

Recovering the Axe Head of Genuine Anointing

We've faked the power of Pentecost long enough. Let's set aside the imitations and reclaim the real deal.

Shortly after Elijah was carried to heaven in his fiery chariot, a group of young prophets asked Elisha to go with them to build new living quarters near the Jordan River. While one of the young men was cutting down a tree, the blade of his axe fell in the water and sank into the murky depths of the riverbed (see 2 Kings 6:1-7).

The construction project came to an abrupt stop. This was before the days of flashlights and sonar devices. These guys were in trouble.

"Let's ditch our counterfeits and our cheap substitutes, and ask the Lord to restore the axe blade. Let's cry to Him for a pure, unadulterated, genuine, life-changing, planet-shaking revival."

Knowing that his friends could not replace this expensive iron tool they had borrowed, the young prophet cried to his mentor Elisha for help. The wise prophet threw a stick in the water where the axe head had sunk. Immediately the heavy iron blade floated to the surface—defying the laws of physics and proving that nothing is impossible with God. Elisha's faith saved the

day.

We can gain so much comfort from this story. It reminds us that God has power over the natural world. It also proves that He cares about the seemingly trivial details of our lives—and that He is even willing to bail us out of the messes we make.

As I have meditated on this passage in recent days I've also applied it to our current situation in the American church. It illustrates how desperately we need to recover what we've lost.

Perhaps you've noticed that our blade is missing. I don't know exactly when it fell off the handle, but it seems as if we've been trying to build God's house without the sharp edge of His genuine anointing. We've traded the real for the phony. We've cheapened Pentecost to the point that it's been reduced to dry religious programs and circus sideshow antics.

We've mastered the art of hype. We know how to fake the anointing. We push people to the floor during our altar times. We know how to manipulate music and crowds so that we can create the atmosphere of the anointing. But in so many cases the real anointing isn't there. In its place is a hollow imitation.

Some charismatic leaders today are even selling specially handcrafted oils that promise the Holy Spirit's power. Others sell scented candles that claim to bring God's presence. And last year one brother was traveling the country with feathers in a jar—claiming that these belonged to an angel with healing powers.

Lord, forgive us for our charlatanism. We need the blade back! We must cry out to the God Who has the power to raise iron from the bottom of a river.

We are not going to advance Christ's kingdom, or build His victorious church, using scented oils, fake charms, ear-

tickling prophecies and goofy charismatic gimmicks. This is all wood, hay and stubble destined for the furnace. What we need today is the sharp blade of the Word that is empowered by the Holy Ghost and fire.

In my world travels during the past few years I have met humble Christians who carry the genuine anointing of the Spirit. I've spent time with Chinese believers who see miracles inside their prison cells. I've met an Indian evangelist who has seen six people raised from the dead. I've met a Pakistani apostle who regularly sees Muslims healed during outdoor gospel meetings.

Last week I interviewed an Iranian church leader whose ministry is leading 5,000 Iranians to faith in Christ every month. In the midst of persecution and political upheaval, a New Testament-style revival is erupting in that Shiite Muslim stronghold-all because the church in Iran is wielding the axe head of genuine Holy Spirit anointing.

Where is the God of Elisha? There is a cry in the American church today that resembles the cry of the desperate young prophet in 2 Kings 6. We have not been good stewards of the Holy Spirit's gifts, and now the precious power of God has eluded us. We dropped it. Yet we are beginning to acknowledge our blunder.

Let's fully humble ourselves. Let's repent of fakery and fraud. Let's ditch our counterfeits and our cheap substitutes, and ask the Lord to restore the axe blade. Let's cry to Him for a pure, unadulterated, genuine, life-changing, planet-shaking revival.

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