

TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

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Smoke Damage

01

Tim Dilena

How do you fight horrible memories of the past? How do you find relief from reliving in your mind some of the darkest times of your life? I learned a valuable lesson about smoke damage and charcoal fires.

Science tells us that our five senses activate our memories. There will be things that we see, hear, taste, and smell that will bring to mind a story that may have happened to us years ago. It happens to me all the time in New York City. I walked into a store and heard music playing and immediately my memory went back to my childhood and the first album I bought with my own money. I saw a young person bouncing a pink rubber ball on the streets and thought of the days of playing a NY game called stickball as a child. But the scenario that flooded my mind with the past was when I was standing in line at a grocery store and the perfume the older woman in front of me brought back vivid memories of my mother. It was the same perfume she would wear when I was growing up. Our senses activate the memory and smell is the one that gives us the most vivid pictures of our past.

For some, the smell of charcoal fire revives thoughts of holiday cookouts and the joys it brings with it. But charcoal made a disciple in the Bible remember the worst day of his life. His name was Peter. Peter made a bold promise to Jesus at the last supper. He said, "Though all deny You, Jesus, I will never deny you." What happened after his hubris, had to be the darkest day of Peter's life.

John 18:15–18 says this, "Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, 16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. 17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." 18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself."

**“ Victorious living,
but not scar free.
The resurrection of Jesus
means the worst thing is
never the last thing. ”**

CHARCOAL makes me think of a holiday weekend, but for Peter it makes him think of the worst day of his life. It was over a charcoal fire that Peter denied Jesus.

Peter has just experienced smoke damage, because I believe the last thing he ever wanted to smell to activate his memory was charcoal.

Another odor that brings back vivid memories to me happened when a good friend's house caught on fire. It was a tragedy. Though the fire department came immediately, there was a great loss. Any item that did manage to survive was smoke damaged. There are a number of ways to help fight the smoke damage in clothes, furniture, and carpet, but the one that caught my attention was using charcoal. Somehow charcoal fights smoke damage. That is what Jesus does for Peter. Jesus chooses the charcoal method.

Jesus is resurrected from the dead and is about to see Peter and liberate him from the smoke damage of his horrible past. Deliverance and freedom will happen over breakfast on the beach. Peter is fishing because he thinks this ministry thing didn't work out the way he thought. But the good news is that Jesus is on the beach too. However, Peter doesn't know it. Peter is fishing, and then John sees Jesus from their boat. John 21:7-8 says, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish."

Peter jumps in the water and swims 100 yards to the shore. Jesus is there cooking breakfast. After swimming 4 pool laps, Peter dries off on the sand and is immediately hit in the face with something that has to spiral him to his dark past. It's an odor recognition. "What is that smell?" Peter thought. The Bible tells us what it is. "So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread." (John 21:9). It's CHARCOAL! That odor doesn't mean Easter and resurrection to Peter, it reminds him of the worst day of his life. The last thing Peter wanted to smell was a charcoal fire. But Jesus was fighting the smoke damage and about to bring healing to Peter.

There is something interesting to keep in mind about the resurrection of Jesus. When God raised Jesus from the dead, why didn't God fix His physical body? Why did God leave the scars? Why were the nail scars visible to human eyes? Can it be that God

was telling us something through these forever scars? I think we were being told, that you can live life abundantly with your greatest wounds. You can go forward though you have scars to remind you of the past. Somehow we must understand that the resurrected Christ is forever the wounded Christ.

“ **You can go forward though you have scars to remind you of your past.** ”

Jesus begins the healing process after Peter smells the charcoal. John 21:10-12 says, "Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Come and have breakfast is the key. A meal in the middle east was significant. You NEVER ate with your enemy, you only ate with YOUR FRIENDS. When Jesus said "come and have breakfast" to Peter, I believe those were the first words of the resurrected Jesus to Peter PERSONALLY. He heard other things post-resurrection, but those were his words that he heard while smelling charcoal. Jesus was telling Peter, "Despite what you smell, you also hear words of restoration."

When you are faced with the reoccurring thoughts that take you back to a horrible past, your ammunition to fight those thoughts is breakfast with Jesus. It's opening up your ears to Him speaking to you despite what your memory is pulling you to. Each morning have breakfast with Jesus and let Him speak. Open up His word, breakfast is waiting. I have to believe that charcoal took on a new memory for Peter. Instead of him thinking of denial, I believe Peter's mind was renewed and he now thought of a day on a beach that His friend cooked breakfast for him. God healed his smoke damage.

Reflecting on the Worldwide Prayer Meeting at Yale University 02

Summit International School of Ministry

From the moment the first notes of Yale's student worship team rang out, reverberating through the gates and hallways of Old Campus, you could feel the atmosphere on the New Haven Green begin to shift.

Before the World Wide Prayer Meeting at Yale, Luke Bell, a senior student, sent out a note to the student volunteer team. In it, he said,

"There has been something special going on in our campus. We as a student body have been crying out day and night— for our friends, our suitemates, peers, professors, our campus, city, and world. Whether it be in our silent devotional times with Jesus, in our walks to and from class or in the prayer meetings with our campus ministries. God has been listening to us. He has certainly not overlooked nor forgotten our prayers. More than any of us, He desires to pour out

REFLECTING ON THE WORLDWIDE PRAYER MEETING AT YALE UNIVERSITY (CONTINUED)

His Holy Spirit on our campus. He desires to genuinely encounter and save every single soul on our campus and city.”

As the prayer event kicked off on April 19, around 1,000 people gathered on the New Haven Green and began openly worshipping the Lord. There were testimonies of Yale students hearing music and prayers from their dorms. One student said he could “feel a peace” walking through campus, and as he returned to his dorm, his roommates were leaning out of the windows to listen.

During one poignant moment, Han Choi, a third-year student at Yale, asked those in attendance to extend their hands toward the campus as he began to pray for God to reveal Himself to every person within its gates. Shortly after, Pastor Carter Conlon, TSC General Overseer, spoke a message reminding those gathered of the promises of God spoken over Yale. “The very stones”, he implored, “have born witness to the glory of God that was once within these walls!”. The presence of the Lord was palpable as Summit students, Yale students, and TSC congregants began to lift their voices together in prayer for the requests submitted by Yale students; prayers for mental health struggles, academic struggles, and a desire for God to revive the hearts and minds of college students.

What an awesome privilege it was to stand alongside Christian students at Yale who are believing God for a spiritual awakening

SUMMIT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

in their time. Thank you, Jesus, for what you are doing on college campuses across this nation! Thank you for allowing us to live for the benefit of others and stand with our peers who are believing for the miraculous.



Nailing Your Colors to the Mast

03

Rev. Canon J. John

A friend recently reminded me of the expression ‘nail your colours to the mast’ and wondered about its background. A little research came up with a most rewarding answer.



In the ‘Age of Sails,’ ships were identified by the flags (or ‘colors’) that they flew from the top of their masts. At a time before radio this was vital, allowing sailors to identify who was on their side and who was the enemy. This action has given rise to all sorts of English phrases. So sometimes ships would disguise themselves by hoisting other flags and would ‘fly under false colours’. If they then suddenly changed their flags to reveal their true identity they were ‘showing their true colours’.

In a sea battle, any ship that wished to surrender would lower her colours. There is a story of how, during the great sea battle of Camperdown in 1798 between the Royal Navy and the Dutch, the colours of the British flagship were shot down. Recognising the danger that this would be taken as a sign the British had surrendered, a sailor, Jack Crawford, climbed to the top of the main mast and, ignoring heavy fire, replaced the colours, nailing them to what was left of the mast. The battle continued and eventually the Dutch fleet was destroyed. Some historians consider that it was this victory that allowed ‘Britannia to rule the waves’ of the world for the next hundred and fifty years. In which case, Jack Crawford’s single act of heroism had consequences of extraordinary significance.

NAILING YOUR COLORS TO THE MAST (CONTINUED)

So, for a ship's captain 'to nail his colours to the mast' was to do two things. First, it was to state clearly the identity of the ship and who she served. Second, it also made surrender virtually impossible. It was a bold act of defiance, saying, in effect, that we will sink rather than admit defeat.

For anyone who is a Christian today this idea of nailing colours to the mast is incredibly appropriate. In this aggressively post-Christian age there has never been a greater temptation to 'sail under false colours' and to hope that no one notices you. This is a disastrous strategy. After all, if you have been disguising yourself for some time, when you do have to take a stand on a matter of faith, you will find it very difficult. So you may find, like Peter at the trial of Jesus, that you have denied your faith (Mark 14:66-72).

In any new setting it is wise to reveal as soon as possible that you are a Christian. In Acts 4:13-20, after the resurrection and the

giving of the Holy Spirit, Peter adopts a very different attitude towards keeping a low profile. There may be a time and place for Christians to be secret believers, but I do not believe that in the West it is yet. Far better in the long run—to fly the colours openly and make it clear where our allegiance lies.

Actually, it is a good idea not just to fly the colours of the Christian faith but to nail them too. Most of us like to be liked and it is always tempting to back off when we are threatened. Yet the fact of the matter is that we have to speak and live as Christians whatever happens. We cannot lower the flag of Christ just because we face hostility.

Let's nail our colours to the mast!

Agapé,
Rev. Canon J. John

Education Professionals Praying for Students

04

While working as an attendance teacher, Lia noticed that many students with low attendance rates came from families who needed more support. After learning about a Christian program that provided after-school homework help for kids along with prayer and basic support for the families, Lia wanted to replicate this through the TSC Connect Groups. When Lia approached TSC staff with this idea, the Connect Groups Director suggested that she first start with a prayer group.

Lia took this idea and started the "Education Professionals Praying for Students" connect group in August 2022. This group started with just 2 or 3 individuals praying for a handful of schools and students every week. They prayed for 7 months without seeming to see any results of their prayers. But this spring, they began to see the fruit of their labors. A deacon and teacher at Lia's previous church asked her group to pray for his school to allow him to open a Bible Study Club. When he first submitted the request to start the club in September, it was rejected. However, after the group had faithfully prayed, the principal reversed her decision and the teacher was able to hold his first meeting this past March. At the same time, a parent reached out to the connect group to pray for her son who was just born again so that he could get support in his new journey. He just happens to attend this same school where the Bible Study Club just started!

Now 9 months after Lia started her connect group, there are two groups of education professionals and parents praying every week for every single school, student, parent/guardian, and educational professional that has requested to be on the list. Starting out at just a handful, they are now praying for 68 schools and 91 students, 20 parents/guardians, and 7 education professionals. They are also receiving incredible testimonies from the education professionals they pray for. Wendy Johnson is one such education

professional who had this to say about her bible study club, "This club has brought us together from all different roles: teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, security guards, and social workers! It is also a joy to see the students have fellowship and draw strength and encouragement from one another! They already feel emboldened and have been speaking more to their peers about their life in Christ!"

Lia's original plan was to start an after-school program, but starting with prayer and seeing what God has done has strengthened her faith and shown her the power of prayer. She thought she had an idea of how to address the need for kids with low attendance, but God had other plans.

