

Smoke

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Study by W.D. Frazee—January 1,

A man shall be as an hiding place. Jesus is our refuge. Last Sunday morning in Jacksonville, 21 people were killed in clouds of smoke as fire erupted in one of the leading hotels in that Florida city. I was struck with the story. I want to read you a few lines of it.

“Fire on the lower floors of the three hundred room Roosevelt hotel sent smoke billowing up through the building and brought death to twenty-one persons. Flames never got above the second floor, but most of the dead were on the upper floors where fireman’s ladders wouldn’t reach, and where heavy gray smoke blocked their attempts to find their way through dark hallways to the two stairways”

They were killed with what? Smoke. And then down on the same page, under a different headline I found some more about another kind of smoke —“Exhaust gases eyes as killer in polluted air.” Up in Cleveland, the American Association for the advancement of science heard Dr. Goldsmith of the California state department of public health present the fears that carbon monoxide spewing from auto exhaust and smoke stacks is responsible for killing and sickening people in many cities.

“Carbon monoxide combines with hemoglobin the carrier of oxygen in the blood, and could be hazardous especially for people with heart or lung ailments,’ Dr. Goldsmith said. Levels of carbon monoxide in the air in Los Angeles have been increasing about ten percent a year until just recently”

That is another kind of smoke, isn’t it? Yes. It takes longer to kill people than the smoke in that hotel. And then, will you believe it? Right next to it was another story about another kind of smoke. All on the same page. “Smoking Feared threat to Brain.”

“Evidence that smoking may impair the intellectual faculties of high school teen-agers was reported Sunday by a New York biology teacher. The educator said the apparent link noted between smoking and decreased mental ability might result from the absorption into the blood of toxins originating from smoke”

Yes, folks, whether it comes from a burning hotel, or from the exhaust fumes of automobiles, or the chimneys of great industrial plants, or from the burning cigarette, smoke is not exactly man's friend, is it? No. It isn't.

I have been thinking about this week. The more I thought about it, the more I thought we ought to study it tonight. I would like to have you notice three things about smoke. You know them without my mentioning them, but sometimes it is the thing we know the best that help us the most if we get to thinking about what their implications are.

In the first place, smoke obscures. My mind went to the ninth chapter of Revelation, and the second verse.

"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" Revelation 9:2.

Can smoke actually hide the sun? Yes. Can even the air get darkened by reason of the smoke? Yes. That is what is happening, my dear friends, over many of the great cities in various parts of the world. They actually have a name for it now, smog. And probably if that smog could be analyzed you would find that it has thousands upon thousands of sources ranging through all these automobile exhausts, and the industrial smoke, and the smoke from these millions upon millions of burning cigarettes.

"And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" *Ibid*.

It comes from the pit, alright. Yes, smoke obscures.

Smoke irritates. In Proverbs 10:26 the wise man draws a lesson from that. Solomon was full of similes, and this is one of them.

"As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so *is* the sluggard to them that send him" Proverbs 10:26.

Yes, smoke irritates. It irritates the eyes. It irritates the nose. It irritates the throat. It irritates the trachea and the bronchi and all the air sacs. Is that right? Yes. Irritating everywhere. All the way along the line.

But besides its work of obscuring and irritating, smoke also stupefies. That is what this educator is concerned about. Thousands of high school students having their mentality dulled by smoke. And of course these twenty-one people last Sunday morning in the hotel in Jacksonville, they got the ultimate. Didn't they? Asphyxiation. But whether it is done all in a few brief moments in a hotel fire, or whether it is done over a period of years through the smoke from exhaust fumes, or the smoke from the burning cigarette, smoke irritates, stupefies, and as the result of irritation it kills such as in lung cancer, and as the result of its stupefying action, it kills, it asphyxiates.

I wonder what we ought to do about it? There are three questions I want to ask you about it. First is, shouldn't there be a place where people can get away from it all? What do you think?

Now my next question will come a little closer. How much smoke shall we have in the place of retreat, the refuge? If you were the one that were pulling people out of the smoke, and trying to get them back as quickly as possible into normal life, how much smoke would you want in the recovery room? Shall we be conservative and say, just as little as possible? I wonder if five-hundred acres free from it would be too many?

Now my third question is, What does smoke come from? Fire. It comes from fire. Now will you turn over to the book of James, the third chapter, verses five and six.

“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” James 3:5-6.

Will you go with me this first Vesper service of the New Year in an earnest sincere endeavor to study how we can get rid of the smoke? What do you say, friends? But remember, to get rid of the smoke, we must get rid of what? The fire. Sure.

Too many people are simply toying around with filters, and it is not doing the job, friends. To stop the smoke, stop the fire! May I read you some thoughts from other translations?

“How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire” *Ibid*, RSV.

How many have ever fought fire out in these woods here? Oh yes. Dozens of you. Was it because some airplane came over and dropped a great firebomb? Was that what did it? What started it? A match. And a match is pretty small, isn't it? That is right.

A match from some careless smoker, or from some hunter who has decided to warm himself at night with just a little fire, and went off and left it. That's it, folks.

“Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” *Ibid*.

James is talking not about a match, but about a tongue. Whose tongue? Phillips translates this:

“A whole forest can be set a blaze by a tiny spark of fire.
And the tongue is as dangerous as any fire with vast

potentialities for evil. It can poison the whole body, it can make the whole of life a blazing hell!" *Ibid*, Phillips translation.

What can do it? The tongue can.

As Brother Wilson and I were waiting to speak some words of comfort to the bereaved family down at Trenton this morning, he told me of an experience that was told to him up in Harriman, northern Tennessee, not long ago by a man who is the fire chief up in that little town. He is the head of the volunteer fire department. He also owns a restaurant. And it happened that his restaurant got fire. And being the fire chief, of course, he was in there with the others trying to do what he could trying to stop the fire and save what he could.

But since it was his restaurant, he really had a burden as you can understand. And so he ventured farther and longer than the other fireman dared too. And as he told Brother Wilson what happened was this. He said he was in there. He was feeling alright. He felt perfectly normal. And then, like that, he was unconscious. And if the other fireman hadn't known he was in there and gone in and dragged him out, that would have been the end of him.

Yes, smoke is dangerous, friends. It has a deadening, dulling effect upon the forebrain. That is what I was reading here in this article from the educator.

"The absorption into the blood of toxins originating from smoke that are eventually distributed to the mechanism of memory and intelligence which is located in the cerebral cortex of the cerebrum of the brain"

In plain English, folks, that means that there are poisons in smoke that effect the thinking. They can work very slowly, very gradually. But they are nonetheless certain.

Now what about this smoke that James is talking about? This fire that he is putting his finger on. Does it affect the brain? Verily! Oh yes. James says it is set on fire of hell. And I asked you a little while ago, if you were the one that was pulling people out of the smoke-filled blazing inferno trying to help them to recover consciousness, what kind of room would you want for a recovery room? You all agreed that you would like to have a room that was as free of smoke as possible. Am I correct?

Shall we have a campus that is free from this kind of smoke along with the other kinds? What do you say, friends? Amen. And James is talking about the fire that comes from what? The tongue.

You know, there is something very characteristic of fire. It spreads. Any of us that have fought these fires out in the woods, we know that. We see how in just a few minutes it begins to just spread, and pretty soon it has covered an acre. Pretty soon, if we haven't stopped it, it has covered ten acres, or a hundred acres. All it needs is time. And we have all had the experience of seeing that what one man

could have stopped at a certain point, ten men could work hours and still they haven't stopped it when it gets a little headway.

Can the tongue do things like that? Has it ever happened? Did you ever see it? And did you ever see dear souls overcome with smoke? The smoke from the pit that obscured the sun and air so they couldn't see straight nor breathe as they should? And so they thought what wasn't so, and couldn't see the beautiful truth and they lost their faith, they lost their courage, they lost their energy in God's work, all because of the smoke that obscures, the smoke that irritates, the smoke that stupefies.

I would like to have us think of some of the different kinds of smoke. You know, there is all kinds and colors of smoke. Did you ever see yellow smoke? White smoke? Black smoke? Blue smoke? Yes. Did you ever see the smoke of anger? Did you ever see the smoke of criticism? Have you seen the smoke of complaining? Just a little complaining. Can it spread? Just like a forest fire? Yes.

Have you ever seen the smoke of worldly influence? Sometimes drops a little word about wishing that we could do this or do that like the Romans do or like the Egyptians do, or like the Babylonians do, or like the Philistines do, and the Sun of Righteousness gets obscured.

"And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" Revelation 9:2.

There is the smoke of folly, plain foolishness. Oh how that drives away the Spirit of God, my friends. There is a smoke of doubt, doubt of God, doubt of God's church, God's leaders, God's movement, doubt.

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue *is* a fire" James 3:5.

There is the smoke of restlessness and discontent. I want to ask you something, friends, if you lived up here in the woods, and you had a little cabin up there, and you should be out some day and for any reason you happened to set a fire, while it was just a tiny little fire, what would you do? Put it out. Stamp it out. Wouldn't you? Would you just stand there and let it set the whole mountain ablaze? Oh no. You would put it out, wouldn't you? Yes.

May I urge you, friends, for Jesus' sake, when some little doubt creeps into your heart, some tiny thought of complaining, some little bit of restlessness, go to Jesus and get it stamped out before it ever spreads to your neighbors mind. We need smokeless places to draw in and carry in the asphyxiated victims of the smoke that is filling the world, the smoke from the bottomless pit. This place, my friends, must be a place that is smoke free. What do you say? Amen. Can we have that this year? I know we can. If we will be willing, by the grace of God, to control these what? These tongues. Jesus can help us.

It is not only our words, friends, it is everything that influences people. Let me ask you something. Suppose here comes somebody from Chattanooga or Chicago,

or anyplace else, and his problem is this very problem of very real smoke. Actually smoking cigarettes. Do you think it would be a good thing to have around on your living room table several packages of cigarettes? Do you think it would be? Would that be a good helpful thing? Why no.

You say, "Nobody has that kind of thing at Wildwood?" No, I think that is correct. I don't think that is a problem. But friends, I see and hear things sometimes that are just as dangerous to some people as cigarettes are to some people that have that habit. You know Paul made a resolution once. He said, If certain kinds of food make my brother to stumble, then I won't eat them as long as the world stands. Do you remember that? And he wasn't talking about drinking whiskey and eating pork either. He was talking about doing things that might cause the weak to stumble.

I want to challenge all of you in the early hours of this New Year to think of the things you have in your home, in your rooms, and be sure that they are smoke free. What about the reading that lies out there on the living room, or your study table? If somebody that has been addicted, and there are many of them, addicted to the reading of this world and their minds are filled with smoke that they got out of the magazines and the newspapers and the stories and the books of this world, their mind is just all full of smoke. Finally, in God's mercy, they have pulled out to a rural place where the streams flow and the trees are purifying the air. They are out here to get a new lease on life. If they should come into your room, whether it is your private room, or your living room, would they find something there in the way of reading that would at once awaken all those old appetites?

Think it over. What about the radio, friends? Why, somebody says, "Brother Frazee, radio is a wonderful thing." Yes it is. So is the tongue. Isn't it? The tongue is a wonderful thing. James says it is a wonderful thing. And do you know it is just about as hard to keep that radio smoke free as it is to keep the tongue smoke free, isn't it? Well if you know how to do it, God bless you, friends. But if you don't, I know one sure cure. If any of you don't know, you can ask me and I will tell you.

But, of friends, seriously, wouldn't we all feel bad if some dear soul that had been nearly asphyxiated in the smoke of this world should come to this campus and here find the music that started his feet down the broad road in some other place? Whether he got it from a radio, or a record player, or a tape recorder, or a phonograph, or from some human lips, wouldn't it be too bad if the music of the world should be heard in the place that is supposed to be turning people heavenward? Wouldn't it, friends?

Somebody says, "Oh, I can't see anything wrong in a little of this or that." Well, I will tell you, folks, a little smoke won't asphyxiate you. That is right. But I will tell you something else. There comes a point in asphyxiation where just a little more will do it. And you don't know the poor soul may be near asphyxiation when he comes here. And I repeat, don't forget what Paul said, if meat make my brother to stumble, I will eat no meat while the world stands.

Now nobody needs to get fanatical or extreme on any of these points, friends, but I will tell you this. We are dealing with life and death. I am impressed that we are not going to have very many more years. 1963 was different from any year we

have seen before, wasn't it? 1964 will be still more different. We are almost home. Our business, mark my words, is not to clean up this old world like these scientists are trying to figure out how they are going to clean up the old world so we can stay here another thousand or million years. No, no.

Our business, friends, is two things. To try to do what we can to make some little places of refuge where people can be pulled out and brought back to sanity, and then all leave this smoke-filled planet and go off to a safe place. What do you say, friends? What do you say?

But isn't it nice we can have a little bit of heaven here to go to heaven in? Let me read you a beautiful statement from *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 180. This just thrilled my soul when I read it.

"You can surround your souls with an atmosphere that will be like breezes from the heavenly Eden" *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 180.

Say, if you got a hundred breezes like that blowing here, wouldn't that be a good place to bring people that had been half-overcome with smoke? Whether it came from a cigarette, or the smoke of the great cities, or from the music of the cities, or from the reading of the cities, or the false religions of the cities? Whatever that smoke is, friends, it is all from the bottomless pit.

"You can surround your souls with an atmosphere that will be like breezes from the heavenly Eden" *Ibid*.

When I read that, in my heart I prayed, "Lord, help me not to talk so much about the smoke tonight that we miss the breezes from Eden." This is what I want to fill my lungs up with. If I go into a smoke-filled room, I want to stay there just long enough to drag somebody out. What do you say, friends? That is the only reason to get in there.

"You can surround your souls with an atmosphere that will be like breezes from the heavenly Eden" *Ibid*.

Shall we do it? Amen. Would you like to know the rest of that paragraph? It is very interesting.

"You can surround your souls with an atmosphere that will be like breezes from the heavenly Eden. Open your heart to the Lord Jesus. Guard your tongue. Let not your tongue run at random in jesting and joking. ... Educate yourself to carry a pleasant countenance, and bring all the sweetness and melody possible into your voice" *Ibid*.

Now here is another nice one. This is *My Life Today*, page 152. This is on this atmosphere, not smoke-filled atmosphere, smoke-less atmosphere. Full of oxygen. Full of life-giving elements. Listen:

“Under the influence of meekness, kindness, and gentleness, an atmosphere is created that will heal and not destroy” *My Life Today*, page 152.

Isn't that nice? People come with their lungs all irritated, coughing. What is the matter? Smoke. Smoke. Smoke. They have been just breathing smoke for years. They come out here into this atmosphere fragrant with the pines and the cedars, but oh, the mind and the soul need atmosphere too. It isn't just those lung cells that are irritated. The brain cells, poor things, they are irritated too. But oh there is healing atmosphere for them. What is it? Love. Kindness. Gentleness. Isn't that nice?

Friends, I thank God for love. Don't you? Amen. I would hate to be where there wasn't love. That would be a smoke-filled room.

“And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit” Revelation 9:2.

Thank God for heavenly atmosphere! Breezes blowing from Eden that blow that smoke away! And come in and bring healing, love, gentleness, meekness, kindness. Can we have it? A heaven here to go to heaven in.

Now one more. This, friends, will thrill your soul. I never saw this in my life until just today. This particular reference.

“There have been times when the blessing of God has been bestowed in answer to prayer, so that when others have come into the room, no sooner did they step over the threshold than they exclaimed, ‘The Lord is here!’ Not a word had been uttered, but the blessed influence of God's holy presence was sensibly felt. The joy that comes from Jesus Christ was there; and in this sense the Lord had been in the room just as verily as He walked through the streets of Jerusalem, or appeared to the disciples when they were in the upper chamber, and said, ‘Peace be unto you’” *My Life Today*, page 51.

Isn't that nice? Have we ever felt His presence here, friends? Yes. And I remember somebody was telling me about some dear woman that was passing through some trial and sorrow and came on these grounds, not a member of this church, but she testified of feeling the presence of the Lord as she came on these grounds. Friends, I want it to be that way. Don't you? Yes.

But remember, smoke obscures. Smoke irritates. Smoke stupefies. And smoke kills. Remember what smoke comes from. It comes from what? Fire. The fire of jealousy, or discontent, of selfishness, self-pleasing. Oh let's ask Jesus to put out the fire, what do you say, friends? Then there won't be any smoke. No smoke. Let's ask Jesus to fill our hearts with this atmosphere of heaven.

“You can surround your souls with an atmosphere that will be like breezes from the heavenly Eden” *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 180.

Oh, we are going to do it, aren't we, friends? This year. This week. This day. Aren't we? Yes.

Well, you know, as we were walking down tonight Brother Atherton told us why it was that the Lord had let this snow come. It was so that we could get exercise. You know, there are two sides to every coin, friends, you can either look at heads or tails. That is right. And some people, it is amazing how they are always looking at the sad side, the hard side, the bad side, something to complain about. And do you know it is pretty hard to fix up any situation but what somebody can find something to complain about. Did you know that? If you doubt that, let me help you figure out how it can be done.

But oh, the other side of it is the happy side. It is impossible for the Devil and all his hosts because the brake of heaven is put on them by the holy angels, it is impossible for the Devil and all his hosts and all the wicked to fix up any situation but what the child of God, if it touches him, can say, “There is something about this that is going to work good for me.” That is right. That is this breeze of heavenly atmosphere. And ah, the poor, sad people, half-overcome with smoke that come here, they need that cheering word. They need the help in finding out what the meaning of life is. Don't they? And the meaning of life is not that somebody up in the government is going to figure out some new tax deal that is going to solve their problems. That isn't it, friends. Oh no.

It isn't some social security or some Medicare or anything else. That isn't it. What was it our brother sang? I know of a world that is sunk in shame where hearts all faint and tired. That is this world isn't it? But I know of a name, a precious name, that can set that world on fire. And that is the right kind of fire. I know of a name, a precious name, tis Jesus.

Well, as we were coming down a little chorus came into my mind. I haven't thought of it for a long time. And as I thought of it, I thought, we must sing that little chorus tonight. Brother Glancer, do you know that chorus? It was written long before you and I were born. It is an old hymn.

Well, wouldn't it be nice if we could teach Brother Glancer the chorus? There are enough of us here to sing it. Let's try.

There are angels hovering around,
There are angels hovering around,
There are angels, angels hovering round.

They will carry tidings home,
They will carry tidings home,
They will carry, carry tidings home.

To the New Jerusalem,

To the New Jerusalem,
To the New, the New Jerusalem.

Let's give them some tidings to carry home. What do you say?

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