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Text: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 10, 2010  
The Baptism of our Lord

## FIRE

Its been cold, very cold. An arctic blast of cold air has pushed temperatures well below zero. But I tell you, there is a fire burning here! And it will warm you up and it will get you going. All you have to do is let it burn!

John the Baptist was a very powerful and popular preacher. But he kept telling the people, "I tell you, there is someone more powerful than me. And he's coming and he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

And it is true! He was talking about Jesus. And that's exactly what Jesus does. He baptizes people with the Holy Spirit and with fire! The Holy Spirit is fire. The Holy Spirit is energy. The Holy Spirit is power - red hot power! When you are baptized Jesus gives you the Holy Spirit and sets you on fire.

So - are you fired up? Are you using the power Jesus gave you?

There is a story about a lady who had a small house in Ireland about a 100 years ago. She was quite wealthy, but lived very frugally. The people were surprised, then, when she was one of the first to have electricity in her home.

Several weeks after the electricity was installed, a meter reader appeared at her door. He asked if her electricity was working well, and she assured him it was. "I'm wondering, then, if you can explain something to me," he said. "Your meter shows that you have hardly used any electricity. Are you using your power?"

"Certainly," she answered. "Each evening when the sun sets, I turn on my lights just long enough to light my candles, and then I turn them off."

Power doesn't do you much good if you don't use it. Are you using your power? Are you using the power Jesus gave you when you were baptized? Or, like this Irish woman, are you just occasionally flipping on the switch?

The power is yours. When you were baptized a fire was lit in you. Let the fire burn. Let it produce a power that will do amazing things!

After he was baptized, Jesus was on fire! And that fire produced an energy, a power, that changed the world! When a woman who had been hemorrhaging for years touched Jesus, that power flowed into her and healed her. When the disciples handed Jesus five loaves of bread and two fish, that power fed thousands. When a woman who had a reputation for being a great sinner came to Jesus, he said, "your sins are forgiven," and that power changed her life. When Jesus died on the cross, that power kept burning and he got up and walked away from the tomb where he was buried. And fifty days later, when the Day of Pentecost arrived, that power ignited the disciples and they went out and turned the world upside down.

This past Wednesday was The Epiphany of our Lord. The story for that day is the story of the wise men from the east coming to worship Christ, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The story reveals that Jesus is the Savior of all people, not just the people in Bethlehem, not just the people in Judea, not just the people in the Middle East, but the Savior of people from every nation on earth!

Today there are two billion people who follow Jesus. They live on every continent on earth. The fire that Jesus ignited has become a global fire.

In the next several weeks we are going to talk about the fire that is burning in Africa and Asia and Latin America. And we will talk about the fire that is burning in this part of the world. And all the while we will be praying that the Holy Spirit will stir up the coals in our lives and fan the flames of our faith so that we will see that there are people in our world who are hurting, people who are in need of God's love - people at our doorsteps and people across the seas. And we will pray that the Holy Spirit will fire us up to reach out to them and help them.

But if you are wondering if there is a fire burning in you, or if you are thinking that you don't feel very energized, don't worry. The promise to you is this: Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Trust the promise. And then act on it. It works for me. When I trust that the Holy Spirit is working through me and I reach out to someone in need, the fire is revived. And it will work for you as well. The same fire that burned in Jesus will burn in you and you will be part of Christ's global mission.

The power is there, ready to flow into your life, because the promise is forever and God faithfully keeps every promise that is made. Trust the promise. Flip the switch. Turn on the power. Let the Holy Spirit fire up your life!