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There are three main reasons why Elisha was anointed:

1. Thirst : The first reason why God anointed Elisha was he thirsted for it and coveted it more than anything else in the world. In 2 Kings 2:1-10, we read how Elijah tested him on this point. He first told Elisha to stay on at Gilgal, while he himself moved on. But Elisha refused to leave Elijah. Then Elijah led him 15 miles west to Bethel, and then 12 miles back to Jericho and then a further 5 miles east to Jordan, testing Elisha's persistence and earnestness at each stage. Finally, Elijah asked him if there was any one request he could grant him before he left. And Elisha said, I want only one thing. That is why I have been following you all this time. That is why I wouldn't leave you, even when you tried to shake me off. I want a double portion of your spirit. Elisha longed for the anointing with all his heart. He wasn't going to be satisfied with anything less. And he got what he asked for.

I believe God often leads us, as Elijah led Elisha, to test us, to see whether we are going to be satisfied with anything less than the full anointing of His Holy Spirit. If we are going to be satisfied with anything less, we shall have only that much. God does not give this anointing to the smug and complacent believer who thinks he can get along very well without it. But if we realise that this is the one thing we need above all else, if like Elisha we are willing to follow on until we have it, if like Jacob at Peniel we can say in sincerity, "Lord, I will not leave You until You bless me with this blessing," if we really crave for and covet this power of the Holy Spirit, this resurrection power, then we shall indeed receive it. Then we shall truly be Israel's, having power with God and with men.

God often allows failure and frustration to come into our lives just to show us how much we need this anointing. He seeks to make us realise that in spite of being evangelical in doctrine and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we yet need to know the Spirit of God resting upon us in power. It is no easy matter to have the anointing. When Elijah heard Elisha's request, he didn't tell him, "Oh, that's an easy thing you've asked for. You just kneel here and I'll lay my hands on your head and you'll get it." No. Elijah told Elisha, "You have asked for a hard thing." Yes, it is a hard thing. We have to pay a price for it. We must be willing to forsake everything in the world for it.

We must covet the anointing more than anything else on earth-more than money and comfort and pleasure, and more than fame and popularity and even success in Christian work. Yes, it is a hard thing indeed. But this is what it means to thirst. When we reach that stage, we can go to Jesus and drink and, as the Scripture has said, rivers of living water will then flow through us in many directions bringing life out of death wherever they flow (John 7:37-39; Ezekiel 47:8, 9). If we have received the anointing, we must be careful not to lose it at any cost. We can have it and then we can lose it, if we are not careful. If we indulge in unkind criticism or in loose conversation or in unclean imaginations, or harbour pride or a grudge in our hearts, then the anointing is gone. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27 that he kept the members of his body severely disciplined, lest after having preached to others he himself be disapproved. I believe he was referring here to the possibility of his losing, not his salvation, but the anointing. I have never ceased to marvel that the mighty apostle Paul, after establishing so many churches, doing so many miracles and being so mightily used of God, yet stood in danger of losing the anointing if he were careless, then where do we stand? We need constantly to pray, "Lord, whatever else I may lose in life, never let me lose Thy anointing."

2. Purity of Motive : The second reason why Elisha was anointed was that his motives were pure. The glory of God was his only concern. This is not stated in so many words anywhere, but it becomes very evident as one reads the record of his life. The need among God's people was so great and the reproach upon God's Name hurt him, as it had hurt Elijah before him. And he yearned to be anointed in order to fulfil a ministry for God in that land that would remove the reproach upon that glorious Name. Impure and self-centred motives are often the reason why many of God's children are not anointed. Most Christians are happy if they are right outwardly, but God seeks truth in the inward parts. He sees whether we are concerned about His glory or our own. He sees whether the reproach upon His Name hurts us or not. If our hearts are not burdened and hurt as we see the Name of God being reproached in our land today, then I wonder whether God will ever anoint us at all. In Ezekiel 9:1-6, we read of God marking out certain people as peculiarly His own. The ones He marked out were those who wept and sighed at the sins they saw among God's people. These constitute God's remnant and these are the ones He anoints-those whose hearts are concerned about His Name and who seek to glorify Him alone.

3. No Love for this World: The third reason why Elisha was anointed was that he had no love for this world. This becomes evident in his dealing with Naaman. When the latter offered him money, he refused to take any payment for the miracle he had performed. Elisha had no love for this world or for money. He didn't seek personal gain in the Lord's work. Gehazi, on the other hand, provides us with a striking contrast. He was Elisha's assistant even as Elisha had been Elijah's. And if Elisha could have received a double portion of Elijah's spirit and carried on Elijah's ministry, surely Gehazi too might have been able to receive Elisha's spirit and carry on Elisha's ministry. But he didn't get the anointing. He got leprosy instead. Why? Because God saw his heart. Despite all the outward appearance of being spiritual, there was deep down in Gehazi's heart a desire for personal gain. He may have entered the Lord's work sincerely at first, but very soon he began to think in terms of material advantages too. He thought he could accumulate material wealth as well as receive the anointing. But he was mistaken. Many Christian workers have made the same mistake. May the Lord deliver us from ever trying to use our position or our ministry in any church or Christian institution as a means of personal gain.

God is looking for men and women in our land today whom He can anoint with His Spirit - a remnant that is willing to pay the price to receive and retain that endowment of power.

The anointing alone can break the yoke of the Enemy in our land (Isaiah 10:27). The Name of Jesus has been committed to us. But do we have the anointing? Oh, that we might thirst for the power of the Holy Spirit in our life and our ministry, so that we may glorify God, fulfil His will and bring in His kingdom.