

Be Filled with the Spirit

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In John 16:7, Jesus told His disciples:

“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” Jesus also said in Luke 24:49: *“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have seen clothed with power from on high.”*

Jesus fulfilled the will of God by going to the cross. The Father’s acceptance of His Son’s work of redemption was evidence by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit is not an option. It is vital that we be filled with the Spirit because Jesus said, *“it is for your good.”* It is also a case of the Father keeping His promise.

Garment of God’s Anointing

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is God’s anointing. This anointing is like a garment that we put on – it clothes us. This clothing – anointing – empowers us. It is also likened to a civilian who joins the army and puts on the soldier’s uniform which not only gives him an identity but also offers him protection from his enemies (Ephesians 6:13-18). The Holy Spirit clothes us with strength and protection so that we can overcome the desires of the sinful nature that seek to control us.

On one occasion, while Jesus was with His disciples, He gave them this command: *“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 1:4, 5). The Father kept His promise for we read in Acts 2:1-4 that the disciples were baptised in the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues. This promise is for us too. Seek to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. It is anointing from God Himself to empower us to rise above our human weaknesses.

The Holy Spirit Empowers Us to Do the Will of God

The power of God’s anointing is clearly illustrated in 1 Kings 19:15-21 which is the account of the call of Elisha:

“The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel – all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye,” he said, “and then

I will come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant."

The throwing of Elijah's cloak around Elisha symbolises God's anointing came upon him. This anointing was so powerful that Elisha slaughtered his oxen and burned the plowing equipment. This meant there was no going back to his old way of life. To do this takes a lot of strength and will power. Such is the anointing that comes from God. It enables us to rise above human ability to do the will of God so that sin, which prevents us from doing His will, will lose its dominion over us.

This portion of Scripture shows us three essential facts about God that will greatly encourage us:

1) God Knows Who and Where We Are

This is evident in the way He directed Elijah to locate Hazael, Jehu and Elisha (verses 15, 16).

2) God Knows Our Future

God told Elijah that two of the men he would anoint would be kings while Elisha would succeed him as prophet (verses 15, 16). Everything he told Elijah came to pass (2 Kings 8:15, 9:13). The God whom we worship sees and knows our future.

3) God Knows Our Present

Elijah was on the run from Jezebel who wanted to kill him after he had slaughtered all the prophets of Baal. Elijah was afraid. In 1 Kings 19:14, he told the Lord: *"I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."* However in verse 18 of the same chapter, God told him that He had reserved for Himself seven thousand men who had not bowed down to Baal. God knew how many people there were who trusted in Him. Likewise, God knows where we are at this moment. He is aware of our situation.

The Holy Spirit Enables Us to Do God's Work

The cloak that Elisha received from Elijah was symbolic of God's anointing to enable Elisha to do the work God had planned for him. In 2 Kings 2:13-14, we are told that Elisha was able to perform the same miracle that Elijah did in 2 Kings 2:7-8. 2 Kings 2:13-14 states:

"He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. 'Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?' he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over."

From that point onwards, Elisha demonstrated the power that came from God's anointing. He was an ordinary farmer but now a man of God. This was also true with his predecessor

Elijah. The Bible says he was a man just like us (James 5:17). Yet, he was a great man of God. What made him so? It was the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Today, this anointing comes in a powerful way by the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, this same anointing indwells in us and enables us to do great things for God. In John 16:13-15, Jesus says:

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”

If it was needful and expedient for the saints of old to have and depend on the Holy Spirit, how much more do we need Him today? We must desire, ask and seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Why? Because Acts 1:8 says: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

The Holy Spirit Transforms Us to Be Like Him

One day God told Jeremiah the prophet to go to the potter's house and there He revealed His plan concerning His people: *“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?” declares the LORD. ‘Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel’* (Jeremiah 18:6).

The Holy Spirit can take our ugliness, past failures and bad habits and change them into something beautiful. We can then glorify Him in speech and in deed. We do not need to remain victims of our past, failure's or circumstances. To think that we cannot but remain in such situations is to give room to the enemy to have a stronghold in our lives.

God wants us to mould and shape us to be what we ought to be in Him. That is the reason why He has given us the Holy Spirit. He wants to help us break the yoke of bondage. This is affirmed in Isaiah 10:27 when He said: *“In that day their burden will be lifted from their shoulders, their yoke from the neck; the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat.”* The word “fat” is what we understand it to be today. It refers to God's anointing. We can rise above our human failures in the power that comes with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. God is able to do it because we are His children. We should, therefore, not be deceived by the lies of Satan who wants us to believe that we are powerless to break the yoke placed on us.

The dynamic works of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in the lives of the apostles during the time of the early church continue to be manifested today. So, take heed then to Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 5:18: *“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”*

(All the Bible quotations are from the New International Version)