

## Articles and Sermons :: Esteem Highly the Anointing of God More Than Anything Else by Zac Poonen

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Elisha thirsted for the anointing that was upon Elijah 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 "Israelites", 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. Let us indulge in unkind criticism or in loose conversation or in unclean imaginations, or let us harbor pride or a grudge in our hearts, and 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."