

PARABLE OF A PURPOSE-DRIVEN FIRE SETTER

By James Sundquist

Director

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NOTE:

This parable is based on what recently really happened to Karen and me and my daughter. But also because it is based on the destruction of the brethren in the Evangelical Covenant Church and their retaliation to me. But it is really applicable to all Purpose-Driven churches and denominations.

Recently I took my wife and seven year old daughter out to dinner. We had just had a Nor'easter snow storm hit us. On our way home a pickup truck with a snow plow in front was backing up ahead of us, so I slowed down trying determine his intentions....but he kept coming. I did not want to stop suddenly and skid into him, so I passed him slowly on the right barely moving because this side street was narrow. There was just enough room to pass, giving the truck driver complete clearance so he could back up as far as he wanted to, unimpeded. But this really angered the driver of the truck so he start screaming obscenities at us. When we were right beside him to pass he threw his burning cigarette at me right through my window. At first, I did not know what it was as I only saw a flash of something white fly by me about eye level. Then my wife and I smelled the smoke (which she is highly allergic to). Initially, I couldn't find this burning foreign object because it bounced off of my lap and fell between the seats. I could not help but wonder what would have happened were I not to immediately discern that real strange fire had been thrown into our vehicle...so that our car would have totally caught on fire...or worse my wife and daughter and I get seriously burned. I also wondered if a bystander (who was a total stranger) saw this man do this to us, would that person decide not to tell us out of the blue because he did not know us? Or maybe he would tell us, but not too quickly. What would have happened then? In any case, I moved like lightning to search for the bright burning flaming red cigarette. Thankfully, I quickly discovered it, and I had my driving gloves on so I extinguished it immediately even though it was not that easy to snuff out. When I did, even more billows of smoke poured into our compartment, leaving an acrid stench. After being sure it was put out, I then threw it out the window. By now my wife was very upset and my daughter was crying and was very afraid. She then asked how could anyone do that? My wife comforted her. We explained to her that there are evil men in this world and they will become worse, but that God is our strong shield and Mommy and Daddy will protect her.

We did not retaliate or go into road rage ourselves. We immediately drove away, and on our way home prayed for this man who was filled with such rage. But my conscience was concerned whether or not I should get his license plate number and report him to the police. This was clearly a crime and assault, easily prosecutable. And if we chose to, we could have filed a civil suit against him. I also admit being

fearful of him getting our license plate number to track us down to retaliate further (mostly I was concerned for the safety of my wife and daughter). But I also had concerns about letting him roam free to harm other people...should I report him? Even though this whole incident was upsetting, this man is unredeemed. It is far worse for a person who is a Christian or pastor to knowingly lead people astray with what the Bible calls "strange fire".

By now you are probably way ahead of me in seeing the symbolism of this parable of the Purpose-Driven Strange Fire being thrown into the church. There is not just one individual throwing burning objects into one church and bringing strange fire to the altar, but legions of these workers of iniquity throwing them into many different cars (denominations and countries). Some brave souls have yelled fire but instead of using the fire extinguisher on the fire, the leaders and others aimed it at the 911 caller messenger because they thought he was too impulsive and rash by calling in this emergency too quickly and moving on it too swiftly. Or imagine the fire trucks showing up at the person's house or car that made the 911 emergency call but one of the firemen opened up massive water hoses on to the car or house of the person (stranger who did not know the driver of the car on fire). What kind of fireman would that be? Then imagine that others call the police to report that they were eye-witnesses and actually saw the arsonist set the fire. This fire was NO accident. But the police retaliate and arrest these callers and let the real arsonists go free.

Just a few weeks ago traffic was backed up on one of our main roadways, bringing all traffic to a complete halt. I couldn't figure out what the problem was...traffic jams are common...but nothing like this had ever happened. So I turned the news on to discover that a car was completely on fire right in the middle lane. When I finally got within several blocks I could see flames streaming from the car about twenty feet into the air. By the time I reached the burning car it was completely blackened inside and out. I knew there were injuries because of ambulances...and there were also a host of police cars and fire trucks sent there.

Can you imagine the following scenario? Suppose one of the police officers accuses the 911 caller of lying. The 911 caller then defends himself about this and informs the police department. One of the survivors of the fire, who knows there was really a fire and was also a witness as to who really set the fire, then writes the 911 caller and tells him he was way too harsh with this police officer and was also upset that the 911 caller started telling everyone who set the fire and was too aggressive for shouting it from the rooftops! Other police officers join in and help set more cars on fire.

So who is the responsible steward in this parable, based on a true story? Who are the reprobates? Who are the traitors? It is too bad that the perpetrators were not held accountable and stopped! It is too bad that the real victims did not receive restoration.

And it is too bad that the 911 caller is made out to be the villain by both the perpetrators and even one of the victims. Even the witnesses and the police officers circled their wagons around the perpetrators instead of the truth and instead of the victims and rallied against the 911 callers. Can't help but wonder if these 911 callers will ever be brave enough again to make a call the next time there is a fire!

Lev 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

Lev 10:2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.