

"The Burning Door"

(17th in our series, Jesus Everywhere)

2 Chronicles 5-7, John 2:13-22, Acts 2*

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*All scriptures are ESV unless otherwise noted.

Opening and Prayer

Two weeks ago, we preached a sermon titled *Burning and Not Burnt*. It was about the Burning Bush. Last week we preached a sermon titled *One Fire*. It was about trusting the Man of Fire and the Lake of Fire in Daniel 3.

While I was writing that sermon, I took a break and went for a walk and I kept thinking about a song and the refrain made me weep and I couldn't stop thinking about it. It's not "a Christian song" and you may find it offensive (I changed the phrase "God-damned" to "Gosh-darned" but "God-damned" is a more Biblical and theologically accurate). I asked Justin and the band to play it for the offertory. So as they sing, you will make an offering and you know an offering is a sacrifice: You're sacrificing something you think you created with your energy, your life, your work; something you think you own. So Bride of Christ, let's make an offering. [Offertory taken while Justin and the Band are singing *She's So Cold*.]

The Rolling Stones, *She's So Cold*
I'm so hot for her, I'm so hot for her
I'm so hot for her and she's so cold
I'm so hot for her, I'm on fire for her
I'm so hot for her and she's so cold
I'm the burning bush, I'm the burning fire
I'm the bleeding volcano
I'm so hot for her, I'm so hot for her
I'm so hot for her and she's so cold
Yeah, I tried re-wiring her, tried re-firing her
I think her engine is permanently stalled
She's so cold she's so cold
She's so cold cold cold
Like a tombstone
She's so cold, she's so cold
she's so cold cold cold like an ice cream cone
She's so cold she's so cold
I dare not touch her my hand just froze
Yeah, I'm so hot for hot for her, I'm so hot for her
I'm so hot for her and even so
Put your hand on the heat, put your hand on the heat
Aw C'mon baby, let's go
She's so cold, she's so cold, cold, she's so c-c-c-old
But she's beautiful, though
Yeah, she's so cold
She's so cold, she's so cold
She was born in an arctic zone
She's so cold she's so cold, cold, cold
I dare not touch her my hand just froze
She's so cold, she's so [gosh darned] cold she's so
Cold cold cold she's so cold

Who would believe you were a beauty indeed
 When the days get shorter and the nights get long
 Lie awake when the rain comes
 Nobody will know, when you're old
 When you're old, nobody will know
 that you was a beauty, a sweet sweet beauty
 A sweet sweet beauty, but stone stone cold
 You're so cold, you're so cold, cold, cold
 You're so cold, you're so cold
 I'm so hot for you, I'm so hot for you
 I'm so hot for you and you're so cold
 I'm the burning bush, I'm the burning fire
 I'm the bleeding volcano

Did you find that offensive? (Maybe huh?) Now I'm a guy and it may be different for women. So let me ask you women - If you woke one night, out of a sound sleep, and you heard a Voice, a manly voice, and the Voice said, "*I'm the burning bush, I'm the burning fire, I'm the bleeding volcano. I'm so hot for you. I'm on fire for you; I'm so hot for you....*" Well how would that make you feel? Would it be bad news or good news? Wouldn't it entirely depend on whether or not you recognized the Voice?

If you didn't recognize the voice (if you concluded that the man was an intruder), it would be absolutely terrifying. But what if you recognized the Voice, remembered you were on your honeymoon and the Voice was the Voice of your Bridegroom. Well ... that would be different ... You might even make an offering.

Let's pray. Lord God, help us to preach the Good News. Give us ears to hear the Voice of the Bridegroom.

Sermon

Video clip from movie *It's a Bug's Life*
Voice: Harry, no, don't look at the light.
Different Voice: I cannnnn'tttt help it. It's so beautiful. [Bug zapper sound]
 [Screaming and then silence. Zapped bug bounces down the stairs.]

That's the 3rd week I've played that little clip. "No, Harry, no – don't look into the light." "I can't help it, it's so beautiful...."

God is Light and God is consuming Fire and people that have those near-death experiences talk about being drawn to the light and yet if they walk into the Light – we're left holding a bag of ashes.

You know Worship in the Old Testament was like watching a Bug Zapper.

When I was a kid, my father bought a Bug Zapper. On summer nights, friends would come over and we'd sit outside in the dark, drinking ice tea and watching the Bug Zapper.

(Bzzz...bzzz...bzzz...and then a bzzzz – we'd clap. The Bug Zapper was frying a moth.) It was fascinating: The bugs would disappear and all that was left was dust and ashes. Where did the bugs go???

Well Worship in the Old Testament was like watching a Bug Zapper and the Bug Zapper was called the Temple. And sometimes it seemed like the Jews were just gonna put all of Creation in that Bug Zapper. Things surrendered to the Bug Zapper were called “sacrifices.” It seems to be some sort of innate human impulse – to make sacrifices.

Anthropologists and Theologians aren’t sure why people sacrifice, but they must feel some need to give something to God, even if they’re not sure what, how or why. And it appears that God likes it (at least some of the time) – it’s a “pleasing aroma” to His nostrils.

In Exodus and Leviticus, God basically gives Moses instructions for building a Bug Zapper called the “tent of meeting” or “tabernacle.” (The Israelites travelled with it through the wilderness.)

In the inner chamber was the Ark of the Covenant, that is Mercy – covering Law; the Glory of Grace; Light of the World. But to approach the Light, was to like, pass through Fire - a burning door of Fire, if you will.

In that Fire, God commanded the Israelites to make all sorts of Sacrifice for all sorts of situations. There were burnt offerings, cereal offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings ... consecration offerings. Nobody seems to know how they all worked, but we know they were all Life “delivered up” to God through Fire. The worshipper would place his hand on the sacrifice; identifying with the sacrifice and the sacrifice would make atonement for the worshiper. Atonement means “At-one-ment.” So where there had been 2, now there was 1.

In Leviticus 9, they’ve build the Bug Zapper – laid the sacrifices on the altar and fire shoots out from the Lord and consumes the sacrifices. (At the command of the Lord, they kept that fire burning continually. It was or is or at least symbolizes “Eternal Fire.”) That miraculous Fire shows God’s Pleasure in the Sacrifice and His Passion for the Sacrifice.

At the touch of the staff of the Angel of the Lord in Judges 6:21, fire consumes Gideon’s sacrifice.

In 1 Kings 18, it comes down and consumes Elijah’s sacrifice on Mt. Carmel.

In 1 Chronicles, David made an offering on Mt. Zion and fire descends and that’s where Israel builds the Temple.

The Temple was a giant stone tabernacle built where Abraham had almost sacrificed his First Born, in the Fire.

The Temple was like the world’s greatest Bug Zapper. Blood, Smoke, Fire – the constant bleating of animals and the smell of burnt flesh. I wonder what it was like? It sounds barbaric and horrifying. I wonder if it was like this?

Clip from movie *Apocalypto*

[Mayans that are to be sacrificed are walking by people crying out in torture and by paintings on the walls of people being sacrificed. The faces of those walking to be sacrificed have fear and terror on their faces.]

It seems it sometimes felt like that. Isaiah 33:14

¹⁴*The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with the everlasting burnings?”*

That clip was from Mel Gibson's movie, *Apocalypto*. In the next scene, a Mayan priest stands before the altar and cries out:

Mighty Kukulkan (that was the Mayan snake deity). Kukulkan, whose fury could scorch this earth to oblivion. Let us appease you with this sacrifice – to exalt you in your glory to make our people prosper – to prepare for your return."

Then they lay a man on the Altar. By sacrificing him, they attempt to appease Kukulkan's lust for blood and pay for prosperity. That temple was a place of debt, death, and fear. [Image of altar on Mayan temple.]

Sometimes and for some people, the Temple in Jerusalem must've felt like that ... especially if a person thought Yahweh was like Kukulkan – like a snake – like an intruder – like a thief or murderer. Sometimes it must've felt like that – but it wasn't like that ... at least not in 2 Chronicles 5.

In 2 Chronicles 5, Solomon has just finished the Temple and all Israel has assembled for its dedication. As they bring the Ark into the Temple, we read the following:

*⁶And King Solomon and al the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.
⁷Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim.*

Now to an Israelite, an ox was like a new Cadillac or John Deere tractor. It was your Ego and your Pride; it was your work and livelihood. And they sacrificed so many oxen they couldn't keep count. I mean it was like their "right hand didn't know what their left hand was doing" - like they were dancing the offering. And I know that's how it is for you when you give at church. After the service, your wife asks how much did you put in the offering and you say "Gosh honey, I don't know – I just couldn't stop."

2 Chronicles 5 is like a Stewardship Orgy. And you know in Scripture, the good steward is not the cautious steward, but the steward who gives all, invests all, because he trusts that his Master is good and gracious.

As they bring the Ark in to the Temple, the musicians play and the choir sings, "*For He is good and His steadfast Love (Hesed) Mercy endures forever.*" And the House of the Lord is filled with this Glory Cloud. Solomon stands up, blesses the people and then dedicates the Temple.

Next verse:

⁷As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. ⁷And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. ⁸When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

You know if "*His mercies never come to an end,*" they are the End. God is Mercy. Everywhere and Everywhen. God is Mercy and Mercy is Eternal – Eternal Mercy and Eternal Fire.

Well now, the Temple is full of Glory and God is with them. There is nothing required; nothing to pay for; God has already accepted their offering. Next verse:

⁴Then the kind and all the people offered sacrifice before the Lord. ⁵King Solomon offered as a sacrifice 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. ⁶The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the Lord that King David had made for giving thanks to the Lord – for his steadfast love endures forever.

2 Chronicles 7:1-6

Then Solomon holds a feast for all Israel for 7 days.

Several years ago, I had my secretary call the Iowa Beef Processors and do some calculations:

22,000 bull oxen is 16.5 million pounds of steak

120,000 sheep is like 12 million pounds of mutton

And this is for people that live in conditions worse than Tijuana, Mexico. And none of this Sacrifice is “required.” It pays for nothing. It’s like “good for nothing – just Good.” They just enjoy giving stuff to God. They sit around the giant Bug Zapper and cheer.

Now, some of it, like the peace offerings, turned into a barbecue – they ate together. But the Burnt Offering (the Olah), just went up in smoke to God. It would be as if we gathered on Sunday and just blew up our cars – danced for joy and had a cookout.

But we don’t do that anymore ... right? The Sacrifices have stopped ... right?

Jesus died so we don’t have to ... right?

Jesus suffered so we don’t have to ... right?

Jesus present himself as a “living Sacrifice” so we don’t have to ... right?

I mean that’s the kind of stuff we say.

In Apocalypto, the main character – “Jaguar Paw” - is placed on the altar, but saved from sacrifice when the burning hot sun is eclipsed by the moon.

Clip from movie *Apocalypto*

[Scene of the altar. High Priest begins to talk and the people are looking up at him. The sun is eclipsed by the moon.]

High Priest: Rejoice. Kukulkan has drunk his fill of blood. We have sated his thirst. Great god. Show us that you are pleased. Let your light return upon us.

[The moon passes over the sun and the sun begins to shine again. The people are rejoicing.]

The High Priest cries out “*Rejoice. Kukulkan has drunk his fill of blood. We have sated his thirst. Great God show us you are pleased and let your light return on us.*” The Serpent God drinks his fill of blood and is satisfied and the sacrifices stop.

Is our God just like the Serpent God? We say that Jesus died for our sins and He certainly did. But is our God satisfied the same way the Serpent God is satisfied? Theologians will sometimes say “*God was ‘satisfied’ with the Sacrifice of Christ.*” And sometimes we explain that as if God didn’t love us and so decided to not love Jesus on the Cross so He could love us.

- Kind of like if I hated you – but then I tortured and killed my son to feel better about you; like I didn’t love my son in order to love you.

- Kind of like God the Father is mean and blood thirsty, wanting to take Life and God the Son is kind and gracious wanting to give Life.
- Kind of like God is Two and not One – a Taker and a Giver.
- Kind of like the Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross was not Love, when Scripture says it is like the very Revelation of Love.

Now we know it was not Love for Satan – the Serpent – the Taker of Life. But God is Love and God is never not God – the Giver of Life. “*God so loved, He gave his only Son and in this is love that God gave.*”

We say that Jesus “paid for our sin” but is sin like an item that can be bought? What is our Sin? Isn’t Sin taking Christ’s Life?

Jesus said, “*I am the Life.*” So, anytime you refer to your life as your own life, you take His Life because He is “The Life.” Sin is your Pride – your Ego. Sin is taking Christ’s Life. So paying for sin – restitution – must be surrendering Christ’s Life – that you thought is your Life. Paying for sin is surrendering Christ’s Life, but only He can truly surrender His Life. You couldn’t take His Life unless He first surrendered His Life. So, when you surrender “your Life” – it’s actually “His Life” and He must be doing the surrendering in you (like a Sacrifice in you).

Scripture says He was slain from the Foundation of the World. From the beginning God gave His Life in Christ and since the Fall we have taken His Life in Christ. (Hung onto it and called it our own.) Faith is surrendering Our Life, which is Christ’s Life, which means Faith is a Gift.

OR

Maybe this is another way to think of it:

Jesus clearly takes away “the sins of the world” or “the sin of the world.”

But what is the Sin of the world? Isn’t it refusing to sacrifice; refusing to “lay your life down for a friend?”

Love is Sacrifice – Faith is Sacrifice – Worship is Sacrifice

So of course the Serpent God wants an end to Sacrifice (real sacrifice).

Think about it:

Life is Sacrifice:

It’s one cell serving another cell.

It’s one member of my body sacrificing for the next member.

It’s the constant flow of blood.

The constant flow of energy.

Even in this Body of Death – Life is Fire.

Scripture says, “*In Him was Life and the Life was the Light of Men.*” Some say a better translation of John 1:3-4 is as follows – “*That which was made in Him, was Life and the Life was the Light of Men.*” So His Sacrifice is the creation of light and life in Man. Scripture says, “*He was sacrificed from the Foundation of the World.*” Scripture says He was sacrificed “*once and for all at the end of the ages.*” Perhaps His Sacrifice is Life for all and in all – like His blood is for all. But until we meet Him at His Cross and receive His Life, which is His blood, we’re actually dead.

Maybe that’s our problem here – we hang on to Life thinking we’re alive when in reality we’re already dead ...

Whatever the case, the Serpent God wants the end of Sacrifice for our God is Sacrifice – He is Love – Burning Hot Love.

So if the death of Christ on the Cross was the end of Sacrifice, it was also the Beginning of Sacrifice. It was like an Eternal Sacrifice invading temporal reality. Like Eternal Life invading this temporal death. Like Eternal Love, Eternal Fire, Eternal Being – our Eternal God invading this temporal Hell.

C. S. Lewis writes:

...in self-giving, if anywhere, we touch a rhythm not only of all creation but of all being. For the Eternal Word also gives Himself in sacrifice; and that not only on Calvary. From before the foundation of the world He surrenders begotten Deity back to begetting Deity in obedience. And as the Son glorifies the Father, so also the Father glorifies the Son.... From the highest to the lowest, self exists to be abdicated and, by that abdication, becomes the more truly self, to be thereupon yet the more abdicated, and so forever. This is not a heavenly law, which we can escape by remaining earthly, nor an earthly law which we can escape by being saved. What is outside the system of self-giving is not earth, nor nature, nor "ordinary life," but simply and solely Hell ... [Heaven is like a dance argues Lewis]

All pains and pleasures we have known on earth are early initiations in the movements of that dance: but the dance itself is strictly incomparable with the sufferings of this present time. As we draw nearer to its uncreated rhythm, pain and pleasure sink almost out of sight. There is joy in the dance, but it does not exist for the sake of joy. It does not even exist for the sake of good, or of love. It is Love Himself, and Good Himself, and therefore happy.

So is our God like the Serpent God? The Serpent God seeks to take Life and possess Life and thereby destroy Life. And our God seeks to give Life and Life is Love. And Love is sacrifice – Love is Fire.

So Jesus didn't die so we wouldn't have to die. Scripture says "*if we are joined with Him in a death like His we will surely be joined with Him in a resurrection like His.*" It's when we lose our Life, (for Him) – that it's found and

Jesus didn't suffer so we wouldn't suffer. Scripture says "*we share in the fellowship of His suffering.*"

Jesus didn't love so we wouldn't love and

Jesus didn't sacrifice so that we wouldn't have to sacrifice, but so that we would want to sacrifice.

In 2 Chronicles when Solomon dedicated the Temple, they didn't have to sacrifice. And you know only some of the sacrifices were to take away sins.

They didn't have to sacrifice – they wanted to sacrifice.

So

instead of payment, it felt like Grace

instead of death, it felt like Life

instead of fear, it felt like Love.

In fact the Bug Zapper felt like a Party

a Burning door leading to another world – a non-stop Party.

Well when Israel began to lose faith and serve other gods, like the Serpent God – they could no longer endure the burnings. But their punishment wasn't more Sacrifice; their punishment was that God took away sacrifice in the Temple. They were exiled to Babylon. And there in exile, God made them long for worship in the Temple. And it was there that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the Fiery Furnace.

Remember? We preached on it last week:

Rather than worship an idol, they "*Presented themselves as living sacrifices.*"

After doing his best to explain the Sacrifice of Christ in Romans 1-11 and then explaining that is was unexplainable in Romans 12:1, Paul writes

...therefore present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [logical] worship.

Self is what needs to be sacrificed and somehow Jesus helps you do it.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego "*presented themselves*" to the Fire. And like the Burning Bush, like Moses, they burned but were not burnt. In fact, the same fire that burned the guards saved them. Perhaps they weren't burned by the fire for they were already on Fire or filled with Fire – that is filled with Faith and I bet that's because they saw the fourth man, in the fire, the Man of Fire – they saw Jesus.

You know I have a few friends that have suffered ritual abuse at the hands of people who worshiped the Snake God (who's not a god, but the Deceiver).

About 6 years ago, one of them was on a mission trip to Africa where she witnessed a goat sacrificed in a fire. For her it brought up all sorts of horrid memories. She was terrified of sacrifice and terrified of fire and the fear made her want to hide in shame.

Scripture says that Satan (the ancient serpent) keeps us in "lifelong bondage through the fear of death. He traps us in death, with the fear of death."

When she got back, we prayed and Jesus gave her a vision. I know they're real 'cause my wife, Susan, will have the same vision and this time I even saw part of the vision. In the past, Jesus has shown us that even things offered to Satan in the fire belonged to Him and He had them. And He'd shown us that when victims are sacrificed, He's sacrificed with them and for them – but still my friend was terrified of the fire.

So we prayed and I had her picture the fire. To make a long story short, she saw Jesus in the Fire – He held out His hands and showed my friend where she was hanging on to shame (something that gave her shame). She handed Him the shame and then she said, "*I'm really angry.*" She was angry that God had allowed such evil and that she was vulnerable and fragile. Five years ago, I felt shamed and so I said, "*I'm angry too*" and Susan said, "*I'm angry too.*"

And Jesus was still standing in the Fire with His arms outstretched. I said, "*Let's all step into the fire with Him.*" So we held hands and we did and I said something like "*Jesus baptize us with your Fire.*"

After a time, I said to my friend, “*What do you see?*” And she said, “*You’re ugly.*” And I said “*No, in the vision.*” She and Susan both said, “*Yeah. In the vision you’re burned up, charred, and really ugly. We all are!*” Then Susan said, “*Peter, ask Jesus to blow on us.*”

I did and He did and when He did ...

It revealed these beautiful, solid, incredibly bright white beings underneath the ashes. My friend gasped in wonder and exclaimed, “*I’m not fragile.*” (I saw them too.) She exclaimed, “*I’m not fragile.*” And that’s right. She’s eternal and her true self is eternal and her false self is dust and ashes.

Paul wrote this, “*It is sown a physical body and it’s raised a spiritual body.*”

A fire body – God is Spirit and God is Fire and God is Love ...

Whatever is resistant to Love is burned by Love and

Whatever surrenders to Love (receives Love and gives Love) is eternal.

Remember how I told you how my Dad appeared to my wife in that vision in church after he died – so young; full of life and on fire. My Dad is a Man on Fire – like Jesus. And here’s his ashes. His flesh was consumed by Fire and he became Fire. He had already surrendered his heart to the Fire when he was 19. He died with Christ and rose with Christ and the second death didn’t hurt him. The death of his flesh just set him free.

Well whatever doesn’t surrender to Love is burned by Love and the thing that doesn’t surrender to Love is our flesh. (It feels only its own pleasure and its own pain.) The thing that doesn’t surrender to Love is our Ego and our Pride.

The Ego believes the lie – that Love is something I control when Love must control me; something I possess when Love must possess me; something I create when Love creates me. God is Love and I don’t create Love – Love creates me.

Well, with my flesh and my Ego, I hide my shame.

My shame is like an empty space in my person.

My shame is my knowledge of my failure.

My shame is my knowledge that I (myself) do not and cannot Love.

I’m dead or trapped in Death.

Shame feels convicted by Love – so it hides from Love.

Shame feels burned by Love ...

until it is surrendered to Love.

And Love burns for Shame – for Shame.

It’s fascinating. Love hates hidden Shame.

And yet Love loves surrendered Shame.

It longs to fill Shame with itself.

I have four children and I asked myself this week, “*When did my love burn brightest for each one?*” Immediately, with each, I thought of a moment, when he or she, through tears and in agony made a sacrifice to me by surrendering Shame ...

A uniquely shaped void of shame that I longed to fill with a Burning Love called Grace.

As a parent, you know those moments:

- Through tears, a child tells you they think you love their brother more than them.
- In agony, one confesses her agreement with darkness.
- In tears, another tells you she secretly despairs and has never told anyone.
- In sobs, one confesses he's failed and doesn't know why you love him.

In those moments, Love burns and the Sacrifice is consumed and the Void is filled with Grace – creating an eternal treasure of indestructible Life.

I have four children and a Bride. For 34 years, my love has burned for that place on her body that she instinctively feels and therefore covers in shame – it's that place I long to fill and in that place God makes life. And the older I get, the more God teaches me to burn not only for a naked body but a naked soul. Love longs to fill until the contours of empty shame become the contours of Molten Hot Grace – until the empty shape of a person's shame becomes the eternal fullness of the Divine Substance.

Well, as you know, the Jews returned from Babylon and rebuilt the Temple around 500 BC. It was rebuilt again by Herod and then sometime around 30 AD – the Messiah – the Man on Fire – suddenly came to His Temple. Malachi had prophesied "*He would be like a refiner's fire*" and He wouldn't end the offerings, but He would purify the offerings and the offerers. He entered His Temple and chased out the Merchants; the Temple was not to be a place of debt, death and fear, but Grace, Life and Love. He said, "*Destroy this Temple and in 3 days I will rebuild it*" and He spoke of the Temple of His Body.

On the night Jesus was "delivered up" in Sacrifice, He took bread and He broke it saying, "*This is my Body. Take and eat.*" In the same manner, after supper, He took a cup and He said, "*This cup is the New Covenant (the Eternal Covenant) in my Blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Take and drink. The Life is in the Blood.*"

And Luke records that right before He did that, He said something. He said,

"I have earnestly desired" - "epithumia" "epethumesa."

Literally

"In Lust, I have lusted to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom."

"In Lust, I have lusted, to commune with you."

Listen closely:

"Epithumia" – comes from "thumas" which means Heat.

"thumas" – comes from "thusia" which means Sacrifice.

"Epithuō" is to "offer sacrifice."

And "Epithemia" is burning Love – translated Lust.

Do you hear what Jesus is saying? [Peter sings verses from the opening song.]

"I'm so hot for you. I'm on fire for you, I'm so hot for you ..."

"I'm the burning bush, I'm the burning fire, I'm the bleeding volcano ... "

With all Creation, He sets the stage in order to sing that to you, in the hope – that you would sing it back to Him because you want to.

See? You can trust Him.

He's not an intruder; He's your Bridegroom.

"Jesus Christ and Him Crucified" is God sacrificing everything for you; in the hope that you would sacrifice everything for Him.

God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - all sacrificed for you.

"God was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself," writes Paul.

It's true! Jesus felt "forsaken" as He bore our Shame on the Cross. But the Father was with Him, burning with Love, for His Son was trapped in our shame.

IT WAS ALL LOVE.

The Serpent God never sacrifices what he loves – he can't Love. And so with him, it's never Sacrifice – It's just murder.

Our God only sacrifices what He loves – for He is Love.

Always Love and when He sacrifices, He creates Life.

Not desecration – Creation.

His Sacrifice is the Word spoken into the Void that creates All Things.

And to create you in His Image, God sacrificed Jesus and Jesus sacrificed His Communion with His Father as He bore your Shame.

Jesus wanted to be sacrificed for you and in you, His Temple, so you would want to surrender your Shame – sacrifice Self – and that's called Faith.

As Jesus lay in the Tomb – (and at Communion you place Him in the tomb that is you) – the Fire fell, or perhaps it burst forth from His Body. This is a picture of the Shroud of Turin:

[Image of the Shroud of Turin]

I don't know if it's the real Shroud of Jesus, but scientists say it could have only been created by the most powerful burst of intense ultraviolet light. Scripture says they found the Shroud on Easter morning but it doesn't mention anything about dust or ashes.

I don't know why, but perhaps it's because Jesus was the first man fully on fire – devoid of Ego and Sin. So there were no ashes –

our flesh, our sin are His ashes and He is our Life.

Whatever the case, His Body is the Temple and His Sacrifice is the Burning Door –
from one side of the Door it looks like Debt, Death, and Fear;
from the other side of the door, it looks like Grace, Life, and Love.

What's on the other side of the door?

Where do all the bugs go?

What's on the other side of the Burning Door?

Well read the *Apocalypse* – that means Revelation. Read Zechariah about the Wall of Fire around the Eternal Jerusalem. She's a Bride and she's a temple and God is her temple. She's like a Holy Bug Zapper, moving through space and time with 12 burning doors and she contains Eternity.

What's on the other side of the Burning Door? Read the Revelation, chapter 5 – on the other side of the Burning Door is a goat, sacrificed and put back together. On the other side of the Burning Door is Jesus, my Dad, a finished and eternal me, a finished and eternal you. Revelation 5

*... every creature in heaven and on earth [even bugs I guess] and under the earth and in the sea and all that is within them
... worshipping God before a Lamb standing on the throne.*

An entire Creation - burning hot - for Him.

"And this was the plan for the fullness of time," writes Paul, *"to unite all things in Him, making peace by the Blood of His Cross."* The Blood that constantly flows from one member to the next in a Communion of Fire.

I say this with a bit of Fear and Awe ...

But our God isn't satisfied when the Sacrifice stops.

He's satisfied when it starts and never stops.

But then we don't call it Sacrifice ... we call it Life – Eternal Life – Ecstasy.

- when only One Sacrifices – it looks like a Cross;
- when Two Sacrifice – it looks like a Marriage (an erotic marriage);
- when All members Sacrifice – it is the Kingdom of God – consummated in ecstasy.

It's on the other side of the Burning Door.

This is the Burning Door.

Communion

This is the Burning Door. Your heart can pass through the door ... right now – it's called Eternal Life and God will deal with your flesh in time. So close your eyes and pray this prayer with me:

Lord God, in Jesus' name, through the power of Your Holy Spirit – I see that You have sacrificed everything for me. And now, Lord God, in Jesus' name, I sacrifice everything to You.

So come forward, tear off a piece of the Bread, dip it in the Cup (containing Blood that is Life; that is Fire) and make an offering. Worship Him in Jesus' name. Amen.

Benediction and Prayer

Sanctify your Temple. Fill us, Lord God, with Your Fire. Commission us, Lord God, as Your Bride; as Your people moving through this world like a Bug Zapper. For Lord God, I think that's what we are – Your Bride – and the Door is our testimony; it's a Burning Door, spoken to people in darkness, people afraid, people hiding in shame as we tell them "*The Father's good.*" And so you can surrender your Shame; you can walk through the Burning Door for on the other side – is like, 122,000 sheep, 22,000 oxen, a goat that's been put back together, Jesus the Christ – a new and eternal you – an entire new creation and on fire with the Love of God.

Lord God, may we believe the Gospel and may we be Your Temple. We are Your Temple. In Jesus' name, Amen.

And so this is your Logical Worship – to present yourself as a Living Sacrifice. And now just in case anyone is confused in the least bit about this at all, that does not mean taking your life. 'Cause taking your own life is doing just the opposite of surrendering your life – it's seizing control, but presenting yourself as a Living Sacrifice is saying, "*Father, I'd like to do what You want me to do – that's what I want to do.*" And you say that because you know something – and that is "*the steadfast Love of the Lord never ceases and His Mercies never come to an end.*"

You have a good and gracious Father. In Jesus' name, believe the Gospel and if you came forward today and prayed that prayer for the very first time, you need to know something about yourself – you're Eternal and the Love of God will never stop.

In Jesus' name, believe it. Amen.

[Peter says good-bye to Justin.]

Disclaimer: The author has not edited this document. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.