

Sun., June 20 - Father's Day, Camp Sunday

Memory Verse: "God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him." -Philippians 2:13

Message: (Pentecost) The Fire Within #5: "Campfire Ghost Stories" -Pastor David

Reading of Scripture: Philippians 1:1-11

Sermon Scripture: John 3:5-8

Blurb: This Sunday is Camp Sunday! Come dressed like you are ready to go camping! Our church will be sending people to Bible Camp this week. And so, on Sunday we all gather as a church like we would gather around a good campfire to hear good stories...ghost stories...Holy Ghost stories! Don't miss the stories, but beware, they may change you forever!

[Recorded Worship Beginning]

WELCOME -Pastor Andrew

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor Andrew

"God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him." -
Philippians 2:13

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Questions (You Are Faithful)

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Live Worship Beginning]

GATHERING SONG: *From the Inside Out* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

MEMORY VERSE: -Pastor David

"God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him." -
Philippians 2:13

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Wind that Makes All Winds that Blow

Different

Worship prayer -Pastor Andrew

[Both Recorded & Live Worship]

SCRIPTURE READING: Philippians 1:1-11 -Reader:

The missionary Paul writes to the church in Philippi. As he thinks about them, joy and thankfulness fill his mind, and he prays to God prayers of thanksgiving for them. Philippians 1:1-11,

1 From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.

To all those in Philippi who are God's people in Christ Jesus, along with your supervisors and servants.

2 May the grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

3 I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. 4 I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy. 5 I'm glad because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel from the time you first believed it until now. 6 I'm sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus. 7 I have good reason to think this way about all of you because I keep you in my heart. You are all my partners in God's grace, both during my time in prison and in the defense and support of the gospel. 8 God is my witness that I feel affection for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

9 This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. 10 I pray this so that you will be able to decide what really matters and so you will be sincere and blameless on the day of Christ. 11 I pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.

PRAYERS: Father's Day -Pastor Andrew

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE: Father's Day -Pastor Andrew

MESSAGE: (Pentecost) The Fire Within #5: Campfire Ghost Stories

PP#1: The Fire Within: Campfire Ghost Stories

Come, gather round, of you dare! I have tales that will raise the hairs on your necks and send a chill down your spines. Gather around the campfire, settle in, and prepared to hear chronicles of tingling mysteries that baffle the mind...about the paranormal: where the boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds blur and dissolve. Stories of spirit-possession. Come, gather around the campfire and hear ghost stories.

But beware! What you are about to hear are true stories that happened to real people. You may not be able to take it all in, but know this: everything I will tell is 100% true. AND, it could happen to you! Yes, right here, right now. So, listen, if you dare!

PP#2: *Image of a roaring campfire.*

Our first story is about a beautiful young girl who innocently began reading from an ancient book whose mysterious words could open a portal into the spiritual realm. This book of power, of things unseen by the human eye, had been long overlooked on a dusty shelf off in the corner. Oh, this book had brought unimaginable power and miraculous deeds to previous readers down through the ages. But it's potency had slowly come to be forgotten over time, and it was lost in plain sight.

Well, about 10 years ago, right here in Minnesota, a happy-go-lucky girl was taken to the wooded shores of Koronis to Red Rock Camp. Late one night, she found herself alone, with her mind racing and feelings all in a jumbled mess. She was so worried about her friend back home. What should she do? What should she say? She drifted around wondering, worrying, so lost in her thoughts that she almost didn't see the book in the corner. And, as the full moon shimmered on the still lake, and as the lonely call of the loon hung in the air, an eerie urge came over the girl. The book called to hear—not audibly—but through an inner compulsion. She stopped, turned to the corner. And there she saw it. It seemed to jump out to her, invisible the moment before. She couldn't stop herself. Her hand reached out. Her eyes squinted. Her fingers paused, trembling for a moment. And then she gave in. She picked up the book and swiped off the dusty layers from its cracked, leather binding.

She knew she had to read it, she had to open the cover. Again she paused, thinking maybe she should go back to the other girls and play games with them. But the calling of the book grew stronger and stronger. She couldn't resist. She scurried out to find enough light to read. She sat down, flipped open the book and began to read the ancient oracle.

Suddenly, the words started to make sense in her mind. Her heart leapt in her throat. A power came over her. Strangely, mysteriously, the words were about her friend! Not directly, not calling her by name, but she knew that somehow, these words spoke directly to her about her friend. She closed her eyes and shook her head to clear her mind. How could this be? She started reading once more, and again a weird feeling washed over her as the words hit her heart with shocking power. She struggled to breath. She couldn't move. She was unable to stop reading...she *had* to keep going. Wave after wave she felt it's power wash over her. A spiritual presence became palpable. She knew she was no longer alone. Her thoughts burned. The girl trembled as her eyes raced over the words. Somehow, this book spoke directly into her mind, opening up a spiritual link to her about her friend.

She closed her eyes and opened her will to the spiritual presence, letting it grow, letting it burn within her. She could feel it pushing her, prodding her. She knew what she had to do. Her foggy, worried thoughts became clear. She gave into the power, surrendering her will to it. And her inner struggle grew calm. And when she opened her eyes again, they had a resolute fixation about them. She knew what she was going to do. And she got up with a steady confidence, for the power from the ancient book now led her.

My friends, the girl had been fretting about what to do with a friend who had been making some bad choices. The friend had been struggling and sliding, turning away from the good in her life, and the girl didn't really know what to do for her. Nothing she tried to say seemed to help. Nothing she did made a difference. She was worried. And so, even while she was away at camp, thoughts of her friend filled her mind. But her thoughts continued to be a jumbled mess. So, as she was walking around praying about her friend, her eye landed upon a neglected, dust-covered Bible on a shelf.

PP#3: Philippians 1:3-11

3 I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. 4 I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy. ... 6 I'm sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus.

She felt an urge to pick it up and read it. And she did. And somehow she flipped to Philippians 1. As she read the words, it hit her heart that God was speaking to her about her friend.

Verse 3, “I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers.”

“My goodness,” the girl thought, “I must pray for my friend! I need to mention her by name. I’ve been worried about her, but I haven’t been praying for her. I’d forgotten to do that.”

Verse 6, “I’m sure about this: the one who started a good work in you will stay with you to complete the job by the day of Christ Jesus.”

These words hit the girl right in the heart. God was speaking directly into her about her friend. “Do not give up on her! She is not lost. I began a work in her and I will stay with her to complete it. It doesn’t just depend on your friend. I am at work here, too. The story isn’t over. Trust in me for her. I’ve got her. I’ve got this. Stop your worrying. Trust in me.” Peace washed over the girl. Her worry and anxiety calmed. God is working in her life. It’ll be okay!

PP#4: Philippians 1:3-11

9 This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. 10 I pray this so that you will be able to decide what really matters and so you will be sincere and blameless on the day of Christ. 11 I pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.

Verse 9, “This is my prayer: that your love might become even more and more rich with knowledge and all kinds of insight. ... [Verse 11,] pray that you will then be filled with the fruit of righteousness, which comes from Jesus Christ, in order to give glory and praise to God.”

The girl got up, knowing what she had to do. She had to pray for her friend, pray for her to make better decisions, pray for God to fill her with the fruit of righteousness that comes from God. That would be her daily prayer going forward. The girl now had a confident glow about her.

Yes, these words were from Paul to the Philippians. But it was the Holy Spirit at work within the girl that used this ancient book to speak directly to her situation. The Holy Spirit, who lived in the girl’s heart, inspired those words to apply them directly to her life situation. This is what happens when we are spirit-possessed: Holy Spirit possessed! He helps us hear God’s words, spoken into our lives, when we pray and, most often, while we are reading the Bible. So beware, listeners, for the Holy Spirit possess you, and you have this same ancient book of power, available to you. Read it, and unleash it’s power in your life! It will make a difference!

PP#5: *Second image of a roaring campfire.*

Our second ghost story is about a woman who wondered if she saw a ghost of her former husband. His name was Bruce. I’ll let him tell the eerie tale:

Before I collapsed, I was a difficult person. I had an anger burning within me that constantly erupted. Any little thing would set me off. I had a hard childhood. I was born to my mother, but not by her husband. My step-father adopted me, but he never treated me as his own. He was an alcoholic, and when he would drink, he would become violent, but only to me. I had to get out, so I lied about my age and joined the navy. There was always something to be mad about. I spent a lot of time in the brig. When I got out, my life kind of just drifted. I got married to Rosie and had two kids, but I provided an angry home for them. My drinking made it all worse, and Rosie came to hate me. I drove truck over the road, so me being gone a lot helped. But when I was home, I filled my home with

fighting. I was irresponsible and didn't provide for my family. I was empty inside. What little life I had was falling apart. Rosie served me divorce papers.

I remember hearing about God while growing up. But God sure didn't do me any good. So that night, after the big blowout with my Rosie—she knew when she had to back down, because she said she could see the anger change my eyes—I stormed outside screaming and yelling, and I looked up at the night sky and railed at God who was supposed to be there. In anger I pick up rocks and hurled them at God with all my strength into the sky. [*Short pause.*] That's not very smart, you know, throwing rocks at God. You see, one came back down and hit me in the head. I collapsed to the ground, and lying there, sobbing, I died lying in the grass that night. [*Longer pause.*]

Her eyes were wide as she stared at me. "Who...who are you?" She stammered.

"Rosie, it's me, Bruce." I said.

"No it's not! You're not Bruce. You look like him, but you're not him. I know Bruce. You're different. You're not Bruce!"

"Yes, Rosie, it's me. But you're right, I have changed. I'm different. I'm not like the Bruce you knew. I died that night, Rosie. I died. But here I am now, I've come back."

The Holy Spirit got a hold of me. That night the rock hit me on the head, but it didn't kill me physically. As I lay in the grass, sobbing, I told God that I give up. All my years of defiant anger, I just surrendered it. And the Holy Spirit came into my heart and began to change me. I got up, physically, and went to bed. The next day was Saturday and I went to my brother-in-law's house. I saw a brochure in his mail about a church. I decided I needed to go the next day. It just so happened to be Easter. When I got home from church, I went to go see Rosie. She could tell something was different. I looked like my old self, but I was different on the inside. Anger no longer burned there. Instead I was at peace, settled. A smile spread across my face. I didn't have to argue. I didn't have to lash out back.

When she asked me who I was, I was able to say that I was Bruce, but not the same Bruce. The old Bruce died that night out in the grass. I surrendered my old self to Jesus, and the Holy Spirit burned in my heart.

When Rosie pushed my buttons, I had a mysterious capacity to let it go. No, not everything changed overnight. I had a lot of growing to do. But the Holy Spirit inside of me kept pushing me to behave differently, to react differently, to listen, to find kind words to say. It wasn't easy at first, and I slipped up a lot, but the more I got it right, the easier it got. I listened more and more to the Holy Spirit that possessed me. My habits changed. When I was baptized, I went down into the water a chain smoker. After I came up, I never touched a cigarette again. I was able to resist the urge to go to the bars, and slowly my language changed. God gave me victory over my old vices, and I had the resolve to resist them. God restored my relationships, especially with my son and daughter.

Except for Rosie. She never was able to forgive me. She finally walked away. God never promised that everything would always go right for His children. But I was okay. He continued to carry me.

PP#6: John 3:5-8

"5 I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Don't be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' 8 God's Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It's the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Yes, I had died. But like Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3, “5 I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Don’t be surprised that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’” My old self died, but I was born anew. I had the Holy Spirit within me, and He changed my life. I had the power to be different, and I had the hope of a new purpose.

And I want you to know that this same God can give you new life, too. His Holy Spirit can change your life. He will be the power for you to have victory over what burdens you, binds you, keeps you defeated. He will guide you in a new way. You can live differently. Open your heart to Him. Let Him in. Don’t let it get to the point where it takes a blow to the head—literally! Trust me!

Romans 8:9 says, “But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you.”

PP#7: *Third image of a roaring campfire.*

The third Ghost Story, my friends, if you can keep listening, is a tale so strange, so unbelievable, that it boggles the mind. Yet again, I remind you, each of these tales is 100% true!

The pastor returned to his former church for a celebration.

“I never told you,” she said to him, “But your prayers healed me!”

The pastor looked at her closely. He didn’t recognize her. Who was this woman, he wondered. She was younger than he, in her 30s, and had two wiggly kids hovering nearby. But he dare not let on that he was clueless. He decided to try for more information to help jog his memory. “Really?” he asked, “How so?”

“Maybe you don’t remember,” she said.

“That’s right” the pastor thought to himself as he kept a steady smile. “Good, now she’ll give me some background.”

“It was your last Sunday here,” she explained. “I hadn’t been attending long, just a couple of weeks. I came because I had been told by the doctor that I had cancer. It was devastating! I hadn’t been to church since I was a kid, but I needed some help. I just couldn’t handle this. So I showed up one Sunday. I didn’t tell anyone what was going on with me, but everyone was so kind and caring. I enjoyed the service, and your message was about hope in times of trouble. Boy, was that me! I needed that hope. I heard you were leaving soon, but I came back the next week anyway. You talked about how God makes a difference in our lives, and that no matter what, we could have His peace inside. I needed that! The doctor had just shown me the X-rays of the large mass. It was aggressive and he said the surgery might not stop it. Even so, I was also facing a long chemotherapy plan afterwards. But I kept it all to myself. I shook your hand as I left, but I really didn’t stay to talk to anyone.”

“Nope,” the preacher thought to himself, “still don’t remember her. But if she didn’t stay to talk to me, that’s probably why. Then again, I don’t remember those sermons, either!”

She continued, “I came back a third time, and that was your final Sunday. You spoke about trusting in God when you can’t see the future, and you said we had to keep praying about what was ahead. For me, that was my surgery. I knew you were swamped with people talking to you after the service, but I also really wanted you to pray for me about my surgery. So, I waited for a break in the crowd, and went up to shake your hand. I worked up the courage to say to you that I was facing surgery soon and that I would like for you to pray for me. To my surprise, you said you would pray with me right then and there. So, right in the middle of all the commotion you bowed your head, placed your hand on my shoulder, and prayed out loud.

“I must tell you, I didn’t hear a word of your prayer. You see, when you laid your hand on me it felt like a fire passed through me, from my shoulder all through my body. I didn’t know what was happening, but it left as soon as you stopped praying. I didn’t know what to say, but you said that you hoped I would come back to the church and tell them the updates of my surgery. You didn’t seem to be any different, and afterwards everything just went back to normal. It was strange!

“But then, when I went in for my pre-surgery scan, the doctor was shocked. He told me that the tumor was gone, and that everything looked normal. He showed me the two X-rays, side by side. He pointed to the previous X-ray and showed me the tumor, and then he pointed in the new X-ray where the tumor was supposed to be, but wasn’t.

“You probably never heard, pastor, but God healed me when you prayed for me. I thought you would like to know.”

The pastor stared at her with wide eyes. No, he didn’t know. In fact, he still didn’t remember her! He didn’t remember praying for her. It had been four years since his last Sunday there, and she looked healthy in every way. The Holy Spirit had used his prayer even without him knowing about it. He had remained completely clueless, and had she not told him, he never would have known. Sometimes, the Holy Spirit works in people through ways that we never know. Our job is to be faithful and to trust God to do the rest.

PP#8: John 3:5-8

“5 I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Don’t be surprised that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’ 8 God’s Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. It’s the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Jesus says in John 3:8, “God’s Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. It’s the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit does do miracles, amazing and unexplainable things! We are not in control, we simply let the Holy Spirit work!

PP#9: The Fire Within: Campfire Holy Ghost Stories!

So, my friends, these amazing tales of mystery and miracles are Ghost Stories, stories of the Holy Ghost! God’s burning presence releases in us a power that changes our realities! God speaks to us, directly, through the Holy Spirit inspiring us as we read the Bible. The Holy Spirit gives us hope and a new identity, breaking the power of our old destructive habits and birthing in us new and different lives. And the Holy Spirit does wonders in us and through us, sometimes even when we don’t know about it!

I said these are true stories. The first story is from my daughter, Rebekah, at Red Rock camp 10 years ago. The second story is the story of my wife’s father, whose name was Bruce Bonngard. And the third story is my own! The lady came and told me about this one time when I returned to visit my previous church in Duluth.

You have your own Holy Ghost stories! And just like at a good campfire, we get up and go tell the stories we’ve just heard. So, Church, keep telling your Holy Ghost stories, stories of how God breaks into our daily lives to do wonders and blessings, making things new, making us new.

For it is true! “God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.” -Philippians 2:13
Amen.

[IN-PERSON WORSHIP ONLY] CLOSING SONG: *Questions (You Are Faithful)* -Sanctify

OFFERING: -Pastor David

-Give of your monies to God’s work through this church. You can give in person, mail it in or, most conveniently, you can make an automated transfer or a debit card payment on the church website or by using the “square” on the bulletin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

Camp this week!

Next Sunday’s message: The Nudges of the Holy Spirit -Teresa Gruber

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

“God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.” -
Philippians 2:13

BENEDICTION -Pastor David