

I have to decide whether to move closer. Closer to the heat that could change me. Closer to the light that would reveal things I'd rather keep hidden.

He was still looking. And the air felt heavy, charged... alive. This wasn't a call to wait for something far off. It was an invitation – to step nearer to the inconvenient, the unpolished, the unexpected... and to stay there long enough... for the fire to catch. I can read the sky well enough.

But am I ready... to read the present time?

Wondering

- Recall moments when God's presence felt close and immediate in the everyday Notice the people or places in your life that may be signs of the Kingdom breaking in Reflect on what it might mean to move closer to the "heat" of God's refining love
- Consider what is revealed when the light of Christ shines on what you would prefer to keep hidden

4. Mission Spirituality

Mission is not making Jesus' words easier but walking with him until his fire burns away what cannot last. The gospel's disruption dismantles ego and frees us for love. Fire is to make us radiant – people whose lives are sparks of hope, hospitality, and truth-telling.

Wondering

- How might we as a church community or individually walk together through the discomfort that truth brings, towards reconciliation and mission

Going Deeper in the Week

Notice:

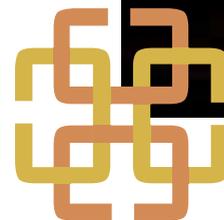
Keep watch for "sparks" of the Kingdom – moments of courage, acts of justice, seeds of reconciliation.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You came not to leave us as we are,
but to set the world ablaze
with your love.
Give us courage to stand
in your fire,
grace to be changed by its heat,
and joy to carry its light
into the world.

Amen.

Photo Credit: Marek Pivnicki



HeartBeat

Fire as the Passion of God's Presence

Growing The Gospel Together

Sunday 17th of August
Lectionary Reading:
Luke 12:49-56

Opening Prayer

God of refining fire,
Your presence burns away
illusion and fear.
Kindle in us the courage
to stand near your truth,
and the grace to live as people
warmed and changed by your love.

Amen.

Opening Wonderings

I wonder

- What experience you have of sitting around a camp fire with friends .
- What words you would use to describe a fire . And what types of fire come to mind .

Scripture Reading

Luke 12:49–56

Read the passage aloud twice, leaving a pause after the first reading for silence.

Ponder

- What image came to your mind as this passage was being read?
- What sentence or collection of words were you drawn to from this text.

Share your thoughts with the group.

CONNECTING SCRIPTURE AND LIFE

1. Fire as the Passion of God's Presence

When Jesus speaks of “bringing fire,” it’s not about arbitrary destruction. In Luke, fire is God’s purifying presence – as at Pentecost – that emboldens and transforms. It burns away false securities: family loyalties elevated above God, cultural norms that clash with love, consumerist dreams that mask emptiness.

We are reminded that this is not a decorative fire to warm our comfort; it’s the blazing love of God that both heals and unsettles. Being with Jesus means allowing that fire to change what we cling to most.

Wonderings

- Recall a time you felt the fire of God’s presence – warming, unsettling, or both Consider the false securities the refining fire of God may be calling you to release

2. Division as Honest Clarity

Jesus is not courting conflict for its own sake. The Kingdom’s arrival reveals who embraces it and who resists it... sometimes even within our own homes.

Being with Christ means we cannot always be with the values our communities prize. Compassion may

clash with self-interest, truth with polite avoidance, abundance with scarcity.

Richard Rohr says, “The truth will set you free – but first it will make you miserable.” Division can be the growing pain of awakening to God’s reality.

Wonderings

- Recall a time when following Christ led to discomfort or misunderstanding in relationships Notice where compassion in your life might be pushing against self-interest
- Reflect on moments when truth-telling felt costly but necessary
- Consider how the abundance of God’s Kingdom challenges patterns of scarcity in your community

3. Reading the Present Time

Jesus’ hearers could read the weather but not the signs of God’s work among them. We too can analyse markets, politics, or social media trends – but miss where the Spirit is already at work, often at the margins.

Holiness is learning to recognise the Kingdom in the ordinary and the inconvenient. The question is not when the Kingdom will come, but where it is already breaking in – and whether we are willing to stand close to its fire.

Dramatic Monologue

“Reading the Present Time”

(Luke 12:49–56)

Read aloud

I was standing on the edge of the crowd... heat clinging to my skin, dust rising from the ground. Then his voice cut through the air – steady, unhurried: “You know how to read the sky. When a cloud rises in the west, you say, Rain is coming. When the wind blows from the south, you say, It will be hot. And you are right. But why... do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

At first, I thought, He’s speaking to someone else. But then his eyes... they found me. I know the weather. I can read the market stalls, sense the mood of a neighbour before a word is spoken. But... can I read this moment? Can I see what God is doing... right now? Not tomorrow. Not someday. Now.

And then faces came to mind – the beggar by the gate, the woman who talks too loudly in the marketplace, the children playing in the dust.

Were they the signs?

Was the Kingdom breaking in right there – and I hadn’t noticed? A knot tightened in my stomach. Because if I do see it,