



Burn A Hole In The Fire

Mark 9:17-27 KJV And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; [18] And whosoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. [19] He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. [20] And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. [21] And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. [22] And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. [23] Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. [24] And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. [25] When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.* [26] And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. [27] But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

I. INTRODUCTION—WAGNER DODGE

Wagner Dodge had a dilemma except at the time, he didn't know it. On August 5, 1949, Wagner and his smoke jumpers were about to embark on one of the deadliest journeys they had ever been involved in. They saw the fire from the air and when they jumped from the plane, all appeared well. All of the chutes deployed, every man made it safely down from the sky, and they rolled up their parachutes and then begin to march in single file down into the gorge where the Missouri River gently flowed.

But when Wagner Dodge left his men in the middle of the gorge and scouted ahead to assess the fire, he realized that this might be the day that he died. When he got within one hundred feet of the fire, he made three discoveries that would change his life forever.

First, he realized that the fire from was much worse than what they had thought it to be from above. The wind was coming over the ridge and was whipping the fire a lot faster than he had thought. Second, the swirling winds were blowing the fire above the gulch, up to the ridge. This meant that their escape route was cut off from them. Third, as he directed his men to retreat, he discovered that the fire was in a transitional zone.

Most forest fires can only travel about four to five miles per hour which makes it easy for the smoke-jumpers to outrun them. But Mann Gulch was part of a transitional zone—meaning that it was an area of the mountain that makes a transition between the forest and the plains. So shoulder high prairie grass is mixed in with the trees. The grass was dense, dry and ready to explode in a withering blaze.

The fire was pursuing them and Wagner Dodge and his team of men were trapped in this grass with fire totally surrounding them. Dodge knew that he could not outrun this wave of flame that had surrounded them. In just a minute and at the most two, he estimated that they would be burned to death.

The roar was deafening. Sap in scattered trees was superheating and exploding. Smoke, embers, and ashes swirled in all directions. The apparent options offered to Dodge offered no escape. They could stand and be fatally burned, turn and be fatally burned or run and be fatally burned. Dodge and his fifteen men were about to die.

Suddenly Wagner Dodge stopped and took out a match from his shoulder pocket, lit it and threw it into the shoulder high grass in front of him. His men, watching from behind, thought he had lost his mind. There was no time to light a backfire. But Wagner Dodge was not lighting a backfire. He was lighting a fire that in an instant the grass was ablaze in a widening circle.

As the ring of fire spread, it cleared a small area of all flammable substances. It was not much of a safety zone, but it would do. He jumped over the blazing ring, moved to its smoldering center, wrapped a wet cloth around his face, pressed his face to the ground and waited. As he had anticipated, the surging fire wall rounded both sides of his small circle, leapt over the top, but found nothing to ignite.

Within moments the front passed and had raced up the ridge and left him unscathed in his tiny asylum. He stood, brushed off the ash, and found he was no worse for the wear. He literally had *burnt a hole in the fire!*

Thirteen of his men decided they would outrun the fire and they died trying. Two of his men burrowed in a rock slide nearby and managed to survive. But Wagner Dodge survived because he burnt a hole in the fire! (This story was adapted from *Get In the Ark* by Steve Farrar, pp. 201-203.)

II. THE MIRACLE IN MARK 9

A. Descriptive Words to Paint a Picture

- The words are descriptive in this passage of Scripture that we read. . . .
- Hath a dumb spirit. . .
- He teareth him. . .
- He foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. . .
- The spirit tare him. . .
- He fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.
- Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him. . .
- Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears. . .
- Jesus. . . rebuked the foul spirit. . .
- The spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him. . .

· He was as one dead. . . .

· But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up. . . .

-Ofttimes it casts him into the fire! What descriptive phrases that John Mark used. There were multiple things that this young man had to endure at the hands of this foul spirit that had been belched out of Hell.

-What we all need to know about our kids and our grandkids is that the devil longs to destroy them.

-This young man was attacked at a very young age. It is important for fathers to remember that we need to work to do good with our children at the earliest age possible. If the devil wants to hurt them in their early years then we have to bring them to the Lord as quickly as we can.

-It is never too soon to work toward exposing our children to spiritual matters because the devil is not going to lose a single opportunity to destroy their little lives. If young hearts can be filled by Satan, they can also be filled with the Spirit of God!

-This account by Mark is troubling. Here is a young man who had been under the control of this spirit apparently for his entire life.

· Unreal moments of hellish terror that he would endure because of the *fear of evil*.

· Physical pain from the times he had been thrashed about by this spirit because of the *violence of evil*.

· Ostracism from the community where he lived because of the *terror of evil*.

· A hostage to his house because of the *unpredictability of evil*.

· He cannot speak because of the *strength of evil*.

-This young man would foam at the mouth, grind his teeth, and stiffen up like a board. But there is a phrase in that account given by Mark in 9:22, 'and ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire.' Can you imagine the scars this child had from the fire?

-Here was a father who was in absolute anguish over the condition of his son. He was bringing his problem to Jesus. Jesus showed His compassion when He asked how long this had been going on. "Since he was a baby," the father replied.

· The disciples could not help him.

· The family could not help him.

· The community he lived in could not help him.

· The doctors could not help him.

· No one but Jesus could help this man with his son.

-But there are some elements in this account that can help all who are fathers to see what to do.

B. Mark 9:17—He Was Willing to Seek Jesus

Mark 9:17 KJV And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son. . . .

-We have no idea what this man's occupation was but it really did not matter. He could have been the president of a large business venue in Jerusalem or he could have been a day laborer who worked for minimum wage. On that day, his social position meant nothing.

-Any shred of pride that he had was cast aside because his son was in trouble. It was difficult for him to see his son in the condition that he was in so he sought out Jesus. Apparently he went by himself. This was a trip that he had to take alone.

-There are some trips that a father has to take alone. He cannot send a servant, a friend, or a wife. . . . He has to go alone. There are some things in life that you cannot relinquish your responsibility to someone else.

Tiger Wood's mother is a Buddhist and Tiger claims that as his religion. His daddy's religion remains a mystery. But when Tiger was nine months old, his dad sawed off a golf club for him to swing and he began to swing it before he could walk. When he was eighteen months old, he took him to the driving range and let him hit buckets of golf balls. When Tiger was four, his father hired a coach for him. When he was six, his father entered him in junior golfing tournaments.

Tiger's daddy was a man who would stand in front of him and say, "Pretend I'm a tree," and then demand for Tiger to hit a golf ball over him. Earl Woods once said, "Golf should go to church and count its blessing for what kind of quality kid Tiger is to lead him in the next 20 or 30 years. I mean, all of golf should do that."

-But as you can see it all came up empty, because golf can never serve as a god. Earl Woods couldn't make a trip to the house of God and now we can see the terrible impact that it has had on his very confused, albeit rich, son.

-Men, we have to take the journey to the house of God! One of the reasons that our nation is in the mess that it is in is because men are more concerned about recreation than they are about worship. Leisure, sports, relaxation, and I will add in work are very poor idols that will never get our kids out of the fire!

· Men in our day will smoke joints with their children but not take them to worship.

· Men in our day will share alcohol with their children but not the Word of God.

· Men in our day will take their kids to the movies but not to God's House.

· Men in our day will yell at a ballpark for their kid but never have a lick of emotion in their worship.

-We better get to the place that we are willing to seek the Lord!

C. Luke 9:39—He Knew There Was a Predator

-The same account of this story is given in Matthew 17: and in Luke 9:38-43. In the account that Luke gives there is another point to be taken.

Luke 9:39 KJV And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

-First this man was willing to seek the Lord and secondly he knew there was a predator involved. We live in a world that is increasingly becoming more atheistic in action. But there is something else that takes place when we become atheists in action, we refuse to give acknowledgement to the devil.

-There is a predator after our children! This man knew that there was a predator involved because he said, "a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him."

James Dobson in his book *Bringing Up Boys* wrote that he grew up in a regime. He said, "My folks understood the system. They had a million rules. There regulations and prohibitions for almost every imaginable situation. Coming from a minister's home in a very conservative church, I was not allowed to go to movies (which were remarkably tame), or to dances, or even use mild slang. I remember being reprimanded once for saying "Hot Dog!" when I got excited about something."

He continues, "In those days, parental authority typically stood like a great shield against the evils in what was called 'the world.' Anything perceived as unwholesome or immoral was kept outside the picket fence simply by willing it to stay put. Fortunately the surrounding community was helpful to parents. It was organized to keep kids on the straight and the narrow. Censorship kept the movies from going too far, schools maintained strict discipline, infractions were reported to the parents, truant officers kept kids from missing school, chaperones usually preserved virginity, alcohol was not sold to minors, and illicit drugs were unheard of. Even adults outside the family saw it as their civic responsibility to help protect children from anything that could harm them, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Most of the townsfolk were probably acquainted with the children's parents, so it was easier for them to intervene. This support system didn't always do the job but it was generally helpful." (p. 216)

-Those days are long over. Some of those old days we don't want back but there are some of those old values that desperately need to return to our world, our nation, our state, our county, our city, and this church!

-There is a predator on the loose and it is almost as if he is a snake that is thrashing around in his death throes and doing much damage.

-Here are some troubling statistics from William Bennett (from the book *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators: American Society at the End of the Twentieth Century*). Since 1960:

- Violent crime is up 467%.
 - A 463% increase in state and federal prisons.
 - A 461% increase in out-of-wedlock births.
 - A 200% increase in children living in single-parent homes.
 - The teen suicide rate has doubled.
 - A 150% increase in the number of Americans receiving welfare payments.
 - The amount of cohabiting couples ("shacked up" they used to say) has increased almost tenfold.
 - The divorce rate has doubled.
 - The SAT scores have dropped almost 60 points.
- He noted that thoughts on abortion have changed also.
- Only 59% of Americans believe it is ending a human life.
 - Only 50% believe that abortion is morally wrong.
 - America has killed 53 million kids in the last four decades (since 1973).

-He noted another factor, the pandemic of pornography. It is suffocating the American male. Only 66% say it is morally wrong and 33% say it is normal to look at. In a country our size that means that 70 million Americans will admit to pollsters that it is morally acceptable.

-These predators are driven by money and so they work to purposely target the younger set to ensnare them so they will get richer. It is revenue that is larger than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix, and EarthLink—combined.

-Consider these stats:

- Only 19% of Americans 55 and older say pornography is morally acceptable.
- But 29% of Americans aged 35 to 54 say it is OK.
- Worse, a stunning 42% of Americans aged 18 to 34 years say it is acceptable.

-Unless the hearts and minds of these people aren't radically changed, we can only imagine what will take place with the next generation.

-The views of America are radically being changed about homosexuality also. J. C. Penny's recent ads on Mother's Day and Father's Day showcased lesbian and homosexual couples along with their children (maybe I don't need to buy anything else from JCP!). We are rapidly becoming a moral sewer! Sadly most of us are so desensitized by what is taking place because of our own narcissism.

- In 1996 only 27% of Americans supported the legalization of homosexual marriages with 68% opposed.
- By 2011, a majority of Americans supported same-sex marriages; support had climbed to 53%, while opposition had fallen to 45%. However in 32 states where it has been put on the ballot, it has been voted down. But the homosexual community will not rest until they have gotten it approved.

(All of these stats gleaned from *Implosion: Can America Recover from its Economic & Spiritual Challenges in Time?* by Joel Rosenberg. Chapter 13—The Last Best Hope, pp. 209-228.)

-There isn't a father here today who would knowingly let his kids come into the presence of a lion, a tiger, a wolf, an anaconda, or any other great predator of the wild. But there is a wily predator in our society that is working to undermine the authority, the commitment, and the determination of every father in this house. . . but it is time to burn a hole in the fire!

III. CONCLUSION—THERE IS A SAVIOR!

-This father was willing to seek for Jesus and he knew that there was a predator. But he also knew that there was a remedy for his son. *The spirit that was too strong for the disciples was not too strong for the Lord!*

-When this father brought his son to Jesus, there was something that took place. . .

Mark 9:25 KJV When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thoudumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

Mark 9:27 KJV But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

-Fathers, on this Father's Day, it is our responsibility to make sure we burn a hole in the fire!

- Bring your families to the Lord.
- Share a love for the Word with them.
- Shelter them from the predator that roams this world.
- Pray for them in the morning, at the noon-hour, in the evening, and into the night!