

Transcription of 18TM902

Isaiah 33:14

"Eremacausis"

December 31, 2018

If you have a Bible with you tonight, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about a concept that maybe you haven't thought about much. It's in Isaiah 33:14. Because it is a portrait or a picture of God that I think you will find constantly presented to us in the Scriptures, I think it needs to be burned into our understanding. It isn't something that, maybe, we put all of those pieces together; and maybe tonight we can do that a little bit for you.

The prophet Isaiah was sent by the LORD to the southern kingdom of Judah, and he began speaking about 739 or so B.C. He would spend 53 years being God's prophet to the southern kingdom. He would quit in 686 B.C. During the time that he was a prophet for the LORD, officially, the northern kingdom of Israel would fall into the hands of the Assyrians. It had been years of idolatry and rebellion against God. They never had a good king. They really had no reason to exist. They ran north away from God. They changed the rules for the priests. They lowered the bar for worship. They brought in corrupt men to rule. And God warned them and was patient with them for a long time before, in 722 B.C., they fell to the Assyrians.

But then, as the Assyrians turned from the north (which they had overthrown), they set their sights on Jerusalem. Though they would liked to have gone down to Egypt to wipe Egypt out (and it was a great power in those days), Israel kind of stood in the way in the south; and so their plan was take care of Israel and then head south. And the folks in Jerusalem did not respond by seeing their compatriots' ten tribes in the north and what happened to them; they never took that seriously. And so when that happened to them in the north, they didn't say, "Well, we should probably repent." They didn't at all. Though they had a good king in Hezekiah, though they had a good prophet in Isaiah (who'd been with them for a lot of years), though everything he had said about what was coming did come, they didn't move, really, in their understanding; and so the threats from the Assyrians didn't move them much. It moved Hezekiah. It didn't initially move Hezekiah to pray. He sent money to the Assyrians and asked if he could buy them off. "We'll give you a lot of dough. You just go away. Go to Egypt and leave us alone." And they said, "Okay." And he sent them a check, and they said, "Thank you," and then they kept sending their army, and that didn't help. He then sent money to Egypt to

say, "Would you be there on the day that we're attacked so that you could help us survive this onslaught?" And Egypt said, "Sure! Thank you for the money." And they put it in the bank, and they never showed up. And when they were needed, they weren't willing. They didn't want the battle. They wanted it to come to them on their own soil, so to speak.

And so they were left - Israel was, and especially Jerusalem, its capital - in the lurch; and then Hezekiah did what Isaiah had been saying for a long time. "Let's pray." Hezekiah had, for years, brought reform to the nation; he's a good guy. In panic, he did some dumb things, but he was a godly man - wanted to do the godly thing. And so they began to pray, and they began to seek the LORD; and as they did, things just got worse. The Assyrians sent tens of thousands of soldiers to the border, if you will, of Jerusalem - around the walls of the city. There were folks there from Assyria that would stand outside the gates and yell in the language of the Jews to the people threats about what they were going to do to them when they came in. And the food supply was cut off, and the water supply was dwindling, and there were even cases of people eating their own children. It got so bad that all hope for the people was lost. When the verbal threats stopped, a fellow named Rabshakeh - who was the Assyrian ambassador - would come, and he would pass along word from the king, from Sennacherib who was off fighting another battle. "Well, we'll be back, and as soon as this battle's over, you guys are dead!" And when that didn't work, a letter came from Sennacherib, and it had Hezekiah's name on it. "Dear Hezekiah, you're dead." Finally Hezekiah took that note, and he put it in the Temple in front of the LORD, and he said, "Look what they're saying to us. What do we do now?" And they prayed, and nothing seemed to happen, and nothing seemed to get better. And the people began to be terrified; they were sure that they were dead. They had not been willing to respond to the spiritual reforms under Hezekiah's leadership, but they were willing now to pray because what else could they do but pray. And now it had come to this. Nearly a quarter of a million troops outside the walls of Jerusalem. Not exactly a comfortable feeling. And you're inside, you can't get out, and they're not gettin' in, and there's no hope of your deliverance; and every day the food got more scarce, and the fear became terror, and the people began to fight amongst themselves. And the noise outside was deafening - soldiers marching, their armaments, their banter, the talk. Frightening. Except for one morning, everyone woke up to silence. "Did they leave?" Someone who got the short straw was told to go out and look, and he did. And as he went out, and he began to walk around the walls of the city, he began to find dead soldiers everywhere - lying on the ground, food in their hands, fallen

down on their faces. Whatever soldiers had turned to run had gotten away and gone back home. But, for the most part, there were 185,000 dead Assyrians around the city of Jerusalem. God had answered the prayers of His people. The angel of the LORD had come at night. God had delivered them, and they were safe.

The problem was - and I tell you that whole story to get you to verse 14 - the sinners in Zion and the hypocrites in the city now had an even greater fear. Before, it was the Assyrians. "They're gonna get in here and slaughter us! They're gonna skin us alive!" There could be no worse death than to die at their hands. But now they saw what God had done, and now they find themselves terrified of the God who had delivered them. "How are we going to survive in front of Him when we were doomed to survive in front of these Assyrians?" And the fear of the army and certain death gave way to a greater fear of God and His power as they saw the fire of the LORD had destroyed this army in one night. "We couldn't stop them." But they realized now there was a greater power than the Assyrians that they had to answer to - God Himself - and they wondered, "How in the world are we going to survive this?" And they realized for maybe the first time in a long time that their wickedness made them stand on pretty shaky ground. How would they ever survive this?

Which brings us to our verse. And this is what it says, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites." Here's what they said " 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' " Afraid and fearful, the sinners were finally conscious and aware of their wickedness in light of the work that God has done. They saw the LORD as a "devouring fire." Isaiah had, for years, been trying to teach the people that the presence of the LORD amongst them was a burning fire. And he used several words to describe that; he used lots of analogies so that he could speak to them about God and His character. In fact, the Bible is filled with this concept of God and fire - the presence of God, the judgment of God, the pruning of God. They are all attached to this concept of God being a consuming fire. In Isaiah 6, the prophet Isaiah, as a young man, finds himself standing before the throne of God, and it was in the year that King Uzziah died. He was a young prophet who really had a lot of confidence in the king, but now the king was gone, and this prophet-to-be, this young man Isaiah, was going to have to learn to trust the LORD. And he found himself in the spirit, standing before the presence of God, and it frightened him. And he said, "I am unclean, and I come from a people with unclean lips. And here I stand before You," and he just thought, "I am cooked.

There is no way I'm going to survive this. Woe is me. I am undone." And as he realized his sinfulness, the angel of the LORD (in Isaiah 6) was sent and dispatched to get a coal from the fire of God, from the altar of the LORD, and it touched his lips, and the LORD declared that he was clean. The fire of the LORD, the presence of God, the mercy of God, the power of God cleansed the life of the prophet, and it became, really, the song that he sang for the next 53 years. "God is a fire." It left a mark on him that maybe it wouldn't have left on anyone else.

If you jump to the end of the book, in Isaiah 66:15, you hear Isaiah writing, "Behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many." And he's talking about that time when the LORD will return, and he describes Him in the same manner - the fires of God bringing God's anger to bear. No one's standing. No one's surviving that judgment. And it's Isaiah who speaks in no uncertain terms that the idolater and the rebellious, in the days to come, won't survive. So that was burnt into Isaiah's heart. Pun intended. The fires of the LORD.

If you go way back to Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve fell into sin - when they disobeyed the LORD, when they heard the judgment that was coming - they were cast out of Paradise, out of the garden. And in order to not allow them to come back, the LORD stationed a very powerful angel, a cherubim, standing at the entrance to keep men away from the tree of life. He didn't want anyone to be eating of a tree that would allow them to live forever in that condition. But it is the angel that stands to guard the way with a flaming sword, this presence of God to guard the way, to keep people back, to keep them from falling.

In Exodus 3, Moses - 80 years old, living on the back of the desert, 40 years already there - wondering what God's plans for him might have been (he thought he knew them at 40), walking through the wilderness one day, runs into the very presence of God at a burning bush. It's an interesting picture. A bush that is burning and it is not consumed. It attracts Moses' attention, as you would well suspect. When he drew a little closer, it was the voice of the LORD from that burning bush that said, "Take off your shoes. This is a holy place." It is from that place that God would send Moses to the people in Egypt so that, by His power, He might deliver them. But he is sent from the fires of God, from God's presence, with His power. And again there's that allusion to, that picture of, illustration of

fire. When Moses, months later, brings the people of God out of Egypt, he brings them to Mount Sinai. They would stay there for almost a year. It was only a six-week trip from the borders of Egypt through the Red Sea to here. But there, the people would learn the God that they were going to serve - that He was real, He was powerful, He meant business, you shouldn't mess around with Him. But He was for them. And if you go back and you read the descriptions there that you find in Exodus 19 (and in that section of chapters), you find that the hill that they came to stand before - where the LORD's presence was in Mount Sinai - began to quake and to shake, and the fires began to.....the place was ablaze. It said it looked like the smoke from a furnace on fire. And the people were terrified. They backed up. In fact, this is what is written in chapter 19 of Exodus. It says (verse 17), "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly." And then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up here," and the LORD began to speak to Moses as to what he would say to the people. And the people were so terrified of what they saw that when Moses came down and said, "The LORD's got a plan for you," they said, "Whatever He wants! We will do whatever that guy wants! Except we want you to talk to him. Don't let Him talk to us. He scares us." And it moved on them in a real way. About five chapters later, you will read (Exodus 24:17), "The sight of the glory of the LORD was to the children of Israel like a consuming fire on top of the mountain in the eyes of the people." They walked away, five chapters later, going, "Phew. That's the LORD. He's a consuming fire." When Moses got the people together years later, and he brought them to the entrance to the Land of Promise (he was about to hand them off, he was about to die) in Deuteronomy 4 - that little thirty-day meeting with the folks that he delivered this message called the book of Deuteronomy - he said to them, in chapter 4:24, "The LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." In fact, "Out of heaven you've heard His voice to instruct you; and on the earth, He showed you great fire, and you heard His words come out of that great fire" (Exodus 4:36).

And this reverence to the fires of God is everywhere in the Scriptures. It is a picture that God would like to leave on our hearts. On Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was being poured out upon the 120 disciples waiting for the promise of God to send the Holy Spirit upon them, that morning they woke up to the winds blowing and upon their heads these cloven tongues of fire, the wind fanning these flames

into what would become the salvation of thousands. But it was, again, that fire representation of God's power, this time poured out upon His people.

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote His vision of Jesus; mentions it very early in chapter 1, "This is the Jesus I saw." Mentions Him again in chapter 19. And in both of those descriptions, he said, "I saw the heavens opened, and I saw One who had eyes that looked like flames of fire," (verse 14) like they could look through you. In chapter 19:11-16, he talked about the Lord coming, riding "on a white horse, and as He who sat upon it was called Faithful and True, in His righteousness He made war. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His name is called The Word of God." And everywhere you turn, there is that same symbolism, that same portrait, if you will, that is painted for us.

Malachi, who was the last prophet in the Old Testament, wrote about the days of the Lord's coming again, "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire" (Malachi 3:2). He's coming to separate that which is holy from that which is not.

Nahum wrote (1:6), "Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire." Over and over again. You can't get away from the illustrations.

Even in the book of Hebrews, which puts it more bluntly, Paul wrote in chapter 12 (verses 18 and 29), as he quoted from the Old Testament out of the book of Deuteronomy, "You haven't come to the mountain that can be touched. You're coming to the mountain that was burned with fire. Our God is a consuming fire." And he used a different word in Greek. It literally means to consume everything or to take everything out.

In the New Testament, there are basically three symbolic pictures of God: God is love, God is light, and God is a fire. And whether or not you are consumed by this fire of His presence depends entirely upon the condition that He finds you when you come in contact with Him. There are those who, like the works of the believer at the judgment seat of Christ, the fires will approve of what manner of life and what kind of people we are. In fact, Paul writes (1 Corinthians 3:11-15) about that judgment seat of Christ that our works will be tossed into the fire just to see what sort they are, literally what motivated it, what drove the action. If it makes it through the fire, you receive a reward; if it doesn't, you lose your reward. You're

saved, you're in, but you lose your reward. But it's that fire of God's discernment that kind of purges the wrong reasons to be doing what you're doing and the right ones. The awesome truth is God is everywhere. We can't get away from His presence. You think He's only here in the sanctuary.....no. You guys leave, He's still here. But He'll go with you, home. And He saw you comin' over here on the way. He saw what you were sayin', what you were thinkin', what your attitude might have been. Hopefully it was good. You can't get away from His presence. David wrote, in Psalm 139:7-12, "Where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You're there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You're there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, You're there. Darkness can fall across me, but the night will be light about me because the darkness and the light are the same to You." "I can't get away from You."

So I have this picture of the burning presence of God, the consuming fire - to anoint, to empower, to deliver and to judge, to purge, to divide. And then we say, "That God is everywhere, and we can't get away from His presence." Scientists call that burning fire *eremacausis*. That's the word we had up here on the board. It comes from two Greek words, although it is a Latin derivative word. The word "*eremos*" means slowly or quietly, "*kausis*" means to burn. A dictionary definition of the word, if you happened to have looked it up today, is that this gradual oxidation from exposure to air and moisture (which rots everything in its path) or the decay of old trees or dead animals, this slow-burning fire of nature that takes away everything we see, is defined as *eremacausis*. The Bible would support that understanding. God is everywhere. The burning fire of His presence both heals and destroys. When leaves fall to the ground, and the earth quickly absorbs them into the soil, that's *eremacausis*. When your soul departs in death, and your body is buried in the ground, it disintegrates over time, the worms crawl in, the worms crawl out. *Eremacausis*. You happen to be cremated, you're just speeding up the natural process by twenty years; that's about it. It's just a time saver. You're soon going to end up in the same place. *Eremacausis*. It's the fires of nature. It pervades the universe. And what's interesting is God presents Himself to us in that same manner. His omnipresence is that He is with me, He fills the universe. It's a comforting thought to know that He sees all and He knows all, and He'll deal with everything in His time.

So when you read about the judgment of God, the fires of God, you realize that there's a lot of injustice in the world. God sees it. He knows it. Now the fires burn slowly, one day very quickly. But He'll have the last word. One who sins in

secret, under cover of darkness, thinking to do evil, God is a consuming fire, and He sees it all. Yet if you have surrendered to the Lord, you've repented of your sins, the fire of God's presence doesn't judge you; it cleanses you. He seeks to purge you, to refine you, to make you stronger. So God's at work everywhere. In the lives of the believers, He's doing good things. In the lives of the lost, they get the burning slowly so that they might repent of their sin. God is patient. He doesn't act overnight. He gives everyone a great opportunity. But you see, at some point we get saved because we realize our sin and we recognize who He is, and so we come to Him in our dilemma. If you put iron in a hearth and heat it at about 3000 degrees or so, any impurities left in the iron will disappear. And when you cool what you now have, it will no longer be iron; it'll be steel. Stronger. Way stronger. Same thing with your life. Submit yourself to the fire of God's presence, and He'll change you daily. Choose to argue with Him, fight with Him, disobey Him, ignore Him, refuse Him, and He's coming your way. But not in a good way. He's going to go after you, man, and make life miserable because He doesn't want to lose you. He came to save you. It's out of His grace and mercy He does that at all. But it's the process in which God works. It's the way He's chosen to define Himself in the Bible. "I'm a burning, consuming fire." The fires in the world are plodding, they are slow, they are quiet, they're imperceptible; but one day eventuating into the eternal fires of judgment. Why do you think the psalmist would say, "If I go to hell, You're there?" Because God's judgment of fire is still there. He is still the Judge.

So you get back to this verse, and you think about these thousands of folks hiding for a long time, actually, in the city. Frightened. And then they see God comes to their aid, though they don't deserve it, and now they have a greater fear. "Now we've got to answer to Him! I would have rather taken my chances with the Assyrians." But look who's worried. The sinner and the hypocrite are seized with fear; they're afraid. And their question is, "How are we going to stand before the devouring fire and the everlasting burning?" You see, they understood it. The word "dwell" is mentioned four times in this passage. It is twice here in verse 14; you'll find it again, down here in verse 16; you'll find it again in verse 24. And certainly three occasions - in verses 14, 16, 24 - there's a different word for "dwell." Sometimes the word "dwell" means to be a guest, sometimes it means to flee in fear so that you're running. And the context here is, in verse 14, "Can you really dwell with God and not be consumed? Can you run away from Him that He won't catch you? Who's going to survive? I can't get away from Him! I'm dwelling in His presence. I don't have anywhere to go. I don't have a door to go through. I

don't have a way out." Having seen the fires outside the walls and the city, and what it had done, the sinners now ask themselves would they dare feel comfortable as a guest in the presence of God's fire. "What in the world are we gonna do? We're gonna be scorched. We're gonna be wiped out. We're doomed. We can't escape. We can't fight." Terrified.

The truth is you can't escape God. God's everywhere. You can't hide. You can hide from me. I won't even come lookin' for you. (Laughing) Count to ten. All right. I'm goin' home. Not much fun to play hide and seek with. The apostle Paul declared it when he said, "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). So, then, what can we hope for? We have to be cleansed by His fire. We're gonna have to get near Him one way or the other - either in repentance to be cleansed or in judgment to be judged.

Verse 15 says this, "He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high; his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; bread will be given him, his water will be sure. Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off." They'll have a vision for the future. The wonderful answer from the prophet is that if you seek God and live to serve Him, then, verse 16, you might "dwell on high." And the word "dwell" there means to make yourself at home or to find rest. Different word than in verse 14. "How are we gonna dwell here?" Even in proximity. But if you come to know God and want to begin to walk in His ways, then your place with a burning fire can be one of rest. In fact, if you go down to verse 24, it says this, "And the inhabitant will not say, 'I am sick'; the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity." That word for "dwell" means to have a permanent place of residence. You're not rentin' the apartment now. You own the house. This is a verse that now speaks of heaven. Right? Ultimately, as Isaiah looks even further ahead, those that trust in the fire that dwells with them can find permanent forgiveness and life.

Hell is a place described as the fire of God's wrath that does not go out. One day the burning is going to accelerate. You remember what Peter was saying, in chapter 3:10 of 2 Peter, when he said, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise," and then he said, "and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." And then Peter said, "If you know that, how are

you livin'? What manner of life should we have if we know that it's all gonna burn?" and we say it with tongue-in-cheek. We have a really good pastor friend that the worship team and I know pretty well. We have gone up to Tahoe for the last many years doing the pastors' conference there in the greater Sierra area. And the fellow who always did sound for us - Bob Scott, he's a pastor in the area - his house and everything he owns was burned up in the fires up north. He lost everything. And I had a chance to say, "Hey, dude, could we get you anything? Can we buy you anything? Can we, as a church, help you?" And he said, "We're blessed, man. God is good. It's all gonna burn." I thought he really said it and meant it. He knew of what he spoke. But it is all gonna burn, and Peter said, "Hey, it's all gonna burn."

Why not live a life that invests itself in a couple things? Number one - you're dwelling in the presence of a consuming fire. God's serious. He loves you. He's gonna do what's good for you, but He's also serious in that regard. And, eventually, everything's gonna burn around us, and whatever can be burned can be burned. If you can hold it in your hand, if you can look at it with your eyes, if you can hold to your heart, it's gonna go. You're not gonna have that; you're gonna lose it. Eremacausis. Even science understands that. You go out, and you get a car, and you polish the chrome, and one day there're these pits, and, "Oh, man, now I really gotta get down there and polish it," it doesn't stop. It's goin' slow, but it's eremacausis; it's goin' away.

We have a refrigerator - I thought a refrigerator was supposed to last forever. (Laughing) So the other night I'm sittin' at home.....well, first of all, when we went on vacation, we came back, and our water thing leaked, the ice maker, the little line leaked into the wall. So we came home and had to tear out a whole wall of our kitchen; lost all the cabinets. You gotta be kiddin' me! "Lord, where were You?" No. I didn't..... (Laughing) So, we fixed it, and everything got done, and oh, it doesn't smell bad anymore. And everything got replaced. And then we started hearing this from the refrigerator (Pastor Jack makes a whirring sound). So the compressor's going. So we pulled everything out from the wall, and we cleaned everything, and, "Oh, it's gonna be able to breathe now." (Pastor Jack makes the whirring sound again, followed by a couple of coughs.) So now we've got to go get a new refrigerator! Eremacausis. That's what it is! (Laughing) They have a word for it. It applies to everything. So tomorrow, on New Year's Day, we're gettin' a fridge! But ours still works! It's just goin' (Pastor Jack makes the whirring sound.) (Laughing) Just afraid you'll get up one morning and that'll be the end of that.

The real question, of course, is - what are you made of? Flammable material? Or has God made you such that His burning just makes you stronger? Are you right with Him? Has He forgiven your sins? Do you know His Son? Have you been born of His Spirit? If you had to stand before the consuming fire, are you clothed in the righteousness of Jesus and washed in His blood? Because then you can stand in God's presence. You don't have to fear. You can one day be called home, and you'll stand before this consuming fire, and you won't have to worry about it at all because you've been able to live in that position as well. People go, "Oh, I'm gonna die and go stand before the Lord." Oh, you're standing before the Lord now. "Yeah, but then it's gonna be worse." No it's not. It's just the same. It'll just be more final then. The fires that consume around you will eventually consume you. And what you see in your bumper will be you! In eternity. But the same fire that purifies the godly consumes the wicked. And as the counsel of the prophet Isaiah - his counsel is pretty straightforward - you've got to be right with God. When the Lord sent His letters to the various churches in Revelation 2 and 3, they all represent a couple of things. They represent, I think, the church throughout history, but they really represent the church in any generation. There're some churches like this and other churches like that. But when He wrote to the Laodicean church in chapter 3:14-22, He said to them, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth." And I thought, "Man, that is a tough thing to hear if you're in that church." "Yeah, a letter from the Lord. Gather around. We're gonna read it." God hates lukewarm. I don't know anything that tastes good lukewarm. It's either hot or cold. The Lord said, "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked - I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire." Or, if you will, "Come to Me and receive a life that can stand the fire. You'll be rich. Your garments will be white. You'll be not clothed with the shame of nakedness. Your eyes will be anointed with salve, you'll be able to see. But come and stand by the fire." And I think that's pretty cool advice.

We have a new year coming up where either God is going to refine you or judge you, where He's either going to take you forward or just stop you in your tracks till you get back on the right road again. But there's no escape. It is a path that you can't avoid. You can't hide. You can't move to Idaho and get away from the Lord. (Laughing) Else there might be more folks living in Idaho. If you realize that God is with you, if you realize that He is a consuming fire, you'll live differently. And

the stuff that's all gonna burn, you won't grab hold of so easily, and it won't matter so much. And the things that matter, you'll invest in because God isn't going away. And we don't want to be like these terrified folks who were among God's people, terrified of the life that they had in the world and then even more terrified of the God that they had to stand before. But ultimately, verse 17 says, "With your eyes, you will see the King in His beauty; and you'll see the land that He has promised afar off." You'll have a vision that is heavenly, and you'll no longer get caught up in the earthly. Because look at everything around you. Let it remind you. Eremacausis. It's a great reminder. When your refrigerator takes off, when your bumper gets pitted, when the leaves rot or someone is buried, it's just.....that's the way life goes. But it is because of God's presence. People go, "That's nature." No. That's God's presence. He is the consuming fire - in every place and in every way. It's nice to know a fire - that He's for you and not against you. And if He's gonna turn up the heat, it's gonna be so you can be more pure and holy and useful in His sight.

I hope that 2019 goes well for you. But here's the deal - if you'll get right with God, you'll have the best opportunity to see that happen. Life's still gonna be hard. This isn't our home. Things are gonna get tougher. The world doesn't consider you very desirable any longer. There's not much popularity in being a Christian in our culture. But what else can I be? He gave His life for me; they didn't. And He's comin' to get me; they aren't. And He loves me; they don't. So I've picked a side. How 'bout you?

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
January 6, 2019