

Fire !!!

1 Fire, one of the universal ways to clear a room. How do we react when an alarm is given

Gen 19:17

2

17 When they had brought them outside, one said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away.”

In this story, Lot and his family are told very clearly to get out of Sodom and Gomorrah by the angels, they are told to...

3

“Escape for your life!”

Gen 19:19

4

19 “Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your loving kindness, which you have shown me by saving my life

Here is the alarm of mercy, here is the work of grace, and here is the gratitude of the saved.

5

“Thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life”

The date is Oct. 30, 1912 at 4:30 AM on that Wednesday. At the St. John’s Orphanage in San Antonio, Texas the Catholic nuns, that run the orphanage, smell smoke and begin to rouse the children. One of them lost her life when, after saving many of the orphans, she became trapped upstairs and had to jump for a net being held below, she missed the net. I could find no account of how many were saved by the heroic actions of these ladies, but there were seven or eight reported deaths in the fire, 4 or 5 of the nuns, depending on which account you read, and three of the orphans.

In an excerpt from The Daily Oklahoman, Oct.31, 1912 issue, one of the young children is quoted as saying when asked if he had been warned to get out...

6

“Yes, ma'am," said a shocked haired little fellow with wide open eyes, "If it hadn't been for Billy, I guess we would all have been burned to death. He waked them.”

One of the nuns, after the fire, states...

7

“You have no idea how good the children were.” she said. “They did everything we told them. I said to this little fellow, “Follow me”, and while I ran from bed to bed, he followed right after me just like a little dog.”

As sad as a disaster of this nature is, there are a couple of thoughts that are seen in our texts that I would like to discuss from it...

8

1) The Alarm

2) The Escape Plan

3) The joy at being saved

How can we know if we facing danger if we are not warned? Fire is an insidious thing that creeps up on its victims quietly with very little in the way of warning. We read of people being burned to death while in bed sleeping. The smoke from the fire slowly suffocates them and then the fire burns. How many of those children would have been lost if Billy hadn't sounded...

9 1) The Alarm

For this lesson we are going to define alarm as anything that warns of impending or current danger. That said an alarm can be a yelled warning, watch out, duck, whatever. It might be a sign, curve ahead, watch for falling rocks, etc.. It might take the form of something verbal or written and it might come from any source, even the source of the danger. A rattle snake often warns before it strikes.

I spoke with a gentleman the other day on the golf course and we were talking about religion. He had found out I was a minister and began to share his dissatisfaction with what he sees in the world of religion today. He talked about the lack of depth and substance of what he has seen when he has attended different groups. He said if he wanted to go to a concert, he could choose to do so, but that when he goes to church he wants to hear about the Bible. He also talked about thinking that acapella singing is what he grew up with and he doesn't really like all the instruments being used now days, though he doesn't have a problem with it. I did invite him to come join us, telling him that I think he would enjoy what he sees, we can only hope and pray. But he did say something that struck me. He said that far more often than not when he attends these various that what he hears, when he hears anything, is fluff. I asked him what he meant by that and he said that they do talk about some of the Bible, the parts that tell about the love of God and how that man should be happy in that love. Friends, that is true, God is love and wants all men to be happy in that love. The problem is that if that is all that is talked about, man never learns how it is that he can be happy in the love of God.

One of the things that the world uses to knock the Church of Christ is that they call doom mongers. They say we talk more about hell and sin than we do love and happiness. I suppose I can see how someone might come to that conclusion, but how can the love of God be understood if His wrath is ignored? Don't they go together? How can we understand the magnitude of His love and reward if don't understand the horror of the punishment that is also a reality.

We are here to raise an alarm. You see true followers of God are indeed alarmists. 11 times in the Gospels Christ says beware. Granted, some of those are duplicates because of the Gospel writers telling the same story, but it serves to illustrate the point. He says to beware...

10 *Practicing your righteousness before men; false prophets; men; the leaven of the Pharisees; the leaven of bread; the scribes; every form of greed*

These are just some of the things He warned about. Does this make Christ a doom monger? How silly that notion is. Christ came to warn the Jews of their spiritual adultery and encourage them to repent, to turn back to God. That's not doom mongering that's one of the greatest manifestations of love that there is. Christ was willing to give His life in service to man, bringing both warning of

danger and promise of reward. That's the message of the Word. We need to understand the danger so that we can recognize the importance of the solution. The gentleman I was speaking with on the golf course recognized some of the dangers that are out there but he didn't really understand the magnitude or impact of that danger. In...

2 John 7-9

11

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. 9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

Paul says...

12

“Watch Yourselfs”

The alarm we preach is that of the angel to Lot...

13

“Escape for thy life.”

It is an alarm demanded by the tremendous danger of eternal death. When the cry of "Fire" rang through the orphanage the nuns responded by trying to get the orphans to safety, even at the peril of their own lives. The warning of "Fire!" has an edge to it, it cuts to the very quick. Fire is terrors manifestation. But the alarm the scriptures raise is far more terrible because it speaks not just to the terror of the physical pain of being burned to death but rather speaks to the torment of spending an eternity in Hell. That is the cry of the scriptures, that is the warning of God through His Son Christ. That is what the world shies away from. It doesn't want to know that the ways of the world that are so enjoyable are the path to eternal death and torment. The wrath to come! The judgment will be eternal! It is the wrath of the Most High!

Eph 5:6

14

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

So we come back to the warning given to Lot, *“Escape for thy life,”* the angels were telling Lot that if he stayed in Sodom and Gomorrah he would be destroyed. He needed to heed their warning and run, not even look back. That is the warning given to all men.

15

“Flee sin, and don't look back !!”

Paul addresses this thought in...

2 Tim 2:22

16

22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

The way of the world leads to eternal damnation.

1 John 2:15-16

17

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

This is a warning that God has consistently given to man since the beginning. In our Monday night class we talked about Adam and Eve in the Garden. God told them to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That's **FLEE**. In their case it was flee to avoid death. What is interesting is that the fear of death and destruction is common in all men. It's the reaction that happens to that danger that separates men from men. Isaiah asks the question...

Isa 33:14

18

14 Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless. "Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?"

The answer should be obvious, no man wants to face the consuming fire, the continual burning. This brings us to our next point...

19

2) The escape plan

Now this might seem like an odd second point considering that we have been talking about being warned of possible impending doom. But the point is that while no one wants to have to face that doom, very few are willing to do anything about it. Destruction does not have to be universally faced, it can be avoided. God has put into place a plan so that man does not have to face that destruction, a process by which man can be saved.

Rom 10:8-10

20

8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, **9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10** for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Paul says that the Word of Faith is near and that if we confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead we can be saved. Lot was warned of the impending doom that was coming to Sodom and Gomorrah, he was told how to avoid that doom, now he had to choose to follow the instructions or not. That is the way of God, He doesn't force man to anything, either good or bad. Man always has a choice and while we are creatures of instinct and base desires, we can choose to overcome those and do what our intellect decides to do, even if that's in opposition to our instinct or desire. Faith is an intellectual process. Here, in Rom 10, in his discussion of faith, Paul illustrates clearly where faith comes from...

Rom 10:17

21

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Faith is an intellectual response to the evidence presented. It is not just an emotional reaction, though there is emotion involved. It is most assuredly not a blind acceptance of anything and it is not the blind following of what any man says. Faith is something that is unique to each individual, but without faith...

Heb 11:6 22

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

The point is that there can be an escape...

Matt 23:33 23

33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"

That is what Christ is talking about in...

Luke 12:5 24

5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

There is the warning and the solution. We are to fear God who will cast into hell any and all who choose to not come to Him through Christ. We are to have faith that Jesus is that Christ and that He has given us the Word so that if we will but follow its proscriptions we can find salvation through Christ. That brings us to our last point...

25 3) The joy at being saved

Col 3:16 26

16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

What God has provided for man is the only way to avoid that eternal, spiritual, destruction that is the result of disobedience and unfaithfulness. If someone were to push you out of the way of an oncoming truck and saved your physical life, would you be thankful? Of course, well God is offering the means by which man can be saved from spiritual death and friends that should make us thankful for that. Then Paul goes on to say what a thankful reaction consists of...

Col 3:17 27

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

God offers so much and asks for so little. What would a life eternal in comfort with your creator be worth to you? But be warned, just as there is a life eternal there is also a death eternal. Which will we choose?