



Refiner's Fire

Pentecost 2022

All Bible verses taken from the New Living Translations unless indicated otherwise.

The story of the birth of the Church is wonderfully told within the first chapters of the book of Acts.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, he appeared to the disciples and said: "Don't leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised – the baptism of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5).

Some days later, the people were gathered in a room and the room was filled with the sound of a mighty wind. Then a tongue of fire came and rested on the head of each person present.

Why did God used the imagery of wind and fire?

In earlier times, both wind and fire had been symbols of the presence of God. Wind also signified the power of God. Fire signified both purifying and empowering. So, presence, power and purifying.

Then of course, on that birthday, Peter – who had been rather inconsistent in his faith – stood up and boldly told people about Jesus, with the result that 3000 committed their lives to following Jesus.

The church was born.

On this Pentecost Sunday, we will focus on the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit, or Refiner's Fire.

1. Introduction

PowerPoint 1

"I will bring that group through the **fire** and **make them pure**.

I will **refine them** like silver and **purify them** like gold.

They will call on my name and **I will answer** them.

I will say, 'These are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'" (Zechariah 13:9)

PowerPoint 2

"For he will be like a **blazing fire that refines metal**, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes.

He will sit like a refiner of silver, **burning away the dross**." (Malachi 3:2-3a)

[Read the above verses again and emphasise the words that are underlined.]

2. The process of refining

Fire brings heat which burns away the impurities until the metal is clean.

The silversmith holds the container of silver in the fire. The silver is dull and discoloured when impurities are present. The silversmiths know that silver is pure when they can see their image reflected by the silver.

So as Malachi says, God will "sit as a refiner," refining our lives until he can see his reflection.

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – though your faith is more precious than mere gold" (1 Peter 1:6-7a).

“But he knows where I am going. And when he tests me I will come out as pure gold” (Job 23:10).

As we are going through this refining process, God expects us to call on him:

“They will call on my name” [Zechariah 13:9] – he expects us to call on him

“I will answer them” [Zechariah 13:9] – his promise to answer; to walk with us through the fire

3. The result of the refining process

“I will say, ‘These are my people.’”
[Zechariah 13:9]

“They will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”
[Zechariah 13:9]

Those who are refined become the image bearers of God, honouring God and showing God to others.

“So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – though your faith is more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honour on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world ... The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:6-9).

“In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation” (1 Peter 5:10).

4. Application

Often, in our impurity, we focus on all the earthly things, the things that God’s Word says will perish, the things that are of passing value: selfish desires, petty ambitions, amusements or attractions. Those things that do not reflect the image of God.

How do we partake of this refining? By embracing it through the circumstances of life: adversity, trouble, rejection, failure or afflictions. As we go through these trials, we embrace them and call on God’s name. God will hold us in the fire until the image of God is reflected in us.

In short, God is able to use any challenging situation that we encounter to free us from the dust, grime and dirt of this world and our own selfishness, and change us more into the likeness of Jesus.

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PowerPoint 3

Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver

Purify my heart, let me be as gold, pure gold

Refiner’s fire, my heart’s one desire, is to be holy, set apart for You, Lord

I choose to be holy, set apart for You my Master, ready to do Your will

Purify my heart, cleanse me from within, and make me holy

Purify my heart, cleanse me from my sin, deep within

Refiner’s fire, my heart’s one desire, is to be holy, set apart for You, Lord

I choose to be holy, set apart for You my Master, ready to do Your will

Songwriters: Brian Doerksen

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*This Pentecost sermon resource was written by
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