

Holy Desire: Revisiting Our Word for the Year

For today and next Sunday, we want to revisit two significant words which the Lord has given to us. One is our word for the year from Matthew 3:11. The other word is about showing up well in culture from Philippians 1:27.

Holy Desire: baptize us with fire.

Thesis: In 2022, with the Holy Spirit helping us, we want to fuel our holy desire for the Lord.

- We are a people who desire one thing (Psalm 27:4).
- We declare that our hearts and our flesh cry out for the living God (Psalm 84:2).
- We are a people who cry out, “Baptize us with fire, your holy desire, Lord Jesus” (Matthew 3:11).

Text: Matthew 3:11

Here is the word that God gave us for 2022-- **Holy desire: baptize us with fire** (Matthew 3:11).

Augustine testified that “the entire life of a good Christian is nothing less than holy desire.”

What is holy desire? Holy desire is that longing which draws us near to God and to his purposes.

One of the primary focuses of holy desire is the desire for intimacy with God. This one desire, the desire for intimacy with God, gives birth to all other holy desires. As Augustine said, “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”

So, we cry out, “*Baptize us with fire, your holy desire, Lord Jesus*” (Matthew 3:11).

Let’s read the entire context of Matthew 3:11.

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea 2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the desert,

*'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'* ”

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing [they came to observe, not to repent and be baptized], he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for [signifying] repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:1–12).

Note: Before any move of God, the Lord sends his messengers to prepare people. God is trying to wake up his people and to bring revival. We will either turn to God through passion or persecution (and even judgment). My prayer is that God's people will turn to God and voluntarily kneel out of hearts of passion rather than being driven to our knees through persecution and judgment.

Now, let's focus on the last part of John's prophetic word about Jesus.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Matthew 3:11).

John the Baptist declared what all God's people longed for: the immersive, abiding, and abounding presence of the Holy Spirit for their lives. *Moses said, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" (Numbers 11:29).* In Joel 2:28-29, God promised that one day he would pour out his Spirit on all flesh, not just upon one person here or there. John the Baptist revealed that Jesus was the one who would fulfill this great promise and longing of Scripture and of God's people. The outpouring of God's Holy Spirit was a game changer. Now, there would be a people, not just a person here or there, who would move in the anointing, revelation, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Not only would Jesus baptize with the Holy Spirit, but he would also baptize people with his fire. I believe that fire represents his fiery passion. Fire can have different impact.

Fire can heat your home, or it can burn it down. Fire can purify and purge or consume and destroy.

Several years ago, I felt like the Lord impressed me that “fire” referred to the fiery passion of Jesus. **We need both the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism or immersion of the fiery passion of Jesus.**

We are a people who cry out, “Baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire, your holy desire, Lord Jesus” (Matthew 3:11).

Jesus is a man of passion. His heart and life are on fire.

1. *“His eyes are like blazing fire”* (Revelation 1:14). Jesus’ eyes burn with fiery love for his Bride. (See Song of Songs.)
2. *I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!* (Luke 12:49). Jesus came to set the earth on fire, not with the fire of judgment, but with the fiery revelation of the kingdom of God. Yes, when the revelation of the kingdom of God comes, it divides families, people, and communities, because people must respond and must choose.
3. *Our God is a consuming fire* (Hebrews 12:29; Deuteronomy 4:24 “a jealous God” which is a term of passionate love). God is love and his love is white hot for his people and his creation. Jesus is God. God is love. So, Jesus embodies the love of God toward us in fiery passion.
4. *“Zeal for his father’s house consumes him”* (John 2:17; Psalm 69:9; Hebrews 12:29). Jesus is characterized by zeal; he is passionate and fiery. God is zealous, passionate, and fiery in his love for us and for Jesus, too (Isaiah 9:7).
5. *Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent* (Revelation 3:19). The fiery Bridegroom King calls us to be men and women of passion and zeal—fire. **If we are lukewarm, if we are indifferent or apathetic, if we are going through the motions, Jesus calls us to repent and to change.**
6. *“I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them”* (John 17:26). Jesus prayed to the Father, asking the Father to help us to love Jesus like the Father loves Jesus. The Father is aflame with love for Jesus. May we pray and ask God, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to help us love Jesus like the Father does.
7. *He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire* (Matthew 3:11).

One way that we experience holy desire is to ask Jesus to baptize us with his fiery, passionate love.

We are a people who cry out, “Baptize us with fire, your holy desire, Lord Jesus” (Matthew 3:11).

Another way that we are fueling our Holy Desire is by getting close to the fire.

1. **Get close to God, the source of fire.**
 - a. *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our “God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28–29).*
 - b. Spiritual practices help us to make contact with God who is passionate, loving, zealous, and fiery.
2. **Trust Jesus to help you burn brighter.**
 - a. *“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. 2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. 3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; 4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope” (Isaiah 42:1-4).*
 - b. Jesus knows how to blow on the embers of you heart to rekindle passionate love for God.
3. **Stay close to people who are on fire for God and who challenge you and inspire you to pursue God passionately.**
 - a. Passion for God is contagious; people who are on fire for God inspire us.
 - b. Passionate followers of Jesus catch others on fire.
 - c. Passion for God is fueled by personal and corporate prayer.
 - d. *For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen (Ephesians 3:14–21).*

