

Mistaken Identity

While boarding an airplane one morning after ministering in Atlanta, I heard the Holy Spirit speak to me: "Tell My people there has been a severe case of 'mistaken identity' in the body of Christ."

I knew exactly what the Lord was saying. As I pondered His words, I was reminded of a worship service I had attended a few weeks earlier, during which His glory filled the meeting place in a special way. His anointing had been so powerful that His presence had overwhelmed me.

When I finally had an opportunity after the service to sit down and to express my thanks to the Lord for such an awesome visitation, I made the mistake of saying, "Thank You for Your touch."

Suddenly, it was as if a car traveling at 100 mph came to a screeching halt in my spirit. God reminded me that the words He speaks are eternal, not temporal. And then He began to share with me how much it offends Him when the body of Christ mistakes His glory for a "touch," thus missing the purpose for His presence. His purpose isn't a touch—He comes with an assignment. Whenever His presence shows up in a service He is saying something, and that message should move us to act.

In 1 Kings 19:19, when Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha, we see a perfect example of this: "So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him" (NKJV). A change occurred in Elisha's life when Elijah cast on him the same mantle he used

as his covering and after to part the Jordan (see 2 Kings 2:8).

Elijah did not stop to explain to his protégé what he had just received. The power that was in that mantle had an assignment already woven into it. Elisha was destined to be transformed to a new spiritual level. When the mantle hit him, it called from his depths an assignment that superseded what he was doing at the time.

Verse 21 says, "Then he arose and followed Elijah and became his servant." Though he was in the field plowing 12 oxen, the mantle commissioned him to spiritual works.

The tragedy with many of us is that when the presence and the call come, we say, "Lord, not now."

In many of our services we shun His presence. "Lord, not now, the choir is singing." Or, "Not now, Lord, the praise dancers are dancing." Or, "Not now, Lord, our service is supposed to be two hours long." We have so many "Not now, Lord" excuses.

Studying the biblical passage further, I found that the instrument that was attached to Elisha's oxen only had the ability to dig about 6 inches into the ground. Suddenly, an insight hit me so hard I nearly fell over.

Even though Elisha had great oxen and a huge field to plow, the depth of the ground wasn't but 6 inches. God's calling of us to greater levels will never be at the "right" time—but when the mantle of the next level is cast your way, whatever you are doing at the time that seems great and successful amounts to only plowing 6 inches deep.

Many can be in the vicinity of the power while singing, worshiping, preaching and just enjoying the fact that the presence of the Lord is there. But I urge you not to miss your opportunity to pursue your assignment when the service has come to an end.

I urge you this year to take note: Every time you feel His presence, though the song and message are over, run desperately after God to find out why He has come to your field.

Paul said, "I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me" (Phil. 3:12). When you do that no matter where you are—in a store, on your job, in your house or in a restaurant—when His presence shows up, listen and respond. Even Jesus submitted His will to fulfill His assignment—which was to die for our sins. Let's take our cues from Scripture. Elisha did, and he was rewarded with power that enabled him to go beyond shallow ministry to the deep things of God.

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