

## Beach, Bonfire, Bento and Bible Study **F.I.R.E.**

### **Faithfull, Irresistible, Refining, Everlasting**

**F.** - God Reveals His **Faithfulness** through fire.

**I.** - Just as we are drawn **Irresistibly** to fire, so God draws us to Himself through grace.

**R.** - God **Refines** our faith through fire.

**E.** - God's very presence in **Eternity** will be a Blazing Fire, a terror for one and great beauty for another.

Fire facts: One Fire in Three components

Fires start when a flammable and/or a combustible material (FUEL) with an adequate supply of oxygen or another oxidizer (OXYGEN) is subjected to enough heat (IGNITION) and is able to sustain a chain reaction (EXISTANCE). This is commonly called the fire tetrahedron.

✓ Tetra meaning : four

✓ Hedron meaning: A crystal or geometric figure having a specified kind or number of surfaces

The Bible teaches that God similarly exists in three persons, referred to as the Trinity. Matt 3:16-17, Eph 4:4-6

One God in Three Persons - God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit

Last Weeks theological mind bender: Would God still exist if one of the three members where removed?

Answer: No. At least not the God that is described in the Bible.

Just as we are drawn **Irresistibly** to fire, so God draws us to Himself through grace.

World-renowned psychologist and past President of the American Psychological Association Elizabeth K. Carll, PhD., recently published the Textbook; Trauma psychology: issues in violence, disaster, health, and illness. The phenomenon of human attraction to fire is described as follows. "Many assume that people are naturally repulsed by fire and that they would run far from it and as quickly as they could. The facts regarding human behavior in the presence of fire do not support this assumption. The first reaction to fire, more often than not, is to be attracted to it, to look at it, to move toward it with curiosity."<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, some of us may be here tonight because we are drawn to the very idea of a bonfire. The author continues, "There is no doubt that fire has attractive qualities. It catches a person's attention and draws people to it, especially when it is controlled and perceived to be safe. Children around a campfire, for example, are virtually entranced by fire and seem to lose contact with those around them while they stare at the flickering flames and glowing embers."<sup>2</sup>

Concerning a Stress or Crisis situation the report states that. "Even when fire is uncontained, out of control, and potentially dangerous, it paradoxically attracts people to it. In the middle of the night, people leave the warmth of their homes to stand outside and watch fire burn a neighbor's home."<sup>3</sup>

Our senses provide a tremendous draw to fire. People are drawn to fire because...

- ✓ They may smell smoke. How does the Bible ascribe the draw toward Christ in terms of the sense of smell? 2Cor. 2:16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?)
- ✓ They may hear voices or conversation. How does the Bible ascribe the draw toward Christ in terms of the sense of hearing? Rom. 10:14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
- ✓ Or maybe they see the fire. How does the Bible ascribe the draw toward Christ in terms of the sense of sight? John. 9:24-27 "So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"
- ✓ Maybe they have experienced it before and were motivated to look for and desire the fire. How does the Bible ascribe the draw toward Christ in terms of the sense of taste? Psa. 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
- ✓ Or maybe they were touched by the account of other's experiences around the bonfire and were therefore drawn to it. How does the Bible ascribe the draw toward Christ in terms of the sense of touch? John 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

At this point we might conclude that it is only the presence of God and our own senses that are necessary to bring us to Christ (represented in this case by the Fire). However, one very important element to understanding the mystery of God's irresistible call on our life is missing. That is SIN, and because of sin we are dead. Eph 2:1 "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins"

Lets take a look at some verses in Genesis Chapter 3 to help us understand.

Gen. 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Let's say we repeat our exercise but this time instead of merely removing the blindfold and then returning, our volunteers were first required to disrobe before returning to the comfort of the campfire. Would they return? Each of us so exposed would most likely run for cover in the opposite direction. Isn't that exactly what Adam and Eve did in the Garden.

We were reminded last week that God faithfully reveals Himself to us everyday, but men have rejected God even though they can clearly see His attributes, and in fact benefit from them. At the fall of man we see how Adam and Eve's response was to hide from Him and only allow themselves to be revealed from under cover. Gen. 3:7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths.

Even though Adam and Eve believed that they could cover their sin adequately with mere leaves, in their sin they still ran from God. We have not changed; we cover up our sin and then run from God.

- ✓ God was the one who pursued Adam and Eve . Gen. 3:9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"
- ✓ God was the one who made the sacrifice necessary to cover their sinfulness Gen. 3:21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
- ✓ God was the one who made sure that they would not be forever lost in their sin Gen. 3:22-24 "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

Is the covering that God provided Adam sufficient for us to be able to safely approach the Holy fire of God? Consider: Heb 12:18-19 "For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. and Heb 12:28-29 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

Jan & I have been invited to a wedding. Now this is not just any wedding, but rather it is a Japanese wedding and we are to be the only American guests. Of course the issue of what to wear has become of the greatest importance, even for me. So it was off the BX to buy a new suit in plenty of time to have it tailored. Meanwhile, Jan searched her closet for a suitable dress. And then of course is making sure we have the proper credentials to gain access and the need for special translation of a single invitation written in English. All this because our Mama San has decided that we are her adopted American family, what an honor.

Matthew 22:1-14 "And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their

city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

The Old Testament believer came to God through faith and the law. Heb. 10:1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Whereas the Old Testament believer's covering was the blood of animals, the covering of the New Testament believer comes to God only by grace clothed now in the blood of Christ. Heb. 13:11-12 "For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood."

"Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver; "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."<sup>4</sup>

### **We are irresistibly drawn to the fire of God because:**

1. God calls us and finds us.
2. God makes atoning sacrifice for our sin through His Son Jesus Christ.
3. God removed the barrier that separates us from an eternal relationship with him.
4. God has provided us a suitable set of clothes, through the Blood of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> **Trauma psychology: issues in violence, disaster, health, and illness**, By Elizabeth K. Carll; Chapter 9 The Psychological Aftermath of Large- and Small-Scale Fires, by Jeffrey T. Mitchell;

[http://books.google.com/books?id=JV7u70L\\_xiEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=attraction+to+fire&source=bl&ots=-UTDhluMpl&sig=uvnjPQNZUH02bw0fsjQXBuhnoo&hl=en&ei=i0qcSrCIGdqEngftJGoBQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=4#v=onepage&q=attraction%20to%20fire&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=JV7u70L_xiEC&pg=PA232&lpg=PA232&dq=attraction+to+fire&source=bl&ots=-UTDhluMpl&sig=uvnjPQNZUH02bw0fsjQXBuhnoo&hl=en&ei=i0qcSrCIGdqEngftJGoBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4#v=onepage&q=attraction%20to%20fire&f=false)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pg 232

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pg 233

<sup>4</sup> THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE. Copyright © 1950 by C.S. Lewis Pte. Ltd. Copyright renewed 1978 by C.S. Lewis Pte. Ltd., pg 51.