

Judgement and Fire

Sunday, August 16, 2026

Preached by Pastor Brad

KEY PASSAGES

Luke 7:20-23 (NIV)

When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'" At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

FIVE KEY POINTS

- 1 John's question had a sting to it.** His disciples came back full of what Jesus was doing, and he was not impressed. He sent two of them to ask outright whether Jesus was the one, or whether they should keep waiting for someone else.
- 2 He was expecting fire.** Back in Luke 3 he had promised a Messiah with a winnowing fork in his hand who would burn up the chaff, and he took that picture straight from Malachi. Healing the sick and eating with tax collectors was not the rescue he had been preaching.
- 3 Jesus pointed at his own work instead.** The blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised, and the poor hear good news. He gave no hint that the burning part was still to come, only that blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of him.
- 4 The same Malachi says fire refines.** A refiner's fire and a launderer's soap purify and restore what they touch. John kept the half that burns and missed the half that heals.
- 5 Jesus is both at once, and the cross is where you see it.** Sin had to be paid for rather than waved off, and the only person who did not owe the payment made it. Brad's challenge was to pray about where your own bend is, and to hold justice and mercy together the way Christ does.

STORIES & ILLUSTRATIONS

Windows he already knew how to install. A couple of years into their marriage, he and Rebecca bought their first house, and it needed a lot of work. He suggested new windows and she asked who they were going to pay to do that. He had owned a construction company for four years by then and put windows in every couple of weeks. He was offended for a second, then realized she just did not know.

Elijah and Elisha had done all of it. From where John sat, healings and teaching and even raising the dead were nothing new. The old prophets did those things, got ignored, and the cycle rolled on. If that was all the Messiah brought, Israel was still stuck with Rome.

The sun is a ball of fire that keeps us alive. Brad closed on Malachi 4, where the sun of righteousness rises with healing in its rays. Pull the earth much closer and we would burn up. Where it is, it grows the crops and warms the ground and meets us right where we are.

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