consuming you? What is your passion?

Let us repent for foreign/strange Fire