

## REKINDLE THE FIRE

(2 Timothy 1:1-14)

Intro: What's a church to do?  
What's a congregation to do?  
What's a pastor to do?

Things have changed.

- One generation.
  - #Devoted.
  - #Set in its ways.
  - #Increasingly dying off.
- Another generation.
  - #Fewer in number.
  - #Confronted with competing loyalties.
  - #Maybe not as committed.

Questions have arisen.

- Will the baptized remain faithful?
- Will the faith survive?

Am I talking about?

- Ascension Lutheran Church.
- Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod.
- 2010.

Or am I talking about?

- Church of Timothy.
- Eastern Mediterranean.
- Turn of the first century A.D.

And the answer is:

- Yes.

Do we think?

- We are the first.
- We are the only ones.
  - #Faced with such issues.
    - \*Change.
    - \*Loyalty.
    - \*Survival.

So I ask again:

- What's a church to do?
- What's a congregation to do?
- What's a pastor to do?

I. Timothy Was Encouraged To Rekindle The Fire.

A. It Wasn't Easy Being A Pastor At The Turn Of The First Century.

1. Apostles.
  - a. First generation of believers.
  - b. Pioneers of the Christian faith.
    - Dead.
    - Dying.
2. Other belief systems were competing for new converts.
  - a. I won't detail those competing religions here.
    - That's a more appropriate topic for a Bible study class.
  - b. Christian church was not the only faith group in town.
    - Yellow Pages were full of competing groups.
3. Churches were struggling.
  - a. Hardship.
  - b. Persecution.
  - c. Seemingly timeless questions.
    - Will the baptized remain faithful?
    - Will the faith survive?
    - Will the church survive?
4. So the questions:
  - a. What's a church to do?
  - b. What's a congregation to do?
  - c. What's a pastor to do?

B. Timothy Was Told To Rekindle The Fire.

1. Rekindle the faith.
  - a. Fire of faith that was first lit in his own heart.
    - By his grandmother Lois.
    - By his mother Eunice.
      - #No mention of:
        - \*Grandpa.
        - \*Dad.
      - #Spiritual lights in his life.
        - \*Women one.
        - \*Women all.

- b. Fire of faith was already burning within him.
  - Maybe not as:
    - #Brightly.
    - #Powerfully.
    - \*As was once true.
  - But it was burning.
    - #Nonetheless.
  - Timothy didn't need:
    - #New program.
    - #New strategy.
  - He needed to have the fire within him rekindled.
- 2. My house in St. Louis had a wood-burning fireplace.
  - a. I built many a fire.
    - During the 25½ years I lived in that house.
  - b. I always started with kindling wood.
    - Sticks that I had picked up in the yard.
    - I laid those upon the fire grate.
  - c. I piled logs on top of the kindling.
    - Newspaper underneath.
  - d. Sometimes:
    - Kindling caught fire right away.
    - It needed more encouragement.
      - #Air.
      - \*I had a set of bellows.
        - +Made by an inmate in the Michigan State Penitentiary.
        - =Owl carved in the side.
        - =Words:
          - "Jesus Gives A Hoot."
      - \*But most often it was easier to blow on the fire.
        - +My lungs could hold more air than these bellows.
- 3. Timothy had the breath of the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Living in his heart.
  - b. Blowing in his heart.
    - Spirit of:
      - #Power.
      - #Love.
      - #Self-discipline.
    - Igniting a full-blown faith.
      - #In Christ Jesus.
        - \*Savior.
        - \*Whose:
          - +Life.
          - +Death.
          - +Resurrection.

=Abolished death.  
=Brought life and immortality to light.  
-Through the gospel.

#When I was in seminary.

\*There was a song we would sing.

+In my field education parish.

\*We would have called it a contemporary song.

+You may have heard it.

\*It's called *Pass It On*.

+It only takes a spark to get a fire going,

And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing;

That's how it is with God's love,

Once you've experienced it,

You spread the love to everyone

You want to pass it on.

c. That's what young Pastor Timothy was to do.

-Rekindle the fire.

-Rekindle the faith.

#Treasure it.

#Pass it on.

## II. Our Dream Team Would Like To Encourage You To Rekindle The Fire.

### A. Dream Team Has Been Designated To Lead A Process Of Congregational Renewal.

1. Those folks:

a. H.I. Aston.

b. Avis Erickson.

c. Mary Peterson.

d. Myself.

2. We're the ones who came up with the ideas for:

a. Name tags.

b. Prayer dots.

-How's it going with that?

3. Other evening.

a. Dream Team was sitting around H.I. and Elaine Aston's living room.

-Trying to figure out how to involve the rest of the congregation.

#In the renewal process.

b. H.I. said:

-We need a theme.

c. He threw out some ideas.

-One of those used the word "fire."

- d. That sparked an idea with me.
  - I had been working on the text from 2 Timothy 1:1-14.
  - #Verse 6 uses the word "rekindle."
  - So I suggested:
  - #Rekindling the Fire.*
- 4. So it is that we invite you to join us in Rekindling the Fire.
  - a. Kindling wood is small.
    - Sticks.
    - Twigs.
    - Little branches.
  - b. We will do well to remember.
    - Congregational renewal will require many small twigs.
    - #We didn't get where we are overnight.
    - #We're not going to get wherever we're going overnight.
    - CROP Walk this afternoon.
    - #Has a theme.
    - \*Ending Hunger One Step At A Time.
    - We will be rekindling the fire.
    - #One step at a time.

B. How Will We Rekindle The Fire?

- 1. We will continue to pray.
  - a. Timothy is told that he is being prayed for:
    - Night and day.
    - #Do you know how powerful that is?
  - b. We are involved in 100 Days of Prayer for our congregation.
    - That's what the Prayer Dots are for.
    - #To remind us:
      - \*To pray.
      - \*To keep on praying.
    - I would encourage us to think of 100 Days of Prayer.
    - #Like the Biblical 40 days and 40 nights.
    - \*It's a good long time.
      - +Day after day.
      - +Night after night.
- 2. We trust the breath of the Holy Spirit to blow.
  - a. On us.
  - b. In us.
  - c. Through us.
    - So that the rekindled fire can grow:
      - #Bigger.
      - #Brighter.
      - \*Glowing and Growing in the Light of the Lord.
      - +It still applies.

- That means faithfully putting ourselves.
  - #Where we know the Holy Spirit blows.
    - \*Worship.
      - +Scripture.
      - +Song.
    - \*Lord's table.
      - +Bread.
      - +Wine.
    - \*Bible study.
      - +Sunday morning.
      - +Every day devotions at home.
      - +5x5 groups.
        - =New Daytime 5x5 group is starting this week.
          - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays.
          - 10:30.
        - =If you prefer an evening time.
          - Talk to the folks in that group.
          - #Phone numbers are in the bulletin.
        - =Come.
          - Invite others to come.
        - =When the groups get to be too big.
          - We'll start some new groups.

3. How will we do that?

- a. We are going to start next Sunday.
  - With a retrospective on Ascension's first 55 years.
    - #We have:
      - \*Timeline.
      - \*Picture boards.
    - We would like everybody to attend.
      - #9:45.
      - #In the adult classroom.
        - \*Not just those who usually come for Bible study.
    - We want to look backwards.
      - #Not just to reminisce about the good old days.
        - \*If there ever were such days.
      - #But to put yourself on that timeline.
        - \*When did you join Ascension?
        - \*What was it that drew you to this community of faith?
        - \*How was the fire kindled?
          - +By whom?
          - +To what end?

- We want to use that as inspiration.
    - #For dreaming about our future.
      - \*As a community of faith.
    - #Greek word for "inspiration" literally means:
      - \*Spirit-breathed.
        - +We need the Holy Spirit.
          - =Breathing:
            - On us.
            - In us.
            - Through us.
          - =To rekindle the fire.
  - We're not waiting for the vote.
    - #On the Framework of Understanding.
      - \*On October 17.
    - #If the Framework of Understanding is not adopted.
      - \*We're going to do congregational renewal.
      - \*We're going to rekindle the fire.
    - #If the Framework of Understanding is adopted.
      - \*We're going to do congregational renewal.
      - \*We're going to rekindle the fire.
        - +Folks at Bethany:
          - =Know that.
          - =Will be a part of this.
  - We have not been given a spirit of cowardice.
    - #We are moving forward.
- b. Dream Team will convene small groups of Ascenders.
  - Beginning in November.
  - To shape the dream.
    - #Your input.
    - #Your ideas.
      - \*It won't be:
        - +Pastor's dream.
        - +Dream Team's dream.
      - \*It will be:
        - +Our dream.
  - We will use small groups.
    - #So that everyone will have a chance to contribute.
      - \*Some of you are more forceful.
        - +Can dominate a group.
      - \*Some of you are more bashful and shy.
        - +Can be intimidated in a group.
    - #We want everyone:
      - \*To participate.
      - \*To contribute.                   #To rekindle the fire.

Concl: What's a church to do?  
What's a congregation to do?  
What's a pastor to do?

Together.

-We rekindle the fire.