

Freedom From Perpetual Backsliding

by Zac Poonen

To live a victorious life over sin, we need to depend on the Holy Spirit's power and live in His anointing all the time.

Scripture: Judges 3:10, Judges 6:34, Judges 14:6, Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18, Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:18, James 4:7, 1 John 4:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the importance of being anointed by the Holy Spirit to serve the Lord effectively, drawing examples from the judges in the book of Judges. He emphasizes the need for believers to seek the continuous empowerment of the Holy Spirit rather than relying on emotional experiences or natural gifts. Poonen highlights the cycle of backsliding, repentance, and deliverance seen in the book of Judges, urging believers to break free from this pattern by living under the constant anointing of the Spirit.

Transcript

In the book of Judges, we read of 13 judges whom God raised up in chapters 3 to 16. The fourteenth judge was Samuel whom we read about in 1 Samuel. The names of most of these judges are not so well known.

The first judge was a man called Othniel who was the son-in-law and the nephew of Caleb (Judges 3:9). It says here that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he judged Israel" (Judges 3:10). That occurred frequently in the book of Judges. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and on Samson to equip them to lead God's people (Judges 6:34; 14:6). It was the Spirit's anointing alone that enabled them to rule Israel. That anointing alone can help us to guide and lead God's people today, as well.

We may be born again, and that is certainly the work of the Holy Spirit. But we must still know the Spirit of the Lord coming upon us and empowering us to serve the Lord. Don't be satisfied with an emotional experience that you got in some meeting. Don't even be satisfied with speaking in tongues. You can speak in tongues and yet not be filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't ever be satisfied without the power of the Holy Spirit. You can never, never do God's work without the power of the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus who lived a perfect life for 30 years - Who was born of the Spirit, and Who had lived in obedience to the Holy Spirit for 30 years - had to be anointed by the Holy Spirit before He went out to serve His Father. As He prayed in the river Jordan, the Spirit of God came upon Him. Follow His example. Any amount of knowledge or natural gifts can never be a substitute for this anointing. And we need to live under this anointing

constantly. Samson's example is a tragic reminder to us how we can be anointed at one time, and then lose it later.

During all the 40 years that Othniel ruled Israel, there was peace (Judges 3:11), but then Othniel died. Again the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. And when they did evil, the Lord allowed the king of Moab to enslave them for 18 years (Judges 3:14).

In the book of Judges we see seven such cycles - backsliding followed by punishment followed by God raising up a judge to deliver them. Many believers live in such a cycle all their lives - backsliding, repenting, being delivered and backsliding all over again and so on....They keep going round in an endless circle. They go to a meeting and get stirred up, and dedicate themselves. When the revival meeting is over, their backsliding starts very soon. Then one day, another anointed preacher comes and holds meetings and they get stirred up again.

Is it the will of God that we should live in this endless cycle? Certainly not! Today we can have the Holy Spirit with us all the time. In those days the Spirit would come upon just one leader, and everyone was dependent on that leader, but today we can all receive the Spirit and we don't have to be dependent on any man. We can have the fire of God burning in our hearts all the time.

After 18 years of serving Moab, the Israelites cried out to the Lord (Judges 3:15). And God raised up another deliverer for them - Ehud. He was the second judge. I have wondered why they waited for 18 years before they cried out for deliverance from their slavery. Why didn't they cry out within one month of being enslaved? Why does a person today live defeated by sin for 18 years (or even 40 years in some cases), before he seeks for victory over sin? I don't know why, but it is happening all around us.

Ehud subdued Moab and the land was undisturbed for 80 years (Judges 3:30). But then again they backslid and God raised up Shamgar, who killed 600 Philistines with an ox-goad. That was certainly through the anointing of the Spirit, as Samson would do later.

Then the sons of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord again and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin the king of Canaan. The Canaanites whom Israel were supposed to exterminate, now have a king and are ruling Israel! Believers are supposed to rule over sin. But in most cases, sin rules over them. Jabin had 900 iron chariots and he oppressed Israel for 20 years. Then they cried to the Lord and the Lord raised up Deborah as a judge for them (Judges 4:3,4).

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