The average Christian is so cold and contented with his wretched condition that there is no vacuum of desire into which the blessed Spirit can rush in satisfying fullness.

A.W. Tozer

Never be lacking in passion, but keep your spiritual fervor.

Romans 12:11

Prayer Study #347

First Love Ministries, Inc. of Perry, Georgia USA

FIRST LOVE MINISTRIES AND THE EPIC BATTLES OF THE LAST DAYS: ARE YOU READY FOR THE DAYS AHEAD?

LUKE 12:35-50 AMP

35. "Keep your loins girded and your lamps burning;
36. And be like men who are waiting for their master to return home from the marriage feast, so that when he returns from the wedding and comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately.
37. Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) are those servants whom the master finds awake and alert and watching when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them recline at table and will come and serve them.
38. If he comes in the second watch (before midnight) or the third watch (after midnight), and find them so, blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) are those servants!
39. But of this be assured: if the householder had known at what time the burglar was coming, he would have been awake and alert and watching and would not have permitted his house to be dug through and broken into.
40. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour and a moment when you do not anticipate it."
41. Peter said, "Lord, are You telling this parable for us, or for all alike?"
42. And the Lord said, **"Who then is that faithful steward, the wise man whom his master will set over those in his household service, to supply them their allowance of food at the appointed time?**
43. Blessed (happy and to be envied) is that servant whom his master finds so doing when he comes.
44. Truly, I tell you, he will set him in charge over all his possessions.
45. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is late in coming,' and begins to strike the menservants and the maids, and to eat and drink and get drunk,

46. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour of which he does not know, and will punish him and cut him off and assign his lot with the unfaithful.
47. And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act as he would wish him to act shall be beaten with many lashes.
48. But he who did not know and did things worthy of a beating shall b e beaten with few lashes. For everyone to whom much is given, of him shall much be required; and of him to whom men entrust much, they will require and demand all the more.
49. I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!
50. I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and how greatly and sorely I am urged on (impelled, constrained) until it is accomplished!"

PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD: ARE YOU READY FOR THE DAYS AHEAD?

A. These are the Days of Elijah. The Holy Spirit wrote through the prophet Malachi the last verses of the Old Testament: "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse"* (Malachi 4:5-6). Luke repeats this theme in Luke 1:15-17: "*For he* [John the Baptist] *will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* These passages essentially tell us that Elijah will come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord. I believe that John the Baptist was only a partial fulfillment of this. I believe that a company of people with the spirit of Elijah on them will prepare the way for the Second Coming of Jesus.

<u>Characteristics of the Members of the Elijah Company as Seen in the Life of John the Baptist</u>

1. **They will walk in humility** and often be unknown in the world, because they will never want to take any glory away from Jesus and will not speak of themselves. Although nameless to the world, they will be greatly valued and loved by the Lord. John 3:30: *"He* [Jesus] *must increase, but I must decrease."*

2. **They will lead the Church to repentance**. Matthew 3:5-6: *"Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him* [John the Baptist] *and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.* Luke 3:3: *And he* [John the Baptist] *went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*
3. **They will be part of a forerunner ministry preparing the way of the Lord.** Malachi 3:1: "*Behold, I send My messenger. And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.*
4. **They will make ready a people prepared for the Lord.** *"He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah…to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*
5. **They will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers.** (Again both Malachi 4:5-6 & Luke 1:15-17). This will also be, not only biological and spiritual fathers, but prophetic fathers who will mentor prophetic sons. Samuel Clough writes of this relationship, *"In the spirit of Elijah, fathers will gladly give their lives to raising up sons that will likely exceed them in their public ministry. Sons, likewise, will require the strength and support of prophetic fathers to full exercise their ministry. This mutual dependence on one another will be the only way for prophetic vessels to survive the pressures that will come at the end of the age.*
6. **They will be prophetic.** Matthew 11:11: ***"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet."*** The prophetic ministry at the end of the age will be in the spirit of Elijah. We have not seen that kind of prophetic anointing in our life time.
7. **They will preach with burning passion and power.** John 5:32-35: **"There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light."**
8. **They will stand when others fall**. Paul writes of one of his disciples: *for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world…*(2nd Timothy 4:10). And he writes of Alexander the coppersmith: *Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay*

him according to his works. You also must beware if him, for he has greatly resisted our words. At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me…(2nd Timothy 4:14-16). We must resolve to stand for Jesus no matter what the costs and no matter how great the pressures that are coming. Again, to quote Samuel Clough: *"A critical component of receiving Jesus at the end of the age is not just being ready for His actual appearing, but preparation for enduring the pressures of the end of the age and agreeing with the dramatic and difficult process that God is going to use to display His power and enthrone Jesus in Jerusalem."*

B. Days of Indignation and Judgment will soon come: *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?* (1st Peter 4:17).

"Come my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourselves, as it were, for a little moment until the indignation is past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will not more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:20-21).

We must remember two things. First, His judgments are righteous: Revelation 19:2-*For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.* Secondly, even in times of judgment we can abide under the shadow of the Almighty: Psalm 91:1-3- *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust. Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence.*

C. It's time to declare the Word of the Lord: *Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy* (Psalm 107:2). *"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You"* (Hebrews 2:12). *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the*

Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And those things we write to you that your joy may be full (Chapter 1:1-4).

D. We must engage in spiritual warfare. *Fight the good fight of faith* (1st Timothy 6:12a). *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith* (2nd Timothy 4:7). *And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ* (Revelation 12:17). *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

E. We must walk in peace by faith: In the days ahead the scripture tells us clearly that men's hearts will fail them from fear. ***"…men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken"*** (Luke 21:26). We must keep our eyes on the prize: *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). We must walk in faith and not by sight: *For we walk by faith, not by sight* (2nd Corinthians 5:7). Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. We must remember His promise that the God of peace will crush the skulls of the kingdom of darkness under our feet: *And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly…*(Romans 16:20).

F. We must make a conscious decision to become a bond slave to Christ Jesus. A few weeks ago I shared about being a bond slave to Jesus. I believe that it is such an important topic for this present day that I want to review what I shared earlier. The Book of Revelation was written to the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ. Paul and Timothy (Philippines 1:1), James, the Lord's half brother (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3, Galatians 1:19, James 1:1), and Simon Peter (2nd Peter 1:1) identify themselves as bond-slaves to Christ. The term used in the Greek is *doulos*. This is the lowest, most servile term in the New Testament. A bond-slave was one that had been freed but chose to stay with their master. The master took a punch and pierced their ear at the doorframe. These men surrendered all their rights and loved their Master so much that they were devoted to Him to the total disregard of their own interests. They had no rights and were bound to the Master unto death.

Ephesians 6:5-6-*Bond-slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as bond-slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*

Galatians 2:20-*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

1st Timothy 6:1-*Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.*

Some Final Personal Thoughts

I can say with all honesty that the longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows to me. I want to have the tools I need to get the job done, but I am not nearly as interested in the operation of gifts or even the anointing in my life as I am in intimacy with Jesus.

I know that there are those who oppose this ministry and my teachings. I want to always be humble enough to receive correction, but the correction must come from scripture and not from personal opinions. I know that the Word of God is in direct confrontation with the political and religious systems of this world, and the division between those who love the Word and have true relationship with Jesus and those in the world is quickly becoming greater and greater as the days go by.

I feel strongly the power of the words of Michael Brown, a prominent Bible teacher: *"Where are the calls to take up the cross and follow Jesus, regardless of cost or consequence? Where are the calls to courage, to compassionate service, to world missions, to glorify God by life or by death-in other words to be normal New Testament disciples?"* I hope tonight that all of you in your own hearts will make a commitment starting today to be courageous, revolutionary, and uncompromising, full of both the love of Christ and the fire of God.

Having relationship with Jesus is not a game. It is not even just a way of life. It is life itself. That life brings us into personal warfare between our flesh nature and our spirit man. As Watchman Nee wrote, *"The flesh is too bad to be cleansed; it must be crucified."*

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Don't tell your God about your mountain; tell your mountain about your God!