

Come on, that's not just a song that we're singing, that is the prayer of the season. Jesus, we want you to set a fire in our soul. Jesus, we want more of you. Jesus, we choose to submit and surrender to your lordship, and we offer our lives as a living sacrifice; may the fire fall on us. May the fire fall on us. You see that really is so much more than a song. It's the anthem of the season, it's the prayer of our heart. And so, what we want to do for the next few moments is, in a moment, I'm gonna invite you to just pray for one or two people around you that God would set a fire in their soul, that there would be a divine stirring within them, that they would hunger and thirst for more of God, that they would say, I want more of God. And I know the moment that I say that to some of you, we can back up quickly, but listen, this is a season where God is moving in faith and humility. And if you will bring whatever measure of faith you have and a little bit of humility, there is something about that combination that God is moving in, in this season. He tells us, ask and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be answered. He tells us whatever you ask for in prayer believe that you have received it and it shall be yours. He tells us to pray for one another. And so, if we want the fire of God, we have to be willing to step out a little bit and pray and be prayed for. So whatever campus that you're at, if you feel comfortable doing this with faith and humility, find one or two people around you, maybe introduce yourselves and say, just can I pray the fire of God into your life. And if you don't feel comfortable doing that, maybe you can just, for the next few moments, close your eyes, open your hands, and you ask God to bring His fire and His presence and His spirit into your life. So, for the next few moments, wherever you are, can you just pray for the people around you for God to set a fire in their soul in Jesus' name?

So, Jesus, we just pray that you would set a fire in our soul. We pray that we would hunger and thirst for you and only you. Jesus, would you be the one thing, the main thing, the only thing, the everything of this church? Would you stir up our souls in such a way where we want more, we want more, we want more, we want more? God, I want more, and we want more, and you offer more. And so, would you come, and would you move, and would you respond, and would you show up in this faith, in this humility that we bring to you? Jesus, we want you and only you. If you believe that and you receive it, will you just say, I receive it? Come on, will you say it again? I receive it. Jesus, in your name, we receive it. May your fire fall on us. In your name, we pray, Amen.

Why don't you go ahead and grab a seat at whatever campus you're at, and let me go ahead and just once again welcome you to Valley Creek. I am so glad that you are here with us. We are one church that meets in multiple campuses, carrying the hope of Jesus to thousands of locations. And so, come on, Denton campus, Denton, give it up, and everybody else, let's cheer for Denton people. Come on, Gainesville, Gainesville, where you at? Let's give it up for Gainesville. How about Louisville? Where's my Louisville people at? Come on. All right, come on, everybody, give it up for Flower Mound. And then, how about our online people all over the world, whether you're in Tok, Alaska, or Zambia, we're so glad that you are here with us today. And what I want you to know is that when we welcome you, we are not welcoming you to a building or an event. We are welcoming you to a community of faith. We are welcoming

you to a movement. We are welcoming you to a vision. And most importantly, we are welcoming you to Jesus. And so, I'm so glad you're here with us today. Real quick, next week is a really big week because next week is our one-year mark of missional move, Create the Future. One year of our five-year journey of creating the future, next weekend. So, I have huge announcements for you, big updates, some exciting timelines, all kinds of things. So, whatever you do, make sure you're here next week so you can catch up with where we are and get all of those updates. And so, what I want to try to do today is put a little bit of a bow on this first run of a Conversation on Fueling the Fire. Catch it, first run, I mean it's not, nope, just a bow. Because since January, we've been in this conversation on Fueling the Fire, conversation, a dialogue, a wrestle. We're thinking, we're being provoked in a sense. Things are being revealed and being exposed, and we're having to wrestle through some things about the fire of God. But what is it and what does it look like, and how do we fuel it, and how do we tend it, and how do we steward it? And we are people who are hungry for the fire of God, His presence, His power, and His purity. And I know, as we've been walking through this conversation, let me be the first to just acknowledge, I know it's not easy. I know there are things that we're saying that are challenging, that are convicting, that are confronting. I know there's things that are being exposed, and provoked, and revealed. But in a sense, what I'm doing is I'm trying to stoke the fire of your heart, the fire of your life, the fire of our church. And if you've ever stoked a fire, what happens is there is often a whole bunch of smoke that comes out and a bunch of sparks that jump out and burn things. So if you've been sitting here and as we've been stoking the fire, you've caught a big whiff of smoke, or an ember has jumped on you, and it's like man, ow, ow, okay, that's what's supposed to happen when you stoke a fire, and we're trying to stoke the fire. And even if you've caught a breath of smoke and an ember in your life, we're trying to fuel the fire in Jesus's name. You see, we don't want just a flash fire. We want to fuel the fire. Now, you say what's the difference in that? We don't want just one of those fires just goes real quick, and then it's over. Like have you ever seen children around a fire? Did you ever notice what they want to throw in? They don't want to throw in anything that fuels the fire. They want to throw in anything that flashes the fire; newspaper, and cardboard, and leaves, and plastic. And they throw in all kinds of things, and it goes puff, and it looks really good for a second. It's often very toxic what they throw in there. You do not want to breathe that smoke, and from a distance, it looks like wow that's an amazing fire. But did you ever see a dad around a campfire? A dad is looking for oak logs, things of substance, things that are dense, things that have gravity, things that will actually fuel the fire and build a coal base and keep it going. We are not people who want a flash fire, we want a fueled fire. And if you look at American Christianity, so much of what we've been trained in American Christianity is flash fire. Throw in the thing that quickly burns and looks really good and makes a big splash. Get it real bright and vibrant so you can walk away and not have to think much about it. And so, we go from conference to conference, and event to event, and gathering to gathering, and church to church, and emotion to emotion, and high to high, and feeling to feeling. And honestly, we throw in a bunch of toxic things that aren't really good for us in the first place. That's not what we're trying to do. We're trying to fuel the fire. We're trying to throw in things of substance that are dense, that will burn, and burn for a long time, and build a coal base in a way that glorifies

the Lord. This is what we're trying to do, and they're very different things. We don't want it to look good from afar. We actually want something that burns and lasts generations. So, here's what I want to say to you, what I've been trying to help you do, what we're trying to help you do is build the kind of fire that you can pass on to your children and your children's children. I'm trying to help you build the kind of fire that you can pass on to your spiritual children and their children's children. Because make no mistake about it, the greatest thing you leave your children is the fire of God. I want you to think about it. This is really important. What is the greatest legacy? What is the greatest thing you leave behind to your children or your spiritual children? It is not money. It is not property. It is not possessions. It is not reputation. It is not education. It is not vacations. It is not pictures. It is not hobbies. It is not stuff. We spend so much time trying to get all these things, the money and the education, and the select sports, and the vacation, and the photos, and the things, because we think, because we have a heart for our children, so we are trying to do all this stuff, but that does not matter. What matters is whether or not we leave them the burning fire of God. Whether or not we actually have a coal base that we say here, I spent my life fueling this, and I now pass this on to you. Treasure this with everything that you've got because it's the only thing that matters. In fact, in the run of the Ten Commandments, when God is speaking to us about basic humanity, this isn't basic Christianity. This is basic humanity. Look at what He says. He says, "I, The Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments." Okay, you know what that says? That says you pass on your relationship with God to your children. Whether you want to or not, whether you're trying to or not, whether you have one or not, you pass on your relationship with God to your children or your spiritual children. This is called generational curses and generational blessings, things that get set in motion by our will and our choice, and the life we choose to live, and it gets passed on to our children, and their children, and their children. And you get a choice. You get a choice to turn your back on God and pass on generational curses, or turn your face towards God and pass on generational blessings. You get a choice to pass on to the third or fourth generation's ash, soot, or flaky, crumbly, dirty charcoal, or to a thousand generations, a burning, bright, hot fire of God. And we don't think about us as the ones passing it on, but we have all certainly felt the pain of what's been passed on to us. Because so many of you have spent your entire life trying to break the generational curse that has been handed to you from your fathers. Why is it that generation after generation in a family line there is the same addiction, the same divorce, the same brokenness, the same pain, the same struggle, the same mental health issue, the same spirit of fear? Why? Because every generation passes on ash, soot, and dirty crumbly charcoal to the next generation. And so that's what they start with, and that's all they've got. And some of you have spent your entire adult life, your entire young adult life, your entire student life trying to break free of this ash that has been handed to you. But you get the opportunity to break it in Jesus's name. And you get to be one of the kinds of people that says you know what, that's what was given to me, but I'm done with that. In Jesus's name, there will be no more divorce in this family, and there will be no more addictions in this family, and there will be no more alcoholism in this family. And this spirit of fear yet, no, it stops

with me. Because I'm gonna build the kind of fire that has full of faith, hope, and love, and that's what I'm gonna be giving to my children and their children. And for a thousand generations, my family line will have a fire of God. This is why God says, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." So, Abraham fueled the fire, passed it on to Isaac. Isaac fueled that fire, passed it on to Jacob. Jacob fueled that fire, passed it on to his twelve sons. Why? Because each generation is responsible to fuel the fire of God in their own life and pass it on to the generation after them. And we get a choice of whether or not we're gonna pass on a radiant face, a burning heart, and a holy life, or a zombie face, a slow heart, and a worldly life. We actually get to choose: ash, soot, dirty charcoal, or fire. I mean, look, I am the God of your father.

Ready for this question? Who was your father's God? Because he had one. Who's your, who's your dad's God because he has one. Like, who did he worship? Who did he submit to? Who did he surrender to? Who did he chase? Who did he pursue? Who did he value above all things? Was it work, money, success, lust, greed, addiction, idolatry, pleasure, comfort, a hobby, possessions? So, your dad has some kind of God. Something that he worshipped, and he passed that on to you. It may be Jesus which would be a gift of the grace of God in your life. But for most of us, that's not true. We were handed a pile of ash. So, who is your father's God, but more importantly, who is your God? Because you can't control what was handed on to you, but you can decide today what you're gonna do about it. And you can say, you know what, I'm gonna remove this pile of ash from my life, and I'm going to fuel the fire in Jesus's name, and my entire life changes today. Because today it's no longer about me, today it's about actually building a fire for my children and their children and the children after them, or my spiritual children and their children and the children after them. And what I want to say to you is, it doesn't matter how bad of a pile of ash you are given, how much brokenness you have had to deal with, how horrible of a God your father may have worshipped, in Jesus's name, that generational curse can be broken today, and the fire can be fueled. You can pass on life. This matters, man. This matters. And you're like no, I and I'm, I'm 65 years old. I messed it up. My kids have kids now, and I told, they would say my God was work or success, or sex, or whatever it is. Okay, you can break that today. And they will not remember who you were for 65 years. They will remember the fire that you built in this season of your life and offered to them. They don't really care. They don't really care what's in your will with your possessions. You are like oh, no, maybe. No, they think they do. You thought you did, but what you really actually care about is whether or not faith, hope, and love was handed on to you. This is the kind of stuff that keeps me awake at night, okay? I wrestle with whether or not is my fire hot enough for my son and daughter to do what God has created and called them to do. Not do I have a fire, is it hot enough? Is there enough coal base? Have I built enough fuel load for them to be able to take that which I've spent my life fueling and go, and go to places that I've never even dreamed about were possible with God? Are my spiritual children, the people that I spend so much of my life investing into, is my fire hot enough for them to burn in Jesus' name? Do they see a radiant face, a burning heart, and a holy life? Because it doesn't matter if I think it's so. It matters if they experience it. And so, there's a gravity to that in there. The good news

is he's a gracious God that can interrupt any generational line and can take any ashy life and bring it to flame in Jesus' name, which is why He says, come let's talk this over. Let's have a conversation, says the Lord. No matter how, no matter how, no matter how, no matter how bad, no matter how deep, no matter how broken, no matter how ashy, no matter how sooty, no matter how dirty, no matter how flaky, no matter how charcoally, no matter how long it's been, no matter how deep the stain of your sins or the generational curse that's been handed on to you, I can, says the Lord, take it out and make you clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, even if your entire life is black soot I can, says the Lord, make you white as wool and set your life ablaze in Jesus's name. So, what we're talking about matters. What we're talking about matters. And I've been trying to communicate to every environment and every group of people that I've been around over these last couple of months, there is a gravity right now. Catch the gravity. I'm sorry that it's inconvenient for you to break the generational curse that your children should not inherit. It is inconvenient. And I'm sorry that you didn't have better parents. But the grace of God is interrupting your life now. And if you're a student and you've got an adversary as a parent right now because their God is the God of this world, in Jesus's name, you can break it. That's what we're here for. And we can help you honor your father and mother in the right way and still choose Jesus. There's a gravity to this, guys. And you know what it starts with, it's just simply this. I think there are some dads in the room. Here's the invitation: I think you just need to look at your family this week and say, I repent. I repent for choosing my father's God for so many years and all of the ways that that has impacted you. Today, I choose Jesus and this fire. So, I've already chosen Jesus. But if there's no fire, I don't know what you've chosen.

So, faith and humility, yeah, there's a gravity to that. Because here's my question: if not, what's the other option? Kind of for adults for a second, like what's the other option? Getting your kid into the perfect school so they can go, you know, do the things of the world that you wish you could still do or that you never got? I mean, like what's the other option? Sometimes it's just is like, come now, let's reason together. Come now, reason with yourself for a second. What's the other option? You're like oh no, I. Okay, and remember we've been talking about if there's no smoke, there's no fire, all the things, all the things, all the things. Jesus, I want to leave a really big fire for my children and my children's children, so help me fuel it. It's not easy, and I know it's not easy, and I know it's challenging. And you're like, man, there was some ember flying and some smoke, breathing. Yeah, I know, I know. And this week, as I was praying for you, the Lord brought me back to this really interesting story in the Gospels that I think really kind of illustrates where a lot of us are right now. It's the story of the Mount of Transfiguration. One day, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John, and He goes up this mountain called the Mount of Transfiguration. And they get to the top of this mountain, and Jesus is transfigured, transformed right in front of their eyes, and they see the glory of the Lord. It's like all the veil is lifted and they see the consuming fire of God right there, right in front of them. They can feel it, they can see it as bright as burning, as hot as the Sun. They fall face down because they have just literally seen the glory of God. They're having the greatest spiritual high of their entire life. The Father speaks from heaven, this is my beloved son, and whom I am well pleased listen

to him. And while they're up on this glorious mountain top moment experience in the valley, there is a man with a demon-possessed son. And he spent his entire life trying to do everything he can think to do to get his son set free because this demon controls him. He is deaf, he is mute, and the demon is constantly trying to kill him. And he hears about Jesus and His followers, so he brings his son to the other disciples who are down there and says, please help me. Like, help me, I need help. And the disciples do everything they can think of, everything they've watched Jesus do, and the boy doesn't get free. And as Jesus and the three start coming down the Mount of Transfiguration, this glorious experience, the father sees Jesus, and he runs over to him with his son. Jesus, I brought my boy. He's demon-possessed, and your disciples couldn't do anything with. If you can take pity on us and help us. If you can, says Jesus, everything is possible for him who believes. He shouts back, I do believe, but help me in my unbelief. And with so much compassion, Jesus takes the boy, rebukes the demon, heals him, gives him back to his father. Everybody is amazed. And a little while later, the disciples ask Jesus, why couldn't we cast him out? And Jesus says, because this kind can only come out through prayer and fasting. And as I read that story this week, I thought I think that defines a lot of us right now. See, I think some of us right now, we're on the Mount of Transfiguration. We're having the glorious all-consuming fire experience with God. We see Jesus in a way that we haven't seen Him before. His fire is burning in our lives. We are beholding him. He is transforming us. We're hearing his voice. I mean, this is a glorious moment in time, and space, and season for some of us. And while some of us are having that kind of fire moment, others of us are in the valley. And we've done everything we can think of to get free. We've done everything we know to do to break the stronghold, and we don't feel God, and we can't find him, and there's no fire, and there's no, there's no life. And, and the more we try, the less it seems to work.

It's like some of us are on the glory, but some of us are in the "to." And I think we come to Jesus the way that man did. If you can do anything, like take pity, like help me, Jesus. Everything is possible. I think for a lot of us here's our answer, I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief. I think there are some of you here, you're in the "to," you're hearing all of this. And you're like I do believe but it ain't working. So, help me in my unbelief, Jesus. And what I love is, is that we're just called to bring whatever measure of faith we have to him. He doesn't say, go get a bunch of faith. And no, just whatever measure of, measure of it, as small as a mustard seed. And sometimes that mustard seed is cracked, and it's dry, and it's broken, and it's crumbly, and it's all we got. And Jesus says, that's enough. If you'll just be honest and authentic with me, and just bring, just that's enough. And He will take that brokenness, and He will do what only He can do. And He will bring forth freedom, and life, and restoration. Some of us are in the glory. Some of us are in the two. If you remember from a few weeks ago, we said we go from glory to glory. It's not one mountain. It's a mountain range. With God, we go from glory to glory, to glory, to glory. Well, if you're in the glory, don't try to tell people in the "to" what they should be doing right now. Just keep meeting with God and keep fueling your fire, and keep getting it really, really hot. And if you're in the "to," don't think something's wrong with you. Don't think that you're, what am I doing wrong, and why isn't it? Just, he's inviting

you to bring whatever measure of faith you have to him. That's just, whatever, just, just bringing that, just bringing that. And what I love is that Jesus says, this kind can only come out by prayer and fasting. The interesting part is He doesn't pray or fast in that moment, but because He lived a lifestyle of prayer and fasting. And what I want to say to you right now is there are more people in this church praying and fasting for you than I have ever seen in the 20 years I've been here. Right now, there are people you have never met and probably never will, that aren't even at your campus. Usually, all we can see is literally the person that we were forced to pray with five minutes ago, sitting next to us. We don't realize that there are other campuses, of other people, just like us, who are also a part of this thing. There are people you will never meet that are praying for you every single day. People like Mina, and Irma, and Thelma, and Greg, and Chris, and Jay, and Stephanie. And they pray, and they fast, and they cry out, and their heart breaks, and God is moving in those prayers. And as they're praying and fasting, I believe things are being set free, and deliverance is happening, and healings are taking place, and ash is being removed, and fire is being ignited. Listen to me, who prays for you? In your daily life, adult, who prays for you? This is why you need to be rooted in a local church, because we pray for you. We pray for you. You're like I am, me, and Jesus, and we do our own thing, that's great. But no one's praying for you then unless you've got the ultimate grandma. And if we all had the ultimate grandma, we'd all be a lot different. So, my guess is you do a lot of your life without anyone praying for you. Are you okay with that? You have to decide if you're okay with that. I'm not okay with it, and I'm very grateful for the people I will never meet and will never know their names, and yet they pray and fast for me to be set free in Jesus' name. Root yourself into a body because then God moves in the midst of that. And so, if you're in the two, I think God just wants to tell you today, my grace is sufficient for you. Wherever you are, whatever's going on he, it's, and he's enough. And He hasn't abandoned you there, and he's gonna be leading you to the next glory in the days to come. And we have to remember that we said right in the beginning, it's not by might or power but by my spirit. It's not trying harder, doing better, behaving, no. It's opening yourself up to the grace of God and the spirit of God in Jesus's name and letting Him do that which only He can do. You with me on this?

See, here's what I think is happening, right? Here's what I think is happening right now. What I think is happening right now is that things in our lives are being exposed and revealed so they can be refined. You're like, I don't know if being prayed for is worth that trade-off. I think things are being exposed and revealed so they can be refined. How do you refine something? You set fire to it. Fire burns off all the impurities. This is why Peter says, "In this you greatly rejoice, in this trial that you're having, though for now, for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials, because it doesn't always feel good. But these have come so that your faith of greater worth than gold which perishes even though refined by fire may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor." The way you refine gold is you set it on fire. You heat it up. You put fire to it. And what happens? All the impurities in the gold come to the surface and burn off. But it is kind of an awkward, uncomfortable process for that piece of gold. Why? Because usually the gold looks good on the outside, all the impurities are buried in the

inside. This is how you go from 10 carat, to 12 carat to 14 carat, to 18 carat, to 24 carat, to pure gold. What do you do? You have to refine it by fire. And when you watch gold as it melts down and starts to burn, you know, it's burning the impurities. It's the impurities that are burning off. Now if gold could talk and gold could feel, it'd be like ahh this is terrible, make it stop. But how else are you gonna get pure gold? The problem with us is I think we have a 10-carat gold kind of faith, fancy on the outside, impure on the inside. Looks good, yeah, looks really good. But if we actually set it to fire, there is a whole lot of stuff that has to come out. And God wants to bring it out not because He needs it out, or because He needs you to conform, or be religious, or be better, He wants you to be free. He wants you to be pure. He wants you to be healthy. In fact, this is why in Revelation, Jesus says, "You say, I'm rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. But you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you can become rich; and have white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness and put on ointment on your eyes so that you can actually see." I think this defines us, defines me a lot. I think I'm rich. I think I'm good. I think I've got it figured out, and Jesus says, you're, but you're deceived. See, when He says, wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, naked, did you notice the tone I used? I didn't say you're wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Because that's not how God would talk to you there. He's the God of compassion and grace. And so, what He would say is, is you're deceived because you're fancy on the outside but you're impure on the inside. And so, I counsel you, you buy from me gold refined in the fire, pure gold. How do I buy gold from Jesus? It's a good question. Well, it's certainly not American dollars, and it's not going to church more, and it's not being more religious, and it's not doing more things, and it's not being a do-gooder. How do I buy gold that's been refined from Jesus, which is a picture of faith? Submission and surrender, there's only one way to get it. To submit and surrender to Him and open up your hands so He can give you everything that belongs to him. So that He can make you truly rich, and holiness, and purity, and joy, and life, and freedom, and hope, so that you can cover your nakedness and open your eyes so that you can see him, so that you can finally be free.

So, here's what I'm trying to tell you: let the fire do its work. Ready? Let the fire do its work. Come on, say it with me once, let the fire do its work. It's burning right now, and it's doing it. So, if you feel exposed, if you feel revealed, if you think things are coming to the surface, the fire is doing what it does. Oh my gosh! It's all coming together. This is what happens. So, if you feel yourself like all of a sudden, you're like this is a lot. I'm feeling like stress and anxious and all these things, and all these things that I thought I had dealt with in the past, all these things I haven't struggled with in a while, all these things that nobody knew about me, all of a sudden, they're all coming to the surface. The fire is doing its work. That's what it's supposed to do. I mean, think about it, when you heat something up, what happens to it? Its molecules start going crazy, physics lesson. It gets really, really fast, and it expands. Okay, right now, as the fire of God is burning in this place, your life is expanding, and things are getting faster and faster, and faster to bring the impurities to the surface so that He can set them free. What happens when things get cold? They shrink, and they slow down. Okay, so maybe that anxiety, that stress, that fear, that overwhelming, that sin, that brokenness, that pain, it's all coming to the

surface because the fire is doing its work, because he's taking you from 10 carat to 24 carat. And there's only one way there, through the fire of God. Think of Jesus, He is the consuming fire and the prince of peace at the same time. What does that mean? He's the consuming fire; it means that He has an energy that is infinitely fast. His molecules are going infinitely fast. He doesn't even have molecules, but if you catch what I'm saying. And at the same time, he's the prince of peace. How can you be a consuming fire and the prince of peace at the same time? Because He is perfectly holy and pure. So there now are no impurities to come out of Him. There is no worry, and stress, and fear, and flesh and brokenness that needs to come out of Him so He has peace. So as God heats up the fire in your life, what he's doing is, He is refining you so you will be a man or woman with energy, supernatural spirit given energy and peace at the same time, because you're pure and you're healthy and you're whole. Think of Isaiah, remember Isaiah? Isaiah is a prophet. He thinks he's got it figured out. Isaiah is the kind of guy that would have said to the people around him, I'm rich. I'm doing great. I'm better than you. I'm better than that guy, certainly. And I mean, my family looks better than his family. And my church is better than their church. I mean, this was Isaiah. He's a prophet. He speaks for God. If anybody could say it, Isaiah could, and yet God takes him to heaven. He's standing in the throne room, and he looks face-to-face with the consuming fire of God, hits the ground. His immediate response is, "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips and I come from a people of unclean lips." Here's my question for you. Who told him there was uncleanness in him? No one said anything. When you see the Lord, no one has to say anything. This is what it means to be a Jesus-focused church. We talk about Jesus because as we talk about Jesus, our brokenness comes to the surface because we can't behold Him and hold on to worldliness at the same time. So, we don't have to constantly talk about worldliness and flesh. We can talk about Jesus. Because when we see him, we fall like Isaiah to the ground and we repent, and we confess, and we're honest. Then it says, a seraphim, which literally is an angel, the literally name of seraphim means burning ones. How cool is that? For another time, another day. Literally gets a burning coal from the altar, comes and touches his mouth, and says, see this is forgiven you and set you free and atoned you. The fire of God exposed, revealed, and refined and set him free. Or how about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Remember those three guys? Rack, Shack, and Benny? Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, builds this big demonic statue, tells everybody, if you don't bow down to it, you're gonna get thrown in the fiery furnace. They refused to do it. And so, Nebuchadnezzar heats up the furnace as hot as he can possibly make it. Listen to these words, gets the strongest, this is what it says, strongest soldiers in the kingdom to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They are now bound, and he throws them into the furnace. He throws them into the fire. And Nebuchadnezzar is shocked when he looks back in the fire, and he says I thought we threw three guys in there, there are four walking around. And one looks like the Son of Man, right, and they are unbound and unharmed. When you are consumed with the fire of God, you will not be burned by the fires of destruction. They were the kind of men who were consumed with the fire of God. So, you could throw them into the fire of destruction all day long, and they were not going to be burned. Why? Because the consuming fire of God is significantly hotter than the burning fires of destruction. And what happened was the strongest stronghold that they could put on those three men were burned

off in the fire of God. I just declare over your life that that strong stronghold that you can't get rid of as you're thrown into the fire right now in the season, it's being burned off, that mental health, that heart, that soul, that body thing, this is what God's doing. Listen to me. This is why we have to be baptized in both water and fire. Why? Because water baptism cleans the outside, fire baptism cleans the inside. So, I need more than just to be dipped in water that cleans the outside. That's important. But I need the fire of God in my soul because it purifies and refines, and it brings things to the surface. And when those things happen, be honest about it. Confess your sins to each other, and pray for each other that you may be healed. Like, literally don't know, it's coming, ah, shove it back down. No, no. It took. Here's what I want to say to you: Do you know how much energy and heat it takes to make gold hot enough to start bringing those things to the surface? So, the fact that anything in your life right now, from anxiety, to stress, to fear, to sin, to flesh that might be coming to the surface, don't shove it back down and have to start all over it cold. Ah, like just mmm, this is embarrassing. I know. And it's probably the last part of the work that God needs to do in that thing. Don't let all of the energy go out and start back over cold, because it takes a lot to get the fire of the people to where it is right now. So, in Jesus' name, lean into it. Even we prayed for each other. Why do we pray for each other? As an act of faith and humility, that is healing you. Look, I didn't like that. I know. But I love you, so just come with us. You're okay. We're doing good together. Be free in Jesus' name. I mean look what Paul says, "Be confident of this that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." I just want you to know that as long as you're alive and on this earth, God will keep working until you become fully formed into His images like this. So, He will keep bringing heat and fire back to that thing until it's gone. So, you may as well yeah, as good a day as any, let's send it today, you know. So, He is gonna bring the good work to completion. But Paul also goes on to say, "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." So, which is it? Is He gonna do the good work, or do I need to work out my salvation? Yes. You can't do it without him, and He won't do it without you, which is the key passage that we've been talking about in this entire thing that we are responsible to keep the fire burning. 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. The priest shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed and carry the ashes outside the camp. 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 offering on the fire. The fire must be kept burning, it must not go out. Ready? He gives us three things that you have to do to keep the fire burning; remove, add, and arrange. Remove, add, and arrange.

If you want the fire of God to burn in your life, you have to remove the ashes. Do you realize, ashes are probably the greatest fire retardant there is, just like his weird own paradox? What is ash? It's something that's already been burnt up and it like starts to encroach on the flame. Ash does not burn. And so, ash will eventually choke the fire out. And so, He said, okay remove the ashes and carry them outside of camp so far away from my life that I don't ever have to deal with them again. What are the ashes? I think there's three kinds of ashes. There's the ash of the world, there's the ash of the past, and then there's the ash of sacrifice. There's the ash of the

world; this is the one that's super easy. Anything in your life that's worldly is ash, and it's choking out the fire of God; bitterness, offense, unforgiveness, pornography, sin, addiction, worldliness, idolatry, lust of the eyes, cravings of the flesh, pride of life, greed, all of those things it is worldly ash. We need to consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God and Christ, and we need to scoop those ash. You already know what these ones are. I don't even have to tell, like you know that's of the world, and it's actually choking out the fire. Are you willing to remove it and get it outside the camp? That's the world. Second kind of ash is the past. The past. We all have a past in our life; past of trauma, grief, loss, sorrow, brokenness, pain, victimization, disappointment, unmet expectations, real things that have really happened to you that have been done to you, and that you've done to others. If you don't deal with that past and get it out of there, it's gonna choke the fire of God out of your life. What does that mean? That means you are not your trauma, and you are not a victim, and you are not your past. We need to take off the old self and put on the new self in Christ. It's not minimizing that these things aren't real, or that they weren't painful. But your identity is not what happened to you or what you did to someone else. In Jesus's name, scoop that ash out, carry it outside the camp, stop talking about it. Stop defining yourself by it. Stop owning it. Stop carrying it around. Stop introducing yourself as it. I'm not saying you don't need more healing. No, you probably do. But you have to remove that ash so the fire of God can once again burn bright to heal the pain, and the wounds, and the residues that are in there. We spend way too much time defining ourselves by the past. He is the God of the present, not the God of the past. He wants the fire to burn today, not keep talking about how the fires of destruction hurt you yesterday. Fuel the fire of God today. Don't keep bringing up. And I'm not saying don't, I'm not saying just pretend like no, you gotta heal. But we got to move on from the burns of the fires of destruction from yesterday. And then the third thing is, is the ash of sacrifice. There are amazing things that you've brought to God, and you've put on the altar, and they have burned. When you give God a sacrifice, just so you know, when you put it on the altar, once it catches a flame, you can't get it back. It's gone. You gave it to God. It was good, it was beautiful, it was glorious. Okay, but here's the problem. Once that sacrifice has been burned, it's now ash. And so many of us get caught in this cycle where we want to live in the glory days of yesterday. We remember the sacrifice of yesterday and how amazing it was. We remember going to camp. We remember that song. We remember that small group. Remember, when we had those people. For some of you it's, remember when we were in that church. And it was beautiful, and it was glorious, and you offered sacrifices, and the fire of God fell, and you enjoyed His warmth, and He consumed you, and He burned. But because you never dealt with the ash, you are unable to experience the fire now. It was something beautiful, like glory to glory. Here's the deal: once you go from glory to you can never go back to that glory. Crossing the mountain range with God is a one-way direction. You can't, it's, you'd like turn around and be like where'd that mountain go? It's ash. It's been burned up. Why? Because he's leading you forward. So, I believe a prophetic word for some of you, some of you had an amazing church experience at another church. It was glorious. It was mountaintop. You offered sacrifices. God fell. You had friends. You met with God. You heard His voice. It was profoundly beautiful, but that season has ended. And he's now asking you will you remove the ash and take it outside of

camp so that you can put a new sacrifice on, so that you can experience His fire today with a new group of people and not live with this old, it was amazing. Like your stories of God should never be greater talking about how great it was in the past than what he's doing now. Doesn't mean you're not in it, too. It's not what I'm saying. But it should never be, remember when. Listen, do you realize when Jesus showed up on the scene, and the Pharisees wanted to hold on to the temple? The moment Jesus was born, the temple became ash. The temple, yes, Solomon's temple, where the presence of God was, fire, thing, they all. The moment Jesus showed up, that became ash. Why? Because it was a former glory. There was a better glory right in front of them. And they couldn't take the new glory because they were so longing for the old glory. In Jesus's name, in Jesus's name by the grace and compassion of God, sometimes honestly, it's harder, it's harder to get over old glories than it is to get over old past wounds. Can you scoop it out and take it outside of camp? So, ready, here's the question. Since we've started this conversation, have you removed anything, added anything, or arranged? Oh no, I forgot, see? I got so excited about all that, and I'm like so out of time.

So, you have to remove, you have to add, right, all the things we've been talking about, about the relationships, sacrifice, secret place, all that stuff. And you have to arrange your life. You have to organize it in such a way that it can breathe and it can burn. So the question again, thank you for re-asking it, is, have you removed anything, added anything, or arranged anything so that the fire can burn? Or have we just talked about it? Because at some point in time, we have to move from a conversation I'm fueling the fire to fueling the fire. There's a time and a place to talk about it. And then there's a time and a place to act on it, which is why James says, "Do not merely listen to the word", don't just have a conversation, start there, but then you actually got to go do it. You actually gotta go do something about it, you actually got to go like make it happen. You with me on this? Listen, let me try to maybe pull it together with this. In my circle, this past week, my circle has a bunch of young leaders in our church. And so, in our circle, I just started. I sent here. I want to ask you a couple questions. The first question I just want to ask you is, "What's God doing in our church right now?" And I could see the look on their face like almost like I hadn't thought about that question. And they thought, and they wrestled. And I could see it on their face, and they were trying. They're like I know there's a right answer, I don't want to get it wrong. And they kind of said some things, and their answers were okay. And so, I said, "Okay, let me bend the question. Based on what God's doing in our church, how are you living differently right now?" And I could see the look on their face like oh now, I'm really in trouble. And their answers were okay. And then I bent the question a third time. I said, "Okay, based on what God's doing in our church, how are you leading differently right now?" And that's when they got it. And I watched the aha click on to be like God is doing something right now, and I don't even know that I can define it. But I know it should elicit a different reality out of who I am and how I live. I know that at some level, there are some things that should be being removed and being added, and being arranged, even as we speak, even if I don't fully understand it. And as we had that conversation, the gravity like just came into. I could, I mean, I saw them. I had to spend the last 10 minutes of the circle trying to pull them back up because they caught the sacredness of the season. They caught the gravity of this

moment. They caught the reality that God is doing something, and I might not be able to define it, and I don't have to define it. I just have to follow. I just have to, I just have to remove. I just have to, I just have to arrange. Like what if, because I know some of you right, spring break and Easter and all the stuff that's coming here, and before all that, what if there was just, just one. What if you removed just one thing? Or what if you added just one thing? Or what have you arranged just one thing as a way of faith and humility working together to say, I want the fire of God to go in my life, and I don't want to just go on spring break, and I don't want to just have Easter, and I don't want to just get caught in the motions. I literally want to be like, there is a sacredness to this season that I do not want to miss. Do not miss the sacredness of the season. Just listen to me, it is so much harder to reignite a half-burnt log than it is to start with a log that's never been burned. The hardest thing in a fire, once it's gone out, is to reignite. It's got char on one side, and it's got a little bit of fuel on the other, and it's a really hard thing to light. I would much rather a fresh log. So, here's what I would just say, in this season, whatever God's doing, don't let it go out, don't miss it. You don't have to be, He who began a good work, and you will be faithful to complete it. So, I don't have to, but I need to work out my salvation with fear and trembling. And there may be some things that I already see this, it's the, I already know, I already know this has to be removed. I already know this has to be added, and I already know the way my life is arranged ain't working, and I need to rearrange it. The question is now, will you come with that mustard seed of faith that maybe is cracked, broken, dried, crumbly? I do believe, but help me in my unbelief. And I don't even know Jesus that I wanted that bad, but I don't want my kids to have what I had. So today is the day I choose to break it. Will you help me? And the consuming fire, prince of peace, God of compassion and grace would swoop in and do what only He can do in Jesus' name.

So, you close your eyes. Today was a little bit of a buffet. And the invitation for you is to simply take whatever portion looked good for you. Simply grab a hold of that which the Holy Spirit was drawing to your heart and to your mind. I don't even want to ask you another question. I just want to tell you, Jesus loves you so much that He will never stop pursuing you, calling you, looking for you, drawing you, healing you, transforming you, purifying you. You may be in a beautiful glory, you may be in a very deep "to." He's the same God in the valley as He is on the mountain. And He is just as good to you in the valley as He is on the mountain. And so Holy Spirit, not by might, not by power, but by you, may you do something sacred and special and gravitas in my life, in our lives, in our families, and in this church. But you set a fire in our soul that we cannot contain nor control, and would you give us a grace to want more, and more, and more of you, God, because you're the only one worth having. May the fire of God burn bright in your life in Jesus' name. Amen.