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The Value of Persistence

by Zac Poonen

In Chapter 2 of 2 Kings, we see the persistence of Elisha, when Elijah tested him. When Elijah was about to be taken up to heaven, Elisha went along with him to Gilgal. Elijah told Elisha to stay in Gilgal, as he was going to Bethel. Elisha said, "No. I am coming with you." At Bethel, Elijah again told Elisha to stay there, since he was going to Jericho. Elisha again replied, "No. I am going with you." At Jericho, the same scene was repeated. Elijah then went to Jordan. When they came to the river Jordan, Elijah struck the water, opened up the river and both of them walked across. Then Elijah asked Elisha "Why have you been following me? What do you want?"

What about you? What do you want? Are you looking for a better income, or for a car or a new house? Elisha however said, "I want a double portion of your spirit." He did not want anything else in the world. He wanted the anointing of the Spirit that rested on Elijah. That's why he had followed after Elijah.

God will test us too, before He commits a ministry to us. He will give us a certain experience - bring us to Gilgal - and see if we are content with that. Some Christians are content, but others will say, "No, Lord. I am not satisfied." God will lead these people further and give them a deeper experience - Bethel. He may give you some visions. Some will be content with that. Others will say, "No, Lord. I want more of You." Maybe He will do a miracle through you. Some will now be content. Others will say, "Lord, I want the Spirit that rested on You to rest on me too to transform me into Your likeness. I won't be satisfied with anything less than that." Do you have such a longing? If so, then let me assure you that God will not disappoint you.

I have seen many Christians who have settled for something much less than God's best - 25%, 50% or 75%. Be like Elisha who pressed on to God's best in his generation. He got a double portion of the anointing, because he persisted. And he did twice the number of miracles that Elijah had done.

If you go to many preachers today and say, "I want the baptism in the Holy Spirit", they will say, "O, that's easy. Just let me lay hands on your head." He will pray for you and ask you to mumble something and will then tell you, "You got it." But what did Elijah say? He told Elisha, "Do you want a double portion of the Holy Spirit? That's not an easy thing at all. You have asked for a very hard thing. But if God allows you to see me going up to heaven, then you will get it." Elijah left the matter in God's hands. Elijah is a type of Christ here. And this is what the Lord says to us, "If you can see Me in heaven at the Father's right hand having conquered everything for you, and believe in Me, you can have the anointing." The double anointing is a hard thing to receive. But you can have it if you will look at the Lord alone and not at men. That's the word of the Lord to you. Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit even today - not any man. Even John the Baptist said, "I can only baptize you in water. But He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire." No man can baptize you in the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ alone is the Baptizer. So go directly to Him.

While Elijah and Elisha were talking, a chariot of fire came and Elijah was taken up. Elisha saw it, took the mantle that had fallen and received the double portion of the anointing. There was an immediate proof of it too. When he came to the river Jordan, he struck the water and walked right across. The anointing will become manifest in our lives. We don't have to shout or scream or even tell anyone of our experience. Our life and our ministry will speak for themselves - even to people who criticize us.