



Group Guide: From Fear to Fire

Sermon Summary: This sermon, delivered during a 12-hour prayer gathering, addresses the spiritual transition from living in fear to walking in the fire and passion of the Holy Spirit. The message emphasizes that fear and fire cannot coexist—when fear is high, spiritual fire diminishes, but when we tend our spiritual fire through worship, God's Word, and His presence, fear decreases. Using the account of the disciples locked in a room after Jesus' crucifixion, the sermon illustrates how Jesus didn't wait for them to overcome their fear before appearing to them. Instead, He walked through their locked doors, spoke peace over them, showed His wounds, and breathed the Holy Spirit into them. The core message is that peace is not a feeling to achieve but a Person to receive—Jesus Himself. The sermon calls believers to unlock the doors of their hearts, confess their fears openly, invite the Holy Spirit into wounded places, walk in forgiveness, and daily ask the Holy Spirit to breathe fresh life and power into them for bold, world-changing witness.

Key Points:

- Fear and fire cannot coexist; when fear increases, spiritual passion decreases, and vice versa
- Stop pretending the doors aren't locked; acknowledge and name your fears out loud so they can be brought into the light
- Peace is not a feeling to achieve but a Person to receive—Jesus is the Prince of Peace
- Don't fear your wounds; be authentic and transparent about them, as Jesus showed His scars to the disciples
- Wounds don't disqualify you; they are invitations for healing and can become testimonies of God's redemptive power
- Jesus repeats "Peace to you" because we cannot carry authority without rest
- Daily pray for the Holy Spirit to breathe on you again, creating dependence on Him rather than self-effort
- Walk in forgiveness and declare a year of Jubilee, releasing people from debts they owe you
- God is calling believers to possess the land and expand His kingdom with boldness
- The disciples transformed from fearful, locked-room believers to world-changing witnesses through receiving the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reference:

- John 20:19-23 (Primary passage: Jesus appearing to disciples, speaking peace, showing wounds, breathing the Holy Spirit)
- Matthew 16 (Peter's confession and rebuke of Jesus)
- Acts 2 (Peter preaching at Pentecost)
- Malachi 3:10 (God opening windows of heaven)
- Romans (Adoption and debt forgiveness)
- Ephesians (Walking circumspectly to redeem the days)

Stories:

- The account of the disciples locked in a room after Jesus' crucifixion, fearful of the Jewish leaders, and Jesus appearing to them through locked doors

- Fred's personal story of staying up through the night in prayer, experiencing God's presence during the 12-hour prayer vigil
- The story of their daughter Jenny at age six being called "a dumb old girl" by neighborhood boys, and Fred responding by asking her if she was indeed a dumb old girl, teaching her to find her identity in truth rather than others' words
- Fred and Pat's experience planting a church in Littleton, Colorado at ages 24 and 22 with only 15 people, which grew to 150 people in two years
- The testimony of Kevin Costales in Casper, who initially said he couldn't pray like Fred, and Fred's response that he rarely knows what to pray before praying, demonstrating dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Their oldest grandson now leading a group of 80+ young adults every Wednesday night, a ministry that began in February of the previous year
- Fred and Pat's experience at a comedy theater where Fred repeatedly suggested Monica Lewinsky as a skit topic, illustrating his bold personality

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by inviting the Holy Spirit to breathe fresh life into your gathering. Ask Him to reveal areas where fear has locked doors in your hearts and to ignite fresh passion for Him.

Key Takeaways

1. Fear and Fire Cannot Coexist

- When fear is high, our spiritual fire (passion) tends to be low
- When we tend our fire, our fear naturally decreases
- We have the power to choose which one we feed

2. Peace is a Person, Not a Feeling

- Peace comes from the presence of Jesus, not from understanding everything
- Shalom means "nothing missing, nothing broken"
- We must receive peace, not achieve it

3. Don't Hide Your Wounds

- Jesus showed His scars to the disciples
- Our wounds don't disqualify us; they invite healing
- Healed wounds become testimonies of God's redemptive power

4. The Holy Spirit Breathes Life

- We need daily fresh breath from the Holy Spirit
- Fire fades when we rely on self-effort instead of dependence on God
- The Spirit unlocks what fear has locked

5. The Year of Jubilee - Releasing Debts

- God is calling us to not only forgive but release people from debts they owe us
 - This includes emotional debts, expectations, and the need for them to "make it right"
 - Freedom comes when we release others completely
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: Identifying Fear vs. Fire

1. **Reflection:** Looking at the past year, would you say your spiritual fire has increased, decreased, or stayed the same? What contributed to this?
 2. **Symptoms Check:** Review the symptoms of fear mentioned in the sermon (doubt, isolation, feeling crippled, complaining). Which of these have you experienced recently? Be honest with the group.
 3. **Fire Indicators:** What are the signs in your life that your fire is burning strong? (Hope, joy, peace, confidence, inspiration) When do you feel most passionate about your relationship with God?
 4. **Personal Assessment:** On a scale of 1-10, where would you rate your spiritual fire right now? What would it take to move it up one number?
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Section 2: Locked Doors

5. **Honest Inventory:** The sermon challenged us to stop pretending the doors aren't locked. What "locked doors" (areas you're keeping God out of) might exist in your life? Consider:
 - Fear of obedience in a specific area
 - Fear of failure or rejection
 - Financial fears
 - Relationship issues you're avoiding
 - Dreams you've given up on
 6. **Naming Fear:** Fred encouraged us to name our fears out loud. Why is it important to verbalize our fears rather than just thinking about them? What happens when we bring them into the light?
 7. **Confession:** Is there a fear you're willing to confess to the group right now? (Create a safe space - remind everyone that what's shared stays in the room)
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Section 3: Peace as a Person

8. **Peace Practice:** Jesus said "Peace to you" twice to the disciples. When have you experienced God speaking peace over a situation that hadn't changed externally? What was that like?
9. **Daily Practice:** How would your days look different if you started each morning practicing being in God's presence and letting Him speak peace over your circumstances?
10. **Striving vs. Resting:** Fred said, "You cannot carry authority without rest." Where are you striving instead of resting? How is this affecting your ability to walk in spiritual authority?

Section 4: Wounds and Healing

11. **Wound Awareness:** Jesus showed His wounds to prove His victory was greater than His pain. What wounds are you still hiding behind locked doors? What would it look like to invite the Holy Spirit into those places?
12. **Shame vs. Healing:** The sermon instructed us to "ask for healing where shame lives." What's the difference between healthy conviction and toxic shame? How can you tell which one you're experiencing?
13. **Forgiveness Work:** Are there people you need to forgive where hurt still lives? What's preventing you from releasing them?
14. **Jubilee Release:** This is a powerful concept - have you truly released people from the debt you feel they owe you? This might include:
 - The need for them to apologize
 - The need for them to acknowledge what they did
 - The need for them to "make it right"
 - The expectation that they should suffer consequences

Who do you need to release in this way?

Section 5: Holy Spirit Empowerment

15. **Daily Breath:** When was the last time you asked the Holy Spirit to breathe on you? What would it look like to make this a daily practice?
 16. **Dependence Check:** Fred shared that he rarely knows what he's going to pray before he prays it - he depends on the Holy Spirit. How dependent are you on the Holy Spirit versus your own effort and planning?
 17. **Boldness Steps:** The disciples went from locked in a room to boldly preaching. What bold step is God asking you to take that you've been avoiding out of fear?
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Section 6: Practical Fire-Stoking

18. **Fire Tending:** What specific practices help stoke your spiritual fire? (Examples: worship, reading Scripture, prayer, fasting, community, serving)
 19. **New Territory:** Fred challenged us to try things we've never done before. What's one thing you could do this week that would put you in a place where the Holy Spirit could use you in a new way?
 20. **Prophetic Prayer:** Have you ever prayed something over someone that you didn't know beforehand - just trusting the Holy Spirit to lead? Would you be willing to try this?
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Personal Reflection Activity

Take 5-10 minutes of silence for personal reflection. Have each person consider:

1. **What locked door is God highlighting to you right now?**
 - Write it down
 - Confess it out loud (to God, and to the group if you're comfortable)
 2. **What is one practical step you can take this week to tend your fire?**
 - Be specific
 - Make it measurable
 - Share it with at least one person for accountability
 3. **Who do you need to release from the debt they owe you?**
 - Write their name(s)
 - Write out a prayer of release
 - Consider whether you need to communicate anything to them (with wisdom and Holy Spirit leading)
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Practical Applications

This Week:

Daily Practice:

- Each morning, pray: "Holy Spirit, breathe on me again today. Fill me. Come upon me. Empower me."
- Each evening, ask: "God, what lies am I believing?" and invite Him to speak truth

Specific Actions:

1. **Name Your Fear** - Write down your biggest fear and confess it out loud to God and one trusted person
2. **Practice Peace** - When anxiety rises, pause and say "Peace to me, [your name]" - receive Jesus' peace
3. **Invite Healing** - Choose one "locked door" area and specifically invite the Holy Spirit in for healing
4. **Forgive and Release** - Write out a Jubilee prayer releasing someone from the debt they owe you
5. **Stoke Your Fire** - Do one thing you've never done before in your walk with God (pray for a stranger, worship in a new way, share your testimony, etc.)

Accountability:

- Exchange numbers with at least one person in your group
 - Text each other daily: "Did you ask the Holy Spirit to breathe on you today?"
 - Check in mid-week: "What's your fire level today? What's stoking it or dampening it?"
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Scripture References from Message

Explicitly Mentioned or Read:

1. John 20:19-23 - The primary text about Jesus appearing to the disciples behind locked doors, saying "Peace to you" and breathing the Holy Spirit on them
2. Matthew 16 (approximately verses 13-23) - Peter's confession of Christ as the Messiah and Jesus rebuking Peter
3. Acts 2 - Peter's sermon at Pentecost
4. Malachi 3:10 - God opening the windows of heaven and pouring out blessing
5. Romans 8:15 (alluded to) - The Roman adoption term and God clearing our debts
6. Ephesians 5:15-16 - Walking circumspectly to redeem the days though they are evil

7. Luke 6:38 - Give and it will be given back, pressed down, shaken together, overflowing
8. Joel 2:25 - God repaying the years the locusts have eaten
9. Genesis 2:7 (alluded to) - God breathing life into Adam

Relevant Verses Aligned with Main Themes:

Fear vs. Fire Theme:

- 1 John 4:18 - Perfect love casts out fear
- 2 Timothy 1:7 - God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and sound mind
- Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, for I am with you

Peace Theme:

- John 14:27 - Jesus' peace, not as the world gives
- Philippians 4:6-7 - Peace that surpasses understanding
- Isaiah 26:3 - Perfect peace for those whose mind is stayed on God

Holy Spirit Empowerment:

- Acts 1:8 - Receiving power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you
- Luke 24:49 - Clothed with power from on high

Healing and Wounds:

- Isaiah 53:5 - By His wounds we are healed
- Psalm 147:3 - He heals the brokenhearted

Forgiveness/Jubilee Theme:

- Leviticus 25 - The Year of Jubilee
- Matthew 6:12, 14-15 - Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors
- Ephesians 4:32 - Forgiving one another as God forgave you
- Luke 4:18-19 - Proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor

Seeking God:

- Isaiah 55:6 - Seek the Lord while He may be found
- Matthew 7:7-8 - Ask, seek, knock

Romans 8:37 - More than conquerors through Him who loved us**