

"GLORIFYING GOD IN THE FIRE"

TEXT: *Isa 24:15 Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.*

THESIS: To show that the fiery trials which God sends to test us or purify us can be the best times in life for us when we learn to glorify Him.

INTRO.: A. It is one thing to sing God's praises in the good times, but quite another to learn to sing in the hard times. It is easy to praise the Lord in prosperous times, not so easy in time of poverty. We can thank Him for giving us things, but find it hard when He takes them away. Job said in the midst of unfathomable loss: *"...the Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away blessed be the name of the Lord."* (Job 1:21b)

B. In our text Isaiah is prophesying about the coming captivity & destruction of the land by the armies of Assyria & beyond that about the terrible future Tribulation upon Israel & the world before the Millennium. A graphic description of the desolation is given in the verses preceding the text & then the prophet concludes with *"Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires..."*

ILLUS.: Obviously "fires" stand for all forms of testing & destruction in the text, so let's focus on the fires which come into our lives. What exactly does fire produce?

I. FIRE PRODUCES PAIN: (Text)

A. Pain Makes Us Seek Help:

1. One positive blessing of pain is that we seek the Lord more quickly than when we have no pain.
2. Note that the text says "fires" not just "fire".
3. There are church fires, home fires, marriage fires, etc.

ILLUS.: One preacher was about to quit. When asked why, he said "Because my ministry is no longer ministering. I'm having to put out fires all the time." But if I read my Bible properly that has been the ministry of God's people down thru the centuries. God's people have always had to deal w/ fires. But God wants us to glorify Him in the fires; not complain or quit.

4. Sometimes we start our own fires, sometimes the devil starts our fires & oftentimes God starts our fires; in all of the fires we are to glorify Him!

ILLUS.: The difference between the believer's fires & pain & those of the unbeliever, is that our fires & our pain have a purpose. The pain & fires of the unsaved is meaningless. No matter who starts our fires, we are His children & there is a purpose for them.

II. FIRE PRODUCES ASHES:

1 Pet. 1:6-7 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be TRIED WITH FIRE, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

A. Fire Reduces Elements to Basics:

1. Every fiery trial of our lives purges & purifies some of the dross from us.
2. God often strips away needless or meaningless or extraneous things which get in the way of our pure worship & praise of Him.

ILLUS.: Perhaps if He hadn't removed that thing, person, job, money, or ? He would have missed out on our fellowship. Maybe with that obstruction gone, He has a cleaner vessel or a less encumbered vessel to work through Maybe that thing kept us from serving Him.

II Tim.2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this ife; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

B. Ashes Produce New Growth:

ILLUS.: Acacia trees, teak & long leaf pine trees are dependent upon regular burning of grass & brush between the trees for their survival. -Britannica

The fires in the believer's life often create new opportunities for growth. Ex.: Michael White's imprisonment is the fire that produced the ashes which have prompted new growth in his life.

III. FIRE PRODUCES HEAT: Daniel 3

A. Keeps Us Warm:

ILLUS.: The same fire that produces pain also heats our homes in the winter & keeps us comfortable when the snow flies. Fire contained in the furnace produces no pain, but provides warmth. God doesn't send fires of testing to harm us but to help us.

1. Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego went into the furnace expecting to burn, but instead they became a part of one of the most fantastic experiences of mankind & most spectacular miracles in the Bible.
2. A believer is never alone in the fire!

ILLUS.: When the King looked into the furnace, he expected to see 3 french-fried Jews, but instead he saw 4 figures in the fire & one of them was the Son of God! No doubt that one experience in these 3 young men's lives warmed their hearts throughout their days. Sometimes the thing we think will hurt us the most is the greatest blessing we will ever experience.

B. Makes Food Tastier:

ILLUS.: The difference between a steak cooked indoors in an electric oven cannot compare with that same steak cooked outdoors on a grill! The fire makes the difference!

1. The Word of God is sweeter in the fire than at any other time.
2. The fellowship of the Lord is sweeter in the fire.
3. The blessing of Christian friends is sweeter in the fire.

IV. FIRE PRODUCES LIGHT:

A. Enables You To See More:

1. Fire not only produces pain, ashes & heat, but also light & light helps us see more clearly.
2. Until you have been in the fire, perhaps you could not see the Lordas clearly.
3. Until you have been in the fire, maybe you could not understand or have compassion on others who have been where you are.
4. Until you have been in the fire, many Scriptures meant little to you.

NOTE: Some Scripture must be interpreted through personal experience, not by a preacher or Bible teacher. I have learned more in the fires in the ministry than I ever learned at the feet of a Professor.

V. FIRE PRODUCES TEMPERING:

A. Tempering Is A Hardening Process:

1. When an axe blade is not tempered it loses its edge quickly.
2. It needs to be placed in the fire to harden the steel so it will hold its edge!

ILLUS.: Maybe God put you in the fire because you were too soft. You were not able to keep an edge. When you came up against the hard circumstances you lost your edge, like the axe blade does when it comes up against the

hard wood. Only the fire can temper the axe blade or the believer!

When Job went through the fires of testing, he glorified the Lord, he didn't wait till the fire was out!

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

CONCL.: Fire out of control is destructive. But fire under control is productive. Every fire the believer faces is under the Lord's control! No fire touches the believer apart from the Lord's permission.

We need to learn to glorify the Lord **IN** the fire, not to wait till **AFTER** the fire is over.