

# **REVIVALISTS AND MYSTICS**

## **AN INVITATION TO BURN: CLASS 1**

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**HAZEN AND HANNAH STEVENS**

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### 1. An Invitation to Burn

2 Chronicles 16:9 “For the eyes of the LORD roam throughout the earth, so that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

- a. God is looking for the one whose heart is completely His.
  - i. Men and women throughout history have dared to offer Him their whole hearts.
  - ii. At the same time they remain unremarkably ordinary in their humanness. There is nothing more powerful than the ordinary person that is fully surrendered to God.

- b. God is looking for a resting place.

Psalms 132: 3-4 “I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, 5 Until I find a place for the Lord, A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

- i. David was a man with a burning heart. His desire for God to have a home, to make a home among his people was His great ambition. In His desire for this, He carried the desire of God. God’s ultimate desire is to dwell among His people again.

Revelation 21: 3 “And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

- ii. The near fulfillment of God’s intent is through the giving of the Holy Spirit who makes us together a dwelling place for God.

Ephesians 2:22 “And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”

- c. When God comes, He comes as fire.

Exodus 40:38 “For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.”

Deuteronomy 4:24 “For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.”

## **AN INVITATION TO BURN**

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Song of Solomon 8:6 Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord.

Luke 3:16 “John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

- i. Fire is a symbol of holiness, it is also a symbol of purification. It is also the token by which God’s people knew a sacrifice was received by God.

**Leviticus 6:13** 13 Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out.

- ii. Ellicot’s commentary says: **“This fire, which first came down from heaven (Leviticus 9:24), was to be continually fed with the fuel especially provided by the congregation, and with the daily burnt offerings.”**
  - iii. Keil and Delitch commentary: “Fire was to be kept constantly burning upon the altar without going out, not in order that the heavenly fire, which proceeded from Jehovah when Aaron and his sons first entered upon the service of the altar after their consecration, and consumed the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, might never be extinguished (see at Leviticus 9:24); but that the burnt-offering might never go out, because **this was the divinely appointed symbol and visible sign of the uninterrupted worship of Jehovah, which the covenant nation could never suspend either day or night, without being unfaithful to its calling.**”
  - iv. We no longer have a tabernacle or temple made with human hands in which to steward the flame of God’s presence and worship to Him. There is an altar on each of our hearts. We were created to release the fragrance of worship individually by stewarding the flame within us, and corporately as we gather together to worship Him and seek His face.
  - v. Here, in Atlanta, we have what only a few other cities in the world have, a literal place where the fire of unceasing worship and adoration arises to the Lord. This is unfathomable!
- d. There is an invitation to be an ordinary human who lives in the glory of God’s eternal burning. To be consumed with the presence of God

## ***AN INVITATION TO BURN***

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Isaiah 33:14b-16 “Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with everlasting burning?” 15 One who walks righteously and speaks with integrity, One who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; One who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking at evil; 16 He will dwell on the heights, His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given him, His water will be sure.”

Romans 12:1-2 “1 Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- i. The question this invitation raises is how? How do we be a people who living sacrifices, burning with the eternal flame of the Spirit within and releasing His glory into the world around us?

Moment for Reflection:

- ii. We reach a point in our faith where we stop loving God for our sakes, and we start loving God for God’s sake. It’s not that we stop caring about our own desires or wants. It’s that we have experienced the wisdom of God’s ways and tasted the goodness of His love enough to know that there is no way better. Our desires and wants become aligned with His. We become vessels to carry the Will of God.
- iii. We can see beautiful examples of this process as we look into the journeys of the saints of old. In this course we are looking at men and women who took God at His word and didn’t settle for anything less than all of Him.
- iv. Tonight we are going to briefly look at two mystics who made themselves meeting spaces for God, who wanted God for God’s own self. They truly believed that life could be uninterrupted communion and fellowship with God. The language church history uses for them today is “contemplatives.”
- v. Contemplative comes from the Latin words *con* (meaning “with”) and *templum* (“the place where God dwells”).

## **AN INVITATION TO BURN**

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- vi. mystic: a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain unity with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute, or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths that are beyond the intellect. (Oxford Dictionary)

### 2. Brother Lawrence (1611-1691)

#### a. Biographical Sketch

- i. Born Nicholas Herman, to peasant parents in Lorraine France. His poverty forced him into joining the army. During his time in the army Brother Lawrence had an experience that drew him to God. (Read)
- ii. Upon being injured in the military, Herman entered the Discalced Carmelite monastery in Paris as Brother Lawrence.
- iii. He was assigned to the monastery kitchen where, amidst the chores of cooking and cleaning at the constant bidding of his superiors, he developed his rule of spirituality and work.
- iv. For Brother Lawrence, "common business," no matter how mundane or routine, was the medium of God's love. The issue was not the sacredness or worldly status of the task but the motivation behind it.
- v. Brother Lawrence's path to this perfect union was not easy. He spent years disciplining his heart and mind to yield to God's presence.

"As often as I could, I placed myself as a worshiper before him, fixing my mind upon his holy presence, recalling it when I found it wandering from him. This proved to be an exercise frequently painful, yet I persisted through all difficulties."

- vi. For the last 30 years of his life, people sought out Brother Lawrence to glean from his wisdom and humility. His life was a legacy of the simplicity of wholehearted devotion. It lives on today through his writings and for our inspiration.

#### b. Main Ideas

- i. Key Book: *Practice of the Presence of God*, a collection of his wisdom through conversations and letters

#### c. Quotes

## **AN INVITATION TO BURN**

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"I have abandoned all particular forms of devotion, all prayer techniques. My only prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent, and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy."

"Men invent means and methods of coming at God's love, they learn rules and set up devices to remind them of that love, and it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple. Is it not quicker and easier just to do our common business wholly for the love of him?" (From Maxims)

"Nor is it needful that we should have great things to do. . . We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God."

"He does not ask much of us, merely a thought of Him from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the graces, past and present, He has bestowed on you, in the midst of your troubles to take solace in Him as often as you can. Lift up your heart to Him during your meals and in company; the least little remembrance will always be the most pleasing to Him. One need not cry out very loudly; He is nearer to us than we think."

For Discussion: Which quote from Brother Lawrence stands out to you? Why?

### 3. Madame Jeanne Guyon (1648-1717)

#### a. Biographical Sketch

- i. Jeanne-Marie Bouvier was married to Jacques Guyon when she was just sixteen. She had wanted to be a nun, but her parents forbade it. Her twelve years of marriage proved unhappy. Both her husband and mother-in-law harassed her. Consequently, Jeanne-Marie withdrew into prayer.
- ii. Guyon's husband died when she was 28 years old a few years later she had an encounter with God that thrust her into seeking God wholeheartedly.
- iii. Guyon had deep experiences with God and wrote about it profusely. She was deeply persecuted by the Catholic Church for her beliefs about experiencing God within and was jailed for seven years. During that time, she continued to write extensively on the invitation to abide with God.

#### b. Main Ideas

## **AN INVITATION TO BURN**

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- i. Guyon believed that one should pray at all times, and that one should devote all of one's time to God.
- ii. Key books by Guyon are "Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ" and "Experiencing God through Prayer."

### c. Quotes

"Prayer is the key of perfection and of sovereign happiness; it is the efficacious means of getting rid of all vices and of acquiring all virtues; for the way to become perfect is to live in the presence of God. He tells us this Himself: 'walk before Me and be blameless' Genesis 17:1. Prayer alone can bring you into His presence, and keep you there continually." (From The Short and Easy Method of Prayer)

"It is only by a total death to self we can be lost in God."

"If knowing answers to life's questions is absolutely necessary to you, then forget the journey. You will never make it, for this is a journey of unknowables - of unanswered questions, enigmas, incomprehensibles, and, most of all, things unfair."

"He who has a pure heart will never cease to pray; and he who will be constant in prayer, shall know what it is to have a pure heart."

"The soul seeks God by faith, not by the reasonings of the mind and labored efforts, but by the drawings of love; to which inclinations God responds, and instructs the soul, which co-operates actively. God then puts the soul in a passive state where He accomplishes all, causing great progress, first by way of enjoyment, then by privation, and finally by pure love."

"I have never found any who prayed so well as those who had never been taught how. They who have no master in man, have one in the Holy Spirit."

For Discussion: Which quote from Jeanne Guyon stands out to you? Why?

### 4. Concluding Thoughts & Ministry Time

Acts 11:15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning." 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

- a. Holy Spirit is a person. Jesus has promised His (Holy Spirit) presence to us.

## **AN INVITATION TO BURN**

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- b. What God did in the beginning and in the lives of revivalists and mystics He longs to continue to do. Pentecost was not meant to be an isolated event, but was an invitation to all believers to trust God for more.
- c. We must remember the promises of God and be prepared to receive them, even when they break our conventions. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit because of His ascension to God's right hand. Jesus still desires to baptize with Holy Spirit fire as He did in the upper room and in cornelius house.
- d. The sending of the Spirit is part of Jesus' priestly service. He prepared us as a pleasing sacrifice through the atonement, and then send the fire of the Spirit to consume us.

John 7:39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 16:15 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Luke 3:16 "John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Acts 2:2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. **2** Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.