

When Hearts Burn For Christ

April 12, 2020

PASTOR: Good morning. It's Easter weekend. We're thankful the Lord has been watching over us, so many of those that have been listening and watching in and particularly our church. All of this is rather historic, all of these things, and it's not only just the virus that's historic but churches staying away from services, particularly on Easter Sunday, so we're happy if you're listening in and we're continuing to pray for people and we'd like to pause just for a moment and have a word of prayer even now.

Heavenly Father, we know you are a great God. There's none like unto you. It seems so strange, Lord, that churches aren't meeting this Sunday as we have concern for one another of getting this virulent virus and we're concerned for each other in many other ways. We're concerned for not only the physical needs of each other but we're concerned for the spiritual needs for each other. We pray that we may not become cold and indifferent in the midst of not meeting together with God's people.

On this particular weekend our thoughts

turn to the death, burial, and surely the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Restore our joy today, Lord. Restore our vitality in Christ Jesus. We ask, oh Lord, today that even as we hear your word that you might cause our hearts to be inflamed again by the truth of your word. We thank you now that we can spend this time opening your word up and reflecting on the goodness and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

I had been thinking this week about my own spiritual life and came across a passage -- and it doesn't sound very Easter or resurrection-like -- but I came across a passage in the book of Jeremiah. In the book of Jeremiah 20, it's a very interesting passage. Jeremiah, of course the prophet, it has been revealed to him by God that Jerusalem and Judah was in a great deal of trouble and destruction so he tried his very best to reveal to them what God had told them. In verse 7 of Jeremiah 20 he said, O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded. He says, You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily. In other words, he explains himself here. He says, everyone mocks me. If you're in derision, everyone is pretty much making fun of you, mocking you. So he's telling people what's going to

happen but everybody is mocking him. So he says, for when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, "Violence and plunder!" Because the word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and a derision daily. So they all hate him and they're all mocking him because he's sharing the word of God. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him.

He's upset, Jeremiah. He's flesh and bone. He's to a place where he's kind of up to his neck with everybody mocking him and yelling at him and probably being really nasty. They beat him and did a lot of terrible things. They put him in stocks, and it was really a very, very difficult time for Jeremiah. So he says, "I will not make mention of Him," meaning God. He said, "I'm not going to speak anymore in His name." But this is what caught my attention, where I'm going this morning. He said, But His word was in my heart like a burning fire. He says, Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not.

This morning I want to talk to you a little bit about your spiritual life. Everything we hear every day, every day, every day is about our physical well-being, and it should be with this virus, and along with this virus we are told, you know, are you

having any of these symptoms? We hear about people being sick and dying. But I'm concerned with my brethren, with my church, with other Christians. I'm wondering if people are using this time and that the spirit of God is taking his word and using it in their hearts and their lives.

I think sometimes -- I was reading about some movie stars and such, and they were saying, hey, you know, this is a great time for you to read a book. It's a great time for you just to sit back and watch TV all the time. I wonder if anybody is really spending time really concerned about what's going on in their heart and if God's dealing with them in such a way that their hearts are inflamed, and I think a wonderful time, of course, is when we start talking about Christ going to the cross of Calvary.

This is the week we've been contemplating Jesus dying on the cross of Calvary. He shed his blood and he spent himself on that cross. He took the penalty of our sin as our substitute on the cross of Calvary and we give consideration to the thought that Jesus would die on the cross for a sinner just like me, but we know the victory in Christ Jesus. He died on that cross, was buried, and He rose again three days later. So we want to share some of these

things with you this morning.

I was thinking about how, when we talk about the resurrection -- I hope during this time of staying at home that you haven't lost your joy. I know there are a lot of people that are getting depressed from what I'm reading, that there's certainly probably an increase in even home situations, but I wonder, have you lost your joy? Have you lost your enthusiasm, your spiritual vitality for Jesus Christ? And I'm hoping that the resurrection restores your joy, that your heart will again become inflamed. So I ask you, do you need some joy this morning? So we invite you again to give consideration to the word of God.

There was -- I was reading about some people, some great men of God. Henry Martyn who was a tremendous missionary to India, he said this. He says, Now let me burn out for God. Let me burn out for God.

David Brainerd, who was during the same time as Jonathan Edwards, was a young missionary. He died very young, David Brainerd, and he went to the American Indians and he said, Oh, he said, Oh, that I were a flaming fire in the hand of God.

When John Wesley was saved, he said this.

He said, My heart was strangely warmed.

I wonder, when was the last time our hearts became inflamed? Jeremiah even tried to push it off, and he said he couldn't. He couldn't. In fact, he said again -- and I'll read this to you -- he said, My heart was like a burning fire.

I think we need some burning fires in our hearts again. I think, perhaps, maybe the Lord can use this time of quiet in our hearts and our lives, and I think the resurrection time and thoughts of the crucifixion and Christ rising from the dead victorious and our salvation should cause our hearts to become inflamed.

I entitled this message When Hearts Burn For Christ, and I try to answer this question this way. How does that happen? How does that happen? I have to tell you that I don't think it's going to happen because you jump up and down hard enough or because, you know, you hit your head against a wall, and it's not the same thing that people talk about because they say they have heartburn from indigestion.

I realize that in the spring that people talk about romance, that a young man's heart turns to a young woman or whatever else people have said in

the past. This is different. I think it is in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. I don't think your hearts can become inflamed apart from the Holy Spirit. One of the wonderful truths of God's word is when you are saved the spirit of God comes and indwells your heart. Sadly, so often, so many Christians grieve the Holy Spirit or try to quench the Holy Spirit and really do not allow the spirit of God to work in their hearts and their lives. And when that happens, we wonder why we have lost our joy, our enthusiasm for Jesus Christ. This is the kind of joy that is not associated with earthly events. It's about the fullness of the joy of our Lord.

I'm reminded what Jesus said in John 15:11. And I want you to catch something that's really, really important that Jesus says here, and it's one of the keys for our understanding of our hearts becoming inflamed and burning, like Jeremiah said, for the Lord. You may remember Jeremiah was a prophet and God kept speaking to him and then he would utter forth God's truth to the people around him, but it's always in tune with the word of God.

So Jesus said, in John 15:11, he says, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may

remain in you."

There is -- when your hearts burn, it's not having to do with some kind of ecstatic silly joy of, you know, you're running around in circles. This is about joy that's contained within and it's something that is surpassing the joy of what people want to experience. People are saying, boy, I'm sure missing out right now. You know, I'm hearing about people -- young people talking about, boy, I'm missing out on my prom. Boy, I'm missing out, other people are saying, on this trip. Boy, I was going to go do this; I was going to go do that.

I want you to understand that Jesus, when he spoke to people, when He, the living word, when the word of God was uttered forth, the word of God that he has left us, it is capable through the Holy Spirit of allowing you to have continual joy. It can inflame your heart.

And then He said, "that your joy may be full." I want my joy to be full.

I have thought for many, many years about the fullness of the joy of the Lord Jesus. I am reminded in many ways as well that the fruit of the spirit has to do with joy, too; right? Love, joy, peace, and all the other things that go with it, but

joy, it's the fruit of the spirit. I want that joy. I want my heart to burn for the Lord. I want others around me to be inflamed for Jesus Christ.

Here we have this really historic weird time. I don't know what else to call it. It's in God's plan. God's at work in the midst of this, but I don't want it to go to waste. I don't want it to go to waste. I want Christians to say, My joy has been renewed.

I don't think it's good. I think it would be really easy for most people to feel kind of depressed by sitting at home so much. I think it would be kind of easy for a lot of people to say, I'm going to turn to some sinful habits during this time. I'm sure the consumption of alcohol is enormous right now, but that's not where we get our joy. Our joy comes from above. Our joy is from the Lord. And we utter forth his word. I need to allow the word of God to speak to me, and I was reminded again from a very -- the very simplicity of reading Jeremiah again and the very fact that my heart continually yearns to burn for Jesus. So, yes, this is about an overwhelming joy, this burning, that thrills us about our Lord as the spirit ignites it.

1 Thessalonians 1:6. Let me kind of

reinforce this. He says, And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, and he says, with joy of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:8: Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing -- I love this -- yet you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

How can I have this joy that is inexpressible? I'm trying to express it this morning, and the only way I can tell you is that it is joined in with the word of God as the word of God is preached, and we want the Holy Spirit to take it and move in our hearts.

So you say, oh, I don't know how this has to do any more with the resurrection than you're sharing. Let me talk about in response to the word of God a little bit. If you at home or listening, I want to talk about a response to the word out of Luke 24 this morning. In Luke 24, a great passage, and this is so very resurrection, the chapter, Luke just really goes on about it. In fact, in verses 5-6, this all happens in the same day. This is the day that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. He was crucified, died on the cross of Calvary, rose again victorious, and I share with you that are listening

again, there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ. He is the only provision. That's why He went to the cross. We want people to be saved so that they can have joy that is inexpressible, joy that is overflowing. And so when we get excited and our hearts are aflame, there would be no hearts aflame unless Jesus rose from the dead.

Notice the response, the response as we talk about the resurrection and as other people respond to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In verse 5 of that passage -- I don't have time to dwell on all of these verses -- but it says, Then, as they were afraid -- who are "they"? Those that saw Jesus' tomb was empty. Such an exciting time. Confusing, confusing for all that were involved in it. So they were afraid. That's not the response we're looking for. And they bowed their faces to the earth.

It sounds a lot like people today. There's so much fear today. People are saying, you know, what's going to happen; what's going to happen?

They said to them, why -- the angelic being said, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men,

and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" "

He did exactly as he said. He went to the cross of Calvary for sinners. The only way we can be saved was Jesus Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross of Calvary.

People think even here on this Easter weekend that what did Jesus do? Was this all about social things? No, it had to do with sinners. We needed a Savior and He died on that cross and He had to rise again in order to be victorious. To be victorious not only over the devil but over death, over hell. He was victorious and our salvation is contingent. It is based on Jesus Christ not only being crucified on that cross but rising again from the dead. Our faith would be worthless unless Christ rose again, 1 Corinthians 15.

But I want to take you somewhere yet this morning. In verse 13 of that same chapter it says, Now behold, two of them -- meaning his disciples, people that followed Jesus -- were traveling that same day. What day? Same day as the resurrection. They were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

You might have furlongs or something of that nature, but I want you to notice this is not

close. Okay? It's seven miles away.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened. The resurrection. They were talking about Jesus. They were disciples of his, they followed Jesus, and so as they followed Jesus on this trek, this path, they're talking about hearing all the news and saying Jesus was crucified and he -- we're hearing now that He rose again and they don't believe it, I don't think, because notice. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. All of a sudden Jesus appeared. He's now seven miles away, but Jesus is moving here, there, and everywhere. And it's later in the day. And it said, But their eyes were restrained. In other words, they didn't know it was Him.

And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk" -- and you notice, don't miss the end -- "and are sad?" You're not joyous. See, this is joy. This is a very joyous occasion.

In fact, if you went back a few verses before that and you saw with Mary Magdalene and others, they were told rejoice. This is -- this is a time to rejoice. It wasn't a time for them to be

sad. But, see, they didn't believe. Their eyes were closed and they didn't see the goodness of the Lord.

That's why we remind people on Easter Sunday, hear the goodness of the Lord. Hear what he's done. Look what he's accomplished. He arose again from the dead. But, see, they're sad. They're talking about we don't know he disappeared. What happened to him?

So in response to the word of God the risen Lord spoke to them about what happened. He kind of told them they were being foolish in this passage. He said they're being foolish.

And in verses 25-27 he said this. He said, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart."

See, this is always a matter of the heart, too, don't you realize? It's not only about hearing the word of God, but sometimes we're cold to the word of God. We don't respond to the truth. You're slow of heart sometimes. We're at a place where we say, you know, I've heard all this before. Every year we hear about the resurrection. Christmas time we say, every year we hear about the birth of Christ. And sometimes we lose that joy. Boy, I need to sing some Christmas carols in order to feel real joy.

Listen. You hear the word of God, you

understand the truth, and you want again for your heart to be inflamed as you hear the word, and that's important. That's important.

And so He told them they're slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. This was all in fulfillment of God's word. He is speaking. Jesus is doing the very best to them. Yes, later on he had to show Thomas his wounds, but you notice, it's the word, it's the word of God, and so he shared with them what the word of God said.

He says, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

This is all resurrection day. So He has to explain to them that Jesus needed to suffer and die on the cross for sinners but that He also needed to rise again from the dead in order for people to have their salvation secure. It's a victorious time.

So they listen to all of these things and they invite him in to eat because it was towards the end of the day. It was getting towards the end of the day.

Verse 30, it says, Now it came to pass, as

He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened. Until then, it didn't make all the sense in the world. But see, their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

And they said to one another -- now, catch this. Don't miss this. Don't miss this -- "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He" was doing what? "He opened the Scriptures to us?"

You see, the inflaming of our hearts, which has to do with our joy, is hooked into the word of God. And so we want you to understand again, yes, Jesus Christ died on the cross and He rose again from the dead. It should and we want and we desire that God might inflame our hearts through his spirit. It's an incredible, incredible thing.

You know what really tells me their hearts were inflamed? Not only by their saying it and their response, you see something happens. I'm going to tell you what happens. I know when people -- and my heart is inflamed by two things. Okay? Don't miss this. Two things have to happen. Number one, yes, we already mentioned to you the scriptures have to be

involved in it. The word of God is involved and it inflames our hearts and there's joy in my life.

But you know what happens next? I respond. I respond to the truth. In other words, I testify to it. It doesn't -- it doesn't go and I say, boy, hey, I was really fired up about all of that. Man, I'm really glad that I can be so inflamed by all that thing. Well, I'm going to sit down now and read a book and I'm going to sit down and watch a TV show and I'm going to sit down and do something else.

You know what? The response is this. Notice. Don't miss this. Verse 33: So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem.

Well, what does that mean? I want you to understand in order for them to go seven miles, they went in the dark. Do you understand? They responded, and you know what they did? Verse 34. They went to the 11. Now, Judas isn't around; right? Verse 33. Then verse 34, saying -- they testified, The Lord is risen what? Indeed, and has appeared to Simon!

You testify. That's what you do. You testify. You respond. You act it out.

In fact, Philippians 1 says it's the joy of faith. Philippians 1:25, Paul says it's the joy of

faith. The great resurrection chapter gives the gospel with emphasis on the resurrection.

In 1 Corinthians 15 people often come to this, and there will be many people probably preaching on that today. Paul said in verses 1-2, he says, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you. What's the gospel? At this point you need to respond to that. He says, in which you stand, by which also you're saved, in verse 2, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you. Do you really believe it?

So he said, For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. So we deliver to you the scriptures. Jesus went to the cross and died on the cross.

Verse 4: And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day. This is the great resurrection chapter. And so he preaches on that according to the scriptures he rose again.

And you notice then in the verses following that he talks about all those that testified that Jesus Christ rose again. He was seen by Cephas and by the 12. He was seen by over 500 brethren, and on and on. It's a testifying of what we hear by the

word of God.

That's what we're doing again this morning, by the way, as I preach the word of God. We're testifying He did rise. He did rise and it causes our hearts to burn, and what does it do? It causes me to have joy, and I want you to have joy and we want you to testify of it. We want you to go and tell other people. We want you to respond by your actions. It's not enough for us to just sit down and say, boy, I can't hardly wait for all of these days to be over. We don't want you to waste this virus. We want it to inflame your hearts.

See, being born again is a supernatural event that should cause joy and stir your hearts, and we hope that is true and we hope people will get saved during this virus, that people around us might hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and be saved.

Well, one more thing in closing. I want to close up in Matthew 28, that our hearts will burn in response to the resurrection. You see the response of these followers to the events of the resurrection. You see it changed everything. It changed everything in their life. You see all of a sudden all these people that, you know, were kind of walking around in circles, like these two men on the road to Emmaus,

all of a sudden things changed. I don't care if it's dark, these two guys said, we're going to go walk to Jerusalem seven miles. We're going to respond to this because we've got this joy. Our hearts burn and we're going to testify.

Guys like Peter before the resurrection, they were struggling. I'll do everything for you, Lord, and then he denies Jesus three times on the way to the crucifixion. After that, you couldn't stop Peter. Start reading in places like Acts 2. What's Peter doing? He's preaching on the resurrection.

So the response of these followers to the events and our response should be substantial. The resurrection means victory over death and hell to those that believe and are saved. The resurrection reminds us that our salvation is found in the victorious Christ.

This is a day of joy that should definitely ignite our hearts, and in Matthew 28:5-10, it says, But the angel answered and said to the women -- remember back in Luke 24 as I was embellishing on the idea that here were those that were all afraid and sad and upset over all these things, Matthew gives us some other reflections on what was going on as well. The angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be

afraid."

So many people have been afraid during all this time. I don't think that should necessarily be our response right now. I think this is a time we turn to the word of God. This is a time when we think about the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. This is a time when our hearts could be ignited. This is a time when people could be saved. This is a time when we should have joy. This is a time when we can testify and we don't stop at this point and say, I'm going to curl up and pull my head over a blanket and say, I'm going to wait this thing out. I'm going to bury my head.

"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here." Why? "He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly -- go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him. Behold, I have told you."

So they went out quickly from the tomb when they were told about the resurrection. What was their attitude? Did they -- once you understand the resurrection, once it hits us in our hearts and inflames our hearts, what happens? They had great

joy, yet the fear of anticipation. What's going on; what's going on? But they had great joy and ran to bring His disciples word.

And as they went to tell His disciples, guess who met them? Jesus, saying -- what did He say? What's the first thing he said? "Rejoice!" "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

What an incredible truth. The resurrection, it inflames our hearts; it brings us joy; it causes us to testify. May the spirit of God take his word again in all of our hearts. May we not pull a blanket over our heads during this virus and waste it. May our hearts become inflamed and become overjoyed in rapture for the Lord Jesus Christ and all that he's done for us.

Let's pray. Thank you so much, oh Lord, oh Lord, that you came to earth and you went to the cross of Calvary for sinners like so many of us that have testified and repented of our sins and confessed our sins and said, yes, I'm a sinner condemned unclean. Thank you for dying on the cross for a sinner just like me. And we thank you that you rose

again victorious, our salvation is sure, and we thank
you that someday we will rise to see you and we'll
stand in the very presence of God, our Lord Jesus
Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.