

Fanning it into Flame

Sunday, May 02, 2010

Partners with God

Jesus said in **Luke 12:49**, "*I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!*" What kind of fire was he talking about? I believe he was anticipating a movement where people got what he was talking about and spread it to those around them. Fire has a way of igniting anything flammable in its path. People touching people with the same thing they were touched with, namely, his love.

We are celebrating Holy Communion today. Jesus meant for it to be a dynamic experience of touching his heart and experiencing his presence. The Apostle Paul identifies it in **1 Corinthians 10:15-17** as a participation in what Christ has done for us. Participation is the operative word in this message. God wants us to partner with him by participating in what he is doing. He never meant church to be just outward form and holding to a doctrinal statement. He intended it to be a dynamic ongoing relationship that would have tangible effects. John tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel, "*to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*" Receiving him and believing him was essential. Salvation is not limited to our being given the right to go to Heaven, but rather is more concerned with our having a personal relationship with the God of all creation.

There are two stories from the Old Testament that sets the backdrop for this word. The first is from **2 Chronicles 20:1-23** were the King of Judah, Jehoshaphat hears of an imminent attack upon his nation. He responds by calling for a fast that involves men, women, and children to seek the face of God. God gave a prophetic word to Jahaziel who relayed it telling them that the "*battle is not yours, but God's.*" Then he instructs them to march against the enemy at a specific location and God will deliver them. Jehoshaphat tells the people to have faith in the Lord God and in his prophets and they would be successful. They are so excited about this that they appointed men to sing praises to God as they marched in front of the people. Verse 22 highlights a very key moment: "*As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.*" The victory started when they began to sing and praise the Lord. God not only delights in our participation, he requires it. They were required to march against the enemy.

The second story is from **Joshua 3:3-17** where God tells Joshua that he is going to begin to exalt him in the eyes of all Israel that they may see that he was on a par with Moses. God told him to send the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant into the water and that a miracle of stopping the river would take place. To make it a little harder the waters were at flood stage at this time. "*Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, 16 the water from upstream stopped flowing.*" It didn't stop until their feet touched the water!

In **2 Peter 1:1-12** the Apostle Peter tells us that God's divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness and that out of his own glory and goodness he has given us great and precious promises, "*so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*" There's that word again, participate. God wants us to enjoy our life in him by partnering with him in the process of daily life. He wants to live in us and through us. It's our inheritance. It's our privilege. It's our life. Life is not automatic. Life's answers are not automatic. We must ask to receive, seek to find, and knock for the door to be opened. Let's not miss out on life's blessings because we had some preconceived idea of the way we thought it should work, rather than flowing with the way God says it works.