

**LIGHT THE FIRE, PART TWO**  
**Light the Fire Celebration Sunday – May 20, 2012 –Exodus 3: 1-12**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

I love the old children's Sunday School Song, "This Little Light of Mine". You remember it. "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine..." (Do not worry, I am not going to sing it for you!). Then there is, of course, the favorite verse of all children –"Hide it under a bushel –NO! I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine, all the time, let it shine!" You know the reason you don't hide your light under a bushel? Because it would set the bushel on fire, of course!

But it is a different kind of fire than a literal fire that I am preaching about today. There are at least three kinds of fire mentioned in the Bible –a consuming fire that destroys and is associated with judgment. –a cleansing fire that refines and turns us from base metal into pure gold of righteousness. – or a holy, spiritual fire, one that burns with the Spirit, but does not consume, but causes us to burn within with the holy zeal of the Lord. It is this third one that I am preaching about today.

I have this stupid fear in the back of my head today. It is as we literally burn a piece of paper on which is printed the old mortgage, over there in the Covenant Center during our Celebration Brunch, that somehow, some way, we accidentally burn down the Covenant Center and have to start all over again! Boy, that would be a *memorable* mortgage burning ceremony!

The story of the call of Moses in the desert is a great one. He has fled from Egypt out into the wilderness, to the foot of the mount of God, Mt. Horeb. He has fallen from being a Prince of Egypt, from a high exalted status to a low one, to tending the sheep of his Father-in-law Jethro. But God is about to exalt him to spiritual leadership in the Kingdom. An angel of the Lord, literally a "messenger from God" appears to him in a bush that is burning, but strangely, it is burning but it is not consumed. An angel is just a preacher in a better outfit. It was the burning bush, a bush that was burning with fire, "*yet it was not consumed*". (*Exodus 3: 2*) It is a sign, a prophetic symbol; anything that is odd or not entirely normal but leads to something exciting, extraordinary and good is always a sign that God is up to something. You know, its kind of like normally frugal, Scottish Presbyterians giving generously and outlandishly to the Light the Fire Campaign! That kind of sign that God's up to something. Then God *personally* calls to Moses out of the bush. We do not have an impersonal God; we have a personal one. He knows us by name. He calls us by name. He knows my every weakness; He knows my every strength. And He has a plan for us, to be blessed and to be a blessing. So God calls to Moses out of the burning bush –"*Moses, Moses!*" The Lord calls out from the Light the Fire Campaign –The Lord God calls out from the fire of Pentecost He lit in our hearts last year --"*Church of the Covenant, Church of the Covenant!*" The bush that burns but is not consumed always represents the call and the claim of God over someone, over a people. The logo of the old United Presbyterian Church had at its center the symbol of a bush that was burning yet was not consumed. God is calling Moses from being a Prince of Egypt to becoming a true man of God. God is calling Moses from the quiet of the desert into the bustling activity of spiritual leadership. God is calling Moses from tending sheep to leading a mighty people. God is calling Moses to be about freeing his people from every bondage and bringing them to a Promised Land flowing with the milk and honey of His Spirit. God is calling Moses to be "on fire" for Him; to light a fire in the hearts of His people; to bring them to a place of God's Sovereign plan where they were meant to be. God is calling Moses to burn with a Holy Fire, yet not to be burned up by it; to burn with holy fire, yet not to be consumed. "*Moses, Moses!*" "*Church of the Covenant, Church of the Covenant!*" To this, Moses responds simply and quietly –"*Here am I.*" (*Exodus 3: 4*) Moses is not responding to His call with a statement about location. As in, Hey Lord, not over there, I'm standing over here! No, I am pretty sure

that the Creator of the Universe knows exactly where Moses is standing. No. Moses rather is responding –I am available; I am ready; I am open; I am listening; when you say “go” I’ll go; where you say to go, I’ll go; what you want me to do, I’ll do. I am ready, willing and available. “Here am I, Lord.” “Use me.” In almost every call story in the Bible this is the sequence –God calls and we say, “Here am I”.

Today, if you heard the voice of God calling to you through the Word of God, how would you respond? If today God called you by name and asked you to come on fire for Him, would you do that? If God called you, if God called us as a Church, to burn with a holy zeal for the Lord, to become excited about experiencing God, to step forward in new and exciting ways, would you step forward? Would you do it? Would you say –“Here am I”????????????

Because, you see, I think today is “LIGHT THE FIRE, PART TWO.” Part one was that God lit a fire under us to burn that mortgage; God gave us holy power to do something for Him and for this community; Last year the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and we responded with commitments and hopes and dreams. We said, in effect, “Here am I, Lord!” But a building is just a tool to do ministry within it. A building is not the end product; it is just the means. Were we somehow to say –OK. job over, declare victory, go home—we would miss the larger plan of God at work all around us. Part one is this building; part two of Light the Fire is how to fill it up.

I remember three years ago when the committee that called me to come to The Church of the Covenant was showing me around this wonderful building. I remember thinking –this building is so wonderful; it has everything and anything anyone would ever want as a tool to do amazing ministry in it. 25 years ago when I did youth ministry I would have given my right arm for a youth room like we have; a Covenant Center like we have; Sunday School Rooms like we have; a drop dead gorgeous sanctuary like we have. It took 25 years but the Lord finally brought me to a place that I had hoped and dreamed about when I was a young whipper-snapper pastor. But I had this other, strong impression –that it needed to be filled up. That everything was built for more people than are here now. That our forebears, that those who had gone before us, had vision and hopes and dreams, large God-sized vision and hope and dreams. They built this place to have a HUGE, God-sized impact on our community and world. They didn’t have a small vision, they had a God-sized vision. I remember thinking, “Fill it up, Stu. Fill it up, Stu. Fill it up!” **How do you “fill it up”?????** First, you fill it up with God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Then, I believe people will be drawn to the flame of the Spirit; the people whom God is calling will be drawn to where God is, like Moses to a burning bush. Fill it up with people who are themselves filled with Jesus and God and the Spirit. Fill it up with people who are on fire for the Lord. Fill up to overflow this sanctuary with the Spirit of the Living God and people will come; fill up the youth room with the Holy Spirit and young people will come; fill up the Covenant Center with the fire and zeal of the Lord and the community will come. “FILL IT UP! FILL IT UP!” It is Light the Fire, Part Two.

Church of the Covenant, last year we were filled with Pentecost power and God did a mighty work through us. Dearly beloved, this year we have come to this place to hear from God about our calling, what we are to do, who we are to be. We have noticed this mortgage that is burning. We have seen a people on fire, yet not consumed. We have heard the voice calling from a burning bush: “Moses, Moses!” “Church of the Covenant, Church of the Covenant!” But the only remaining question of the day is will we respond to God’s call? *Will we say, “Here am I”?* Church of the Covenant, Church of the Covenant, take off your shoes, for the place where you are standing is HOLY GROUND.” Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*