

We Need a Double Portion

by Alan Cairns

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obtaining the fullness of the Holy Spirit's power and presence in one's life, and being willing to go all the way with God to fulfill His calling and purpose.

Duration: 36:58

Scripture: Joshua 6:26, Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:6, Luke 2:46-47, Acts 1:9-11, Ephesians 3:19-21

Topics: "Unction"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a chapter in the Bible that has had a significant impact on the ministry of a particular church. The speaker poses the question of whether Christians have ever felt stuck in their faith journey and emphasizes the importance of seeking answers to this question. The sermon explores the topic of obtaining the fullness of power as a Christian and highlights the need for preachers and individuals to understand and experience this power. The speaker shares the story of B. Meyer, who had a transformative encounter with God by surrendering control of his heart, illustrating the importance of honesty and willingness in obtaining the fullness of power.

Transcript

Now let's turn to 2 Kings, chapter 2. 2 Kings, chapter 2. Now, I'm going to get under Mike Barrett's skin tonight. But I'm right and he's wrong, because I'm going to spiritualize this passage. And this is a case where I think you have a history that has a message that is more than historical.

You have Elijah ascending to heaven, dropping his mantle of power to the man who was to continue the work that he had commenced. To me that's not only historic but prophetic, typical of Acts chapter 1, of what happened with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a great, great passage of scripture.

I don't know how I'm going to deal with it tonight. I know how I'd like to deal with it if I had all the time in the world. But this is a prayer meeting and I'm only here to give a prayer talk.

We may come back to it again, I'm not quite sure. But when I look at this, we could take the time to read this and see in it a picture and a parallel of the ministry of Christ. Out of that we can certainly see the parallel and the picture of a very important matter in the life of a Christian.

And answers a question that every one of us must have answered. Every preacher needs to get it answered. I need to have it.

More than head knowledge, I need to have it. These young men as they go out into the ministry, if they don't get the answer to this question, they may as well not go out into the ministry at all. That is, how do I obtain the fullness of power? How to obtain the fullness of power? That is something that is answered here.

And whether we ever get to it or not, at the end of the chapter, from verse 14 onwards, you will find how to use the fullness of power. So this is a subject, or a chapter, that is of vital interest to us in the work of God. And it has something to say to us individually.

Certainly it has something to say to us as a church tonight. Verse 1, And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Carry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel.

And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he said, Yea, I know it.

Hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, carry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know it. Hold ye your peace.

And Elijah said unto him, Carry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they too went on.

And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off. And they too stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters.

And they were divided hither and thither so that they too went over on dry ground. And it came to pass when they were gone over that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee. But if not, it shall not be so.

And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it.

And he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces.

And he took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and smote the waters and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? When he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither. And Elisha went over.

And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him. Amen.

The Lord will add his blessing to the reading of his own precious word for his name's sake. As I said a few minutes ago, in the details of this passage of scripture, you have, I think, set before you a wonderful picture and parallel of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It started out at Gilgal, the place of circumcision.

And of course that was the first legal act performed upon the Lord Jesus that said that he came to fulfill the law of God. While his public ministry commenced many years later, yet his first public legal transaction that marked him as being under the law for us and fulfilling the law for us. And remember, we are later told by Paul that we are circumcised in the circumcision of Christ.

And that's, I think, to be taken quite literally. That our separation unto God is enveloped in, united with, because of, and on the ground of, the separation of the Lord Jesus Christ. That circumcision was his identification with sinful men.

And it was expressed in this way. Because he was not a sinner and needed not any symbolic cutting away of sinful flesh. For he was not a sinner.

He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. But, this was his identification with us. Then we come to Bethel from Gilgal.

And the next great event in the life of Christ, where did it take place? It took place in the house of God. You remember they went up to Jerusalem. You remember that there he talked with the doctors of the law and shocked them with his wisdom.

Even though but a twelve year old boy. Here he was at Bethel, the house of God. The next place was Jericho.

You remember from the book of Joshua, it's the city of the curse. Jericho is one of the most full and understandable and outstanding types of the world in Scripture. A picture, a portrait of the world as the Bible would have us understand the world.

The city of the curse. And that was the scene of our Savior's public ministry. Not only in literal Jericho, which of course he visited, but in the world under the curse.

From there he went to the Jordan of death. From the Jordan of death he went to the dry ground of resurrection. For he came out of it.

And then Acts 1, his ascension. And as he went up, what was the result? His mantle of power came down. That mantle, an evident symbol of spiritual power.

The power of the Spirit of God. That mantle of Elijah, which Elisha took and used to do the miracle. Splitting Jordan, going over in dry ground.

The power of God. In a nutshell, the ministry of Christ. Now I emphasize that to come to what is the very burden of the chapter.

And what I want us to take with us in prayer tonight. Throughout this whole thing, Elijah knew, I'm going. And he set various tests for Elisha.

Elisha, you've got this far. You can settle down here. It's not that he wanted him to.

But he could have. Just as the Lord set tests to Moses. That were not a direction of the will of God that Moses was to take.

But he set a test for him. To see what was in Moses. He did it for the whole children of Israel.

Set the test for them. Many, many a time in your spiritual experience, you will reach that place. Where you are tempted to settle down.

I have come this far. I'm saved. I've got this far.

Now, am I going to settle down here? Tragically, an awful lot of Christians do settle down there. Perhaps we have a bunch of them here tonight. Maybe I'm talking to you and you say, that's exactly where I am.

I started out, but I have not gone all the way with God. I have not gone with God where I once intended to go. Where I once had the vision of going.

Where I once had the burning desire to go. I've settled down. I'm truth to tell.

I'm making no progress. And as far as spiritual usefulness is concerned. I'm going nowhere fast.

Is that where you are? I want to tell you, you'll never be fully blessed there. You can't be. You'll never be fully happy there.

You can't be. You'll never realize the potential and the usefulness that God has put within your heart and your life. It can't happen.

Unless, like Elisha, you face the test, the challenge. Am I going to settle short of God's fullness and God's blessing and God's power? Or am I going to burn every bridge behind me? And no matter what the cost, I am going through with God. Which is it going to be? There's no middle ground.

One or the other. Now this is a passage for preachers. For if there's one abomination that we need to keep out of our pulpits.

It is the preacher who has settled down for less than the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I don't care what his education, what his talents, what his abilities. I don't care how nice a personality he has.

I don't care even how much, quote, human success he appears to have. Any man who wants to settle down should go do any other job in the world. But in God's name, do not defile the office of the ministry.

This is a place for people who are going to go through the whole way with God. And I have some students here tonight, and I'm saying that directly to you. I have some who intend to become students, and I'm saying that directly to you.

There is no middle ground here. You're either going to go the whole way, or please, in God's name, get out and stay out of the gospel ministry. Because it's a curse to a church when a minister does not go through with God.

That's serious. Serious for me. It's serious for these other pastors of the church.

That's the constant burden we've got to live with. Yet the temptation is always there. Of course, it's not only for preachers.

This is something every elder of this church needs to take cognizance of. Every deacon, every Sabbath school teacher, and every single Christian. Are you going to stop short? Is America not suffering enough from Christians who are half-hearted? Who are like Ephraim? Who are like a cake not baked? They're only half-baked Christians.

They're not turned. Half-baked Christians. Has America not suffered enough from worldly-minded, carnal people who name the name of Jesus Christ, and yet, behind the facade of their Christianity, there's no spiritual life.

There's no spiritual power. There's an awful lot of writing in this. There's your future usefulness as an individual.

That's writing on it. There's your future happiness as an individual. That's writing on it.

There's the usefulness that you may have in the church, so the benefit and the welfare and the work of the church is writing on it. And if you are a father or a mother, how can I begin to estimate what's writing on it within the four walls of your own house? How can I begin to estimate that? Certainly, God commits to your charge. We had a dedication service Sabbath morning, and I trust it never just becomes a matter where it's a ritual.

It's why I do ask the questions I ask. Let's take it very seriously. Think of this.

When God commits young lives to your care, the only possible way in this world that you can discharge the duty of Christian parents, according to Scripture, is burn every bridge and go through with God, no matter what the cost may be. No stopping short. No cutting loose before you get to the finishing line.

As they went on together, Elijah knew what was going to happen. And so he put these tests before Elisha. But Elisha had a burning passion.

All that tonight it would burn in our hearts. Here was his passion. I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be on me.

What a request. Elijah had raised the dead. Elijah had prayed and there was no rain for three and a half years.

Elijah prayed and there was rain. Elijah had seen miracle upon miracle upon miracle. He's the prophet of fire.

And yet, Elisha says, I pray thee, give me a double portion of this spirit. This is why I took the time to draw the parallel with the ministry of Christ. Our Savior promised his disciples, The works that I do shall ye do also.

And greater works than these shall ye do. Because I go unto my Father. That's the promise of Christ.

And here we are tonight. Brethren and sisters, listen to me very carefully. The decision that's formulating in our hearts and minds right now is a very simple one.

But a very solid one. Either by the grace of God, we are going to be consumed with that passion. Lord, give me the double portion of the spirit that was on Christ.

Let me see the greater works that he talked about. Let me be a vehicle of that full power of the Holy Ghost. The blessed mantle of the Spirit falling from the exalted and ascended Christ.

Let me know that power. Either we will have that prayer and that passion. Or we'll say, well, I can settle back in Gilgal.

Or in Bethel. Or in Jericho. I can settle back.

I don't need to go all the way. Ah, but you do. That's why Elijah said to him, If you're with me, if you see me when I'm rising, when I'm ascending.

If you see me when God takes me. In other words, Elijah, if you go all the way, you'll get the power. But not otherwise.

Not otherwise. Here we are tonight. The question to answer before God.

Will I stop short? Or will I go all the way with God? I'm going to stop there because if I get into the next part, it will take too long. I may come back to it. This is a chapter that has always fascinated me.

I remember preaching two messages in this in the church on Sharon Drive. Within months of my coming here. I wasn't here very long.

Because this has always been for me a fascinating chapter. These were messages that I believe set the tone for years to come. Not on their own, but they helped set the tone for the ministry of that church as we went on with God.

So I want us tonight, at least to come as far as I've been able to get in these few remarks. And face the question. Let me ask you.

As a Christian. Let's go down the list of questions. Two or three.

Have you got stuck somewhere along the way? Let's be honest. Before God. Let's even now, in our hearts, just ask the Lord.

Lord, give me judgment day honestly. That was a prayer we used to pray in our church in Dunmurray. Years and years and years ago.

With some great prayer meetings. And that was a prayer that came up again and again as the Christians cried out to God. For a moving of the Spirit of God upon their own hearts.

And they would pray that earnestly. Give us honesty. Judgment day honesty.

As we answer these things. So let's ask the Lord for that in our hearts right now. Give me the grace to be honest.

Now, being honest. Have you got stuck along the way? Have you stopped really going on with God? Have you lost the willingness? That you once had perhaps. To go all the way.

Have you get stuck? Now don't be too quick to answer. Because if you're stuck there. Now comes the question.

Are you going to stay there? Or are you willing to confess that before the Lord. And say Lord. By the grace of God.

I am going on with God tonight. I've often said. If you have left the Lord.

You know where you'll find them? Exactly where you left them. When Abraham went down into Egypt. He made a mess of things.

What did he do? He went right back to Bethel. Right back to where he left the Lord. Back to the place of the altar.

Always the case. So are you willing? To ask the Lord for restoring grace? Pride would stand in the way. Lord, I couldn't admit that I have backslidden.

I couldn't admit that I have lost out with God. I want to tell you until you do admit it. You'll go nowhere.

I can look back in times. Many a time in my life. When I've gone into my study.

In the darkness of hell. Just dropping over my soul. And feeling that it was hardly worth living.

Hardly worth doing anything. And I'd have to get down there. Many a time I've taken the 51st Psalm.

And I've prayed my way through. Syllable by syllable. Lord, I have lost out with God.

Confess, I've lost out with God. And I don't think any Christian can be happy going on like that. You reach the place where you're living a living death.

Life is a mockery. You feel a hypocrite. Everything is wrong.

Nothing's right. We have all been there. We know what we're talking about here.

So let's get rid of the pride. Are you willing to say, Lord, I want to get back. Go on with God.

There is forgiveness with the Lord. Does He not deserve our best? Is there any better company we could be in? Is there any better life we could be living? Is there any greater joy than being close to Christ? Can you remember a time when to be close to the Lord, to be able to pray, was a joy to your heart? To open the Bible and to see Christ there was a joy to your heart. To meet with God's people and really lay hold of God was a joy to your heart.

Can you remember those times? Are they but a memory? Aren't they worth recovering? Isn't the Savior worthy of it? Oh, that tonight we'd ask the Lord, Lord, get me to the place. Get me to the place. Where honestly I would say, let, I pray, the double portion of Christ's Spirit be on me.

And I'm willing to go the whole way. Now, I can't be specific for you what that means. You see, what hinders you, it may not be what hinders me.

What hinders me may have no hindering power in your life. We're all different. So I'm not going to try to be over-specific.

But I think, and I'm not trying to put anybody on random guilt trips, but I think that Christians know what it is that comes between them and the Lord. You know where you lost your power. You know where you lost your passion.

You know where you lost your vision. You know where you lost your desire. You know where you stopped and on with God.

You know exactly. No doubt about that. That's the thing to deal with.

That attitude, that feeling, that tongue, that action, whatever it is. That's the place we've got to get to. Lord, I want to go all the way.

I want a double portion of Thy Spirit to be upon me. Is that your prayer? Could we unite in that prayer tonight? Honestly, before God, could we unite as a people of God? I'm not going to ask you to put your hand up, stand up, or whatever. But God does.

Listen, believe me, believe me. We're not playing games here. We're not playing games here.

When the Word of God comes to you, God Himself says, I want a response and I'm going to get a response. I am going to get it. And He will.

So what is it? What is it? I wonder, could we unite tonight? Could you join your heart with mine as we lift our hearts to God and say, Lord, I want a double portion of the Spirit that was on Christ. I want that. For the glory of God to fulfill the calling that you have given me as a Christian.

I want that. And I'm willing to go all the way. One of England's greatest Baptist preachers was F.B. Meyer.

Meyer tells the story that he was a very successful preacher. Very successful church. And a couple of young, not long saved, soon to be missionaries came to his church.

One of them was C.T. Studd. And as he heard these young men pray and watched them in their lives and saw them in their service, he was convicted that he needed this fullness, this double portion of the Spirit of God. And so he went to them, the famous preacher, going to the young men.

And they were very embarrassed about it. How can we advise? It seems so incongruous. They asked him, How? How can I have this? Studd told them, You open up your whole heart.

Every last corner of your heart, you open that to the Lord. Give Him the keys of your heart. F.B. Meyer said that he went alone.

He met with God. He opened up his heart. He said, It was as if I took a bunch of keys, and I took that great bunch of keys into every room in my heart.

And I looked at it. One little key I took off, and I gave the rest to the Lord, and said, Lord, there it is. It was as if the Lord said, No, that's not your heart.

I want that key as well. Meyer didn't say what that particular closet in the heart was. But he said, Lord, I can't do that.

I can't give up control of that area. I can't give up that control. And he says, It was as if I felt the Lord just walking away.

He said, As he receded, I cried, Lord, Lord, I have not been willing, but I am willing to be made willing. And that was the turning point. That was the turning point.

See, that says a whole lot about a man. Number one, there's honesty. Lord, there is in me a desire.

There's something here I don't want to give up. There's an attitude. There's a relationship.

There's whatever. There's a sin. There's a habit.

There's a love. There's a hatred. There's something there I don't want to give up.

And I'm honest about that. But I'm willing to do business with God and let God break my heart and break my will. And I'm willing to be made willing to do all the will of God.

That night, F.B. Meyer got through to God. The rest is history. I'm willing, or to deal with me, to enter every closet, clean out every room, root out every idol, break down every false altar, every high place, everything that exalts itself against Christ in my heart, my home, my life, my mind, my everything.

I'm willing for God to do it. Are you? Ask the question. For you, you're the only one who can give it.

Oh, that tonight, this great prayer would so grip our hearts that honestly we could say, Lord, no matter what the cost may be, grant me, I pray Thee, a double portion of the Spirit. May the Lord take this fascinating portion of His Word, this very solemn, searching, challenging portion of His Word, right in our hearts.

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