

1 Thessalonians 5: 19; "Quench not the Spirit", Sermon # 29 in the series - "A Persevering Faith", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 11th, 2009, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

The Holy Spirit is that 3rd person of the Divine Holy Trinity who is sent into our hearts to dwell with us forever when we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is sent to every believer by the Father and the Son. In John chapter 14, verse 15, Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him for He dwells with you and will be in you." His being given to us forever is saying to the one trusting in Jesus, "I myself will come to you to teach you, to comfort you, to give you the assurance that this great work of your redemption and the application of to your heart and life will most certainly begin, continue on, and be completed. There will be no failure on God's part to complete what He has started. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13 says, "In Christ you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory." The Holy Spirit is given to every believer as the down payment or the earnest of our receiving the complete and finished work of the application of Christ's redemption to our hearts and bodies in our spirits being made perfect and our bodies being glorified. If He is to remain with us forever, and there is no doubt that He will; then there are three things that we must study to avoid in our relationship with Him. He will be utterly faithful to do everything, and to provide everything necessary for your growth in grace, and your comfort in affliction, and your peace in the midst of turmoil. He will be there to give you joy in doing the will of God and the spiritual strength to continue to do what is right when your physical strength is failing. But these are the 3 things to avoid: One is to grieve Him. Ephesians 4: 30 says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." The second is to resist Him. In Acts 7: 51, when Stephen was preaching to the Jews who did not like his preaching of Jesus and the great wonders and signs that he was doing among the people; he said to them, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears!" "You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you." And then the 3rd thing that we must avoid is what we read of in our text in 1 Thessalonians 5: 19, quenching the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to quench the Holy Spirit? Well let's see if we can open up the meaning by looking first of all at the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of burning". Then we will look at some of the things that you and I as believers may do to quench that burning. And then

finally, we will make application as to what we might do to show the Spirit that we are receiving His ministry in our hearts and lives.

1st - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of burning.

I want you to turn with me to Isaiah 4, verse 2. I believe that verse 1 belongs with the preceding chapter and that the chapter division would have been better placed, starting here at verse 2. In chapter 3 the prophet has been speaking of the sinfulness of the daughters of Zion. He describes them back in verse 16 as "haughty, wanton, and sensual". It is, I believe, a picture of the false doctrines and practices flowing out of them, that were preached and taught by the Pharisees in the days before, during, and after our Lord Jesus Christ came in His incarnation. The destruction of Jerusalem would be so great and devastating because of these sins, so many men would be lost in that great destruction that, as it says in verse 1 of Chapter 4, "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, 'We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach.'" "In that day the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious; and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped." That is, that all those among the Jewish nation who would have the reproach of their many sins taken away, would apply to the one man Jesus Christ to have it done. They would be called by His name; Christians. "The Branch of the Lord is used not only here to refer to the Lord Jesus, but also in Zechariah 5: 12 where it says, "Behold the Man whose name is the Branch!" "From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord." The temple of the Lord is the Church of Jesus Christ. The fruit of the churches in true doctrine and holiness would be "excellent and appealing" to this remnant of Jews. That is, for those who have escaped the destruction of Jerusalem and who came to believe and take Jesus Christ to be their Savior. And the way that the Lord would wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purge the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, it says in verse 3, is by "the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." The filth is the filth of pride and the sinful sensual ways of the Jews of those days, but it can easily be applied also to everyone who is like them. There is a tendency in all men to pervert the good ways of the Lord apart from His grace working in their lives.

But "the spirit of burning" is the Holy Spirit of God working like fire in the hearts of sinners, as all men are, apart from Christ; to bring them to a sense of their sinfulness and then to purge it out of their lives. He is the One who works on the conscience and creates the burning sense of shame when we have done something wrong. He is the One who works within the heart of person to reveal the utter sinfulness of sin; the dishonor that it does to God; the hurt that it does to other people, and the awful sense of God's disfavor and judgment coming upon the person who does not repent of their sins. It is when God the Holy Spirit is working powerfully like this that people are wonderfully converted. If

you have never felt the burning work of the Holy Spirit, how will you ever come to be holy, even as God is holy? How will you ever come to the place where you will take sides with God against your sin and put it away and forsake it? How will you come to the place where you in burning indignation are able to say with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39: 9) It is by His burning work, John Calvin says, "that He restores His Church to purity."

The Holy Spirit is also a spirit of fire and burning in relation to the zeal of Christian ministers and the ministry of the Word, and evangelism and the spread of the gospel and the truth of the Word of God. Turn with me to Jeremiah Chapter 20. Jeremiah was a man who loved the Lord and His Word, but he was tired of being mocked and persecuted in his ministry. He was ready to give up. But God had called him, and so he says in verse 7, "O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed." "I am in derision daily; everyone mocks me." "For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, 'Violence and plunder!'" "Because the word of the Lord was made to me a reproach and a derision daily." "then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.'" "But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not." "For I heard many mocking: fear on every side!" Then in verse 11 he says, "But the Lord is with me as a mighty awesome One." It was the Holy Spirit who was with Him, and the Holy Spirit was the One who was creating this burning fire in the bones of the prophet. This was the reason that Jeremiah could not give up preaching. This was what gave him zeal for the ministry of the word and the power to continue to proclaim the truth. And it is the same today.

I know that it is the same today because of what took place in Acts chapter 2, verse 1. "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting." "then there appeared to them tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them." And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was the Church's baptism with the Holy Spirit and Fire as was predicted by John the Baptist in his preaching in Matthew 3: 11 when he said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry." "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." You see, there is a fire that needs to be quenched and that is the fire of the passions of our sinful hearts. And that is quenched by repentance and what the water of baptism represents; the cleansing which we receive by faith in Jesus Christ and receiving Him and the work that He did for us at the cross. But there is a fire that should not be quenched, and that is the fire of the Holy Spirit's good work in the preaching of the word to us. That fire is not to be quenched, but to be felt,

and received, and acted upon. It leads us to repentance and greater faith and zeal to lead a holy life, and to spread the truth of the gospel and the word to others around us.

Now 2ndly- Let's think together about some of the ways that you and I may quench the Spirit of God.

To quench is to throw water on the fire so that the fire is in danger of going out. It is, as John Owen says in his treatise on Communion with the Holy Ghost, "the opposition made to the actings of the Holy Ghost which are the 'quenching of the Spirit,' as some kind of wet wood will do, when it is cast into the fire." Owen is saying that you and I are like this wet wood when we quench the Spirit's good motions in our heart and life. We are like wet wood placed on the fire. Let me give you a Biblical example of the Spirit's work in this regard and how He views us when we quench His holy motions. Turn with me to James Chapter 4.. Here in James Chapter 4, James is making a case for a believer's receiving the ministry of the Holy Spirit to his heart so that it changes the way that he lives. We can see from these words what it is that quenches the Spirit. "Where do wars and fights come from among you? "do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? "You lust and you cannot have ." "You murder and covet and cannot obtain." "he, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." "Adulterers and adulteresses!" "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" "Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." This is what I want you to see from this passage. "Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?" "But He give more grace. "Therefore He says, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" What is the Holy Spirit described as doing in this passage? He is described as yearning jealously. Jealousy is the reaction of a spouse who has been faithful in marriage to their mate who either has been unfaithful, or they suspect might have been unfaithful to them by having an affair with someone else. That is why the terms, "Adulterers and Adulteresses" are used here. James is accusing the believers that he is writing to of spiritual adultery in that they have become friends of the world. And they have become friends of the world by going about their lives trying to live not to God and what He would have them to do, and how He would have them to act; but they have pursued the world's pleasures and used the world's methods to try to get what they wanted out of life. Their pride, their covetousness, their fighting to get what they want; their lust and their willingness to hurt others to get what they want, which is here called murder, all bear witness that they were friends of the world. And if that was the case, he reminds them, they cannot be called friends of God. Oh, how many people think that they are Christians, and yet if they use this kind of reasoning, and these methods, they may be found to be hypocrites at the last. If they are believers they must hear the voice of the Spirit speaking to them in these words, "The

Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously." God is a jealous God, and His jealousy of our hearts affections, and His jealousy toward our use of sinful and worldly methods of obtaining what we want in life, are really much greater than we think. The Holy thoughts of the Holy Spirit are a fire which will burn against us if we do not heed the motions of the Spirit working in our hearts.

Now 3rdly - Let's make application as to what we might do to show the Spirit that we are receiving His blessed influences of fire to our hearts.

I do not have the time to take you to all the verses in that section of James that we just looked at, to show you all the fiery sins which cause the Spirit to jealously yearn over us and which quench His motions in our hearts. But let me list a few of them for you. James 3: 5 says, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things." "See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." "The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature and it is set on fire by hell." My friends, this is the fire of sin. The Holy Spirit's fire will produce discretion and care in our words coming through in the way that we speak and kindness and thoughtfulness which are expressed. The Spirit yearns jealously over our hearts that we would think before we speak. That is why we pray and ask Him to set a guard over our mouth, and "keep watch over the door of my lips." "Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies." (Psalm 141: 3, 4) Then there is envy and self-seeking in very 14. "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth." "This wisdom does not come from above (from the Holy Spirit's working), but is earthly, sensual, demonic." "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." There is a quenching of the Spirit. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." "Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." This, my friends is what it means to be faithful to God. It is not to quench His good motions in our hearts that will lead us to produce this fruit of being peaceable and gentle and willing to yield, and showing mercy, etc. This is being wise with the wisdom which is from the Holy Spirit, the wisdom which from above; the wisdom of God.

Turn with me to Mark Chapter 9, verse 45, and we will conclude from there. Jesus here tells us what we need to do so that we will not quench the Holy Spirit's motions in our heart and life. "And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off." "It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched--where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out." "It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than

having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire-- where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." "For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt." "Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?" "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." Salt in these words represents the grace of Jesus Christ transfusing itself into our thoughts, words, and actions. Every offering which we make to God of our obedience unto Him is a sacrifice which is seasoned with His grace. Everyone is seasoned with the fire of the Holy Spirit's striving with them; that is, according to His sovereignty in Election and His purposes being fulfilled among men. If we are resisting the Spirit and quenching the holy motions of His fire; His searching our thoughts and probing and seeking to bring us to greater understanding of how we are to live; we have placed ourselves in a very dangerous position. If we "have salt in ourselves and have peace with one another", then we have every reason to rejoice that God is pleased with the way that we are living, and He will give us peace in our conscience, and joy in our service to Him. We will be thankful most of all for the constant communion and fellowship that we have with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.