

## Spiritual Power Principles

“Adding the Wood to the Fire” – we have heard that, but do we as Christians understand that?” If you have ever been disillusioned, let down, hurt, confused, betrayed or ready to throw in the towel, this message is for you.

Last week we talked about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. We mentioned that the “fire” burns away the hindrances to Holy Spirit power and consumes our reluctances. It also burns away our hurts and betrayals. But there is a question we DID NOT answer, in my opinion; and that is, “How do I fuel the fire?”, or “How do I keep the “fire” burning so that I can be as victorious as Jesus promised?” The real answer, I believe, is to hang in there while it hurts by keeping the vision God put in your heart. God is a God that builds large fires, beyond imagination, but any large fire starts with a small fire and then God adds the wood (we shall see what that means).

When I was an 8-year-old boy, God cornered me one day and called me into the ministry. Not everyone in my family was thrilled with this, but I was. **What I didn't realize at the time was that I was going to a “powerless” church and how that would lower my expectation of what God could do if I had a heart without limitation.** I slowly became aware that something was missing, because what I read in the Bible wasn't happening where I was. I was reading the Bible one day and I came to this verse – Eph. 3:20 -- *“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us ...”* NKJV, and I had my answer – THERE WAS NO POWER WORKING IN ME, AND I HAVE NEVER BEEN TAUGHT HOW TO FIND THAT POWER OR HOW TO KEEP IT!! And I thought it can't happen this way! Those kinds of thoughts were considered to be “rebellious” where I was. At the same time this gave me such a feeling of personal frustration.

Friends, signs and wonders and miracles – this is God! We are living in the time when “all things are possible to him who believes.” Miracles and ACTS of God are happening all over the world, but is it happening where you live? It will take the baptism of the fire of God! And in this case, God has to “apply the wood” before the fire can be as large as He intends it.

I want to tell all you precious hearts what I see right now – please hear this because it is quite common and is one of the hindrances that the “fire of

God” can burn away. Listen – The Word of God is full of the Lord’s promises. But I see many in the body of Christ ask for the promises and don’t see the fulfillment right away, and get disappointed. You could call such folk a child with a promise but no “obvious” way to fulfill it! Well, be encouraged, God’s timing is always perfect – **AFTER we are prepared** to receive what is “exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.” There is an account in God’s Word that tells us of a person who got a vision from God ... BUT ... God had to make him ready by “adding wood to his fire”

### **TEXT – Gen. 37:5 – 11**

Joseph was one of the younger boys in his family, and the expected custom (the way things *must happen*) in his dreams were being turned upside down. Joseph’s brothers were not throwing a party or shouting, “Oh, praise God, my younger brother he is going to rule over us!” There was jealousy and envy in abundance. And jealousy is the breeding ground for hatred. Many times jealousy surfaces when you think you are not appreciated or overlooked without realizing God is the Potter & we are ???

**Principle – When you are resisting someone else’s future, you cut off your own future!**

There is something here that is often missed by the Spirit-filled saints of God. When God gives you a big dream, it is very likely that the closest people around you are not going to be excited about your vision. And it is also possible that some people who are very close to you will betray you. Joseph’s brothers did that! **First they decided to kill him, but then they sold Joseph to an Egyptian caravan not being even slightly aware that their sale was an enrollment of their brother in the Holy Spirit Fire Department to shape Joseph to make the dream come true God’s way. Actually the sale of Joseph was the kindling wood for the fire God had in mind for Joseph.**

You know, you can do 2 things with betrayal – you can become bitter or better. We probably have all heard that. Funny, though, that the difference between the two word’s spelling is a little letter “l”. There is something that is often missed in regard to betrayal – betrayal can actually launch you into the destiny God has for you. It is sometimes His way to get you from one place to another. While Joseph is in Egypt, the fire of the Spirit of God will burn away his arrogance, his immaturity and lack of discernment –

replacing them with wisdom from above that could astound the head of a nation – the Pharaoh himself!

I just have to pause for a moment and say something else – If you haven't died to yourself, and you get betrayed, it can hurt so much that your reaction can say more about you than the betrayal. It is a fact, fellow-believer, when you want to operate in signs and miracles and in the promises and spiritual things of the Lord, you will be attacked and persecuted. And if you are not dead to yourself, if you are not totally given over to Jesus, attacks and betrayals can cause you to lose confidence. We are meant to be seated in the promises of God until He develops them and makes them ready for us to live in!

### **Principle – If I won't "sit" I might quit!**

Sometimes we get so wrapped up in our circumstances we miss what God says – Heb. 10:35 -- Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. NKJV. **I want to say this without apology – your personal approval with God is far more important than the approval of people. That is true but hard for the flesh to accept!**

I have walked in Joseph's sandals far too many times (far too many in MY OPINION, not God's). I don't compare myself to Joseph, but I can learn from what he did. We all can learn from him and how he reacts. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers and made to work for a man named Potiphar – sort of the warden of Egyptian prison. Joseph became so good at his duties that he started to run Potiphar's household. Wasn't long before Potiphar's "loose wife" wanted Joseph in bed. Now human nature would say, *"Why not, after all, look what has happened to me. I have the right!"* But he didn't – instead he ran away from her remaining faithful to God. What did his faithfulness cost him? Another betrayal by Potiphar's wife and a trip to Egyptian death row where he will live like a dirty animal until his execution. No one considering at the time (unless you look past the present that this was God adding more wood to the fire.)

But Joseph still remained faithful and met a butler and a baker from Pharaoh's palace in the same place. After interpreting their dreams, the butler was freed and Joseph asked that butler remember him to the Pharaoh. Did he do that? No! Just another betrayal to Joseph's faithfulness. But God put another piece of wood on the fire!

There is something going on here that Joseph didn't know -- Ps 105:17-22 says "He sent a man before them — Joseph — who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, he was laid in irons. **Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.** The king sent and released him, the ruler of the people let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his elders wisdom. NKJV

So, here it comes, sometimes God will give you a glimpse of His plan, but He has to MAKE YOU READY for it – even when we think we already are! Sometimes – what we go through is personal preparation for what lies ahead. Even though we might not be aware because we are so focused on OUR REALITY! And the wood He uses to keep the fire burning we shall see shortly.

**And so Joseph had a dream. Don't wait for the favor of others. Just let God get you ready for fulfillment.**

There is more to this story as you know already, but there is a key to Joseph's personal success that we often miss – **Joseph's success also came from his willingness to continue loving those who betrayed him!**

I would like to personalize the remainder of this sermon in terms of Joseph's dream. I have a dream that God gave me. There are days when I really need the baptism of fire just to keep on with the dream or vision. So I would like to say I am dreaming a dream God gave me of revival in this area. Yes, right here in Sheboygan. But I got to say this ~~

**When I think of revival, I don't think about a church full of people. I think about a people full of God!** Joseph gave his life to the dream. He demonstrated a love for God above love for self. He gave it all. Joseph proved a New Testament command before there ever was a New Testament.

Luke 9:23-24 -- Then He [Jesus] said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up **his cross** daily, and follow Me. NKJV. That, is what I would call, "furious love"! THAT – dear people is the WOOD!

He is not talking here about being saved or being a Christian. This is about being His disciple – His followers and learners of the meaning of life and

our destiny so that there can be revival. When Jesus said this, many turned back and quit!

Let me just mention something about the cross from Joseph's life – Although Joseph was betrayed many times, accused wrongly, and imprisoned, he died to himself in that prison long before the door to God's vision was opened to him to become a reality. And I am sure Joseph looked back and said, "God fulfilled my dream, but not the way I thought He would." It was Joseph's faith in God's faithfulness that got through every challenge, and so it is with us today.

I am going to say this very openly – Many people today feel like they have been thrown away like Joseph. I pray, that we, as God's Church, will stop feeding ourselves, and we will start seeing the dying world for which Jesus died. I pray that the fire of God will burn in us! Our cross has a message – "Let's sacrifice our lives and choose to live for God and those around us – for His glory!" Let's see our cross as the wood that keeps the fire burning.

I had a person ask me this week, "What do you see is the key to revival?" I said, "the cross". **You see, Jesus died on His cross to live in us, we die on our cross to live in Him.** Is that called revival – coming back to life?

My reply to that comment was a little disarming for them. Maybe even more disarming when I said, "You know Jesus' destiny as Lord and Savior came through His victory on the cross, but before His cross came betrayal." So what about our cross – many know exactly what I am saying.

What about evangelism? By all means! But don't forget it is possible to have a very big mouth & a small heart. Only our cross can deal with that!

There is a power available to all those who will take up their cross and follow the vision – Eph. 3:20 -- Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us ... NKJV. There is a power that is available beyond even what you are thinking, praying and dreaming right now, and it is available today. BURN THIS IN US, LORD! Burn it in us while unbelieving brethren drive the nails. No nail has the power to stop you – only you do! What about the cost?

It will cost you everything – it will cost the cross and endurance and faith when there is no evidence. But your sacrifice, just like Joseph, will not only

bring signs and miracles, it will bring the Kingdom of God right into our midst. This kind of power has little to do with how you pray or fast; it is the power, just like Joseph, that Jesus imparts through a sacrificial life. It is the power of godly example.

We read a section of Psalm 105 earlier. Joseph has chains and fetters that hurt. The power we have been speaking on will break the chains of our finite thinking so we can see the plan of God from His perspective. You are God's crowning achievement – Jesus is the crown jewel of your life. When we see these kinds of things – nothing shall be impossible. People say, "If only I knew God's will for my life."

God's will for your life is to come alive. The baptism in the Holy Spirit makes it happen – the baptism in fire keeps it happening. Why? Because the baptism in fire will move you to keep on doing what Jesus anointed us to do. It will break the chains and fetters of passivity and enable you to walk in the freedom of the Holy Spirit to do what is in our hearts to do.

God won't force you. He uses the fire to make room for more of Him and less of us. And when the "time of your word comes ..."

I know I have to risk the possibility of being misunderstood by saying this – If we are too focused on manifestations we can miss our goal. I had someone say, "I didn't feel God so He must have not been here. His Presence was not here." I wanted to say some nasty thing that would have made my flesh happy. All I said, was, "But what about Jesus' promise to never leave us or WHAT???" I love manifestations, but I got to say it – "I would rather see a soul rescued from hell than have one more goose bump. I would rather worship and let God be God!" The beauty of it all is that we get both!

Revival – the fire of God – brings balance between our feelings, feeling God, and walking in faith. It brings the Kingdom of God into our tabernacle!

If we want to walk in revival and transformation, we cannot do it ourselves, Jesus must be our focus.

One day we will all stand before God – Joseph will be there – Jesus will be there – the apostles will be there – many will be there -- Breath of Life Tabernacle will be there. And Jesus will say, "Father, here is My Bride and Your Church." These are the ones that carried their cross. When they

faced a problem they didn't know what to do with, they looked for Me, Father. They fixed their eyes on You! So I anointed them – and look at the harvest behind! These are the ones that were “crucified with Christ”.