

Ungodly Counsel Corrupting Churches

When the widow obeyed the word of Elisha to go around and collect empty vessels from her neighbors the oil was multiplied and sold to pay off her creditors (2 Kin. 4:1-7). The key was the faith of the widow to obey the commandment of Elisha and go and gather empty vessels. This account is a story of financial provision coming from obedience, but it can also be applied spiritually as well.

There will be enough oil (Holy Spirit), grain (the living word of God, fresh manna), spiritual and numerical growth/increase, provision and protection for the churches who will hear and obey the counsel of the Lord in this hour.

Fresh oil will follow the obedience to the counsel of the Lord. Water will be turned to wine when we do what Jesus says (John 2:5). The increase of the oil of the Holy Spirit revives people and causes them to become eternally minded and they become an asset to the church and the work of God. Revived workers are one of the greatest needs of the Church in this hour.

In a great house, there are both vessels of gold and silver, and of wood and clay, some to honor and some to dishonor (2 Tim. 2:20). The honorable vessels who qualify for more oil are those who are empty of themselves. The dishonorable vessels are those who are carnal, full of pride, the wisdom of men and self-sufficiency. There will be little to no oil for them.

Spiritually speaking, we know oil represents the Holy Spirit. In the Parable of the 10 Virgins, they were commanded to go out and buy oil (Matt. 25:1-13). Oil is purchased with money, and money to buy oil represents your life. There must be a surrendering of your life (Luke 14:26) and an emptying of

yourself so that you can be filled. Frankly, many in the body of Christ and even pastors are full of themselves. Humility is required to receive the grace that produces the oil of the Holy Spirit in your life (James 4:6). And the measure of the Holy Spirit you will receive is in proportion to your hearing and obeying the Lord's counsel.

Having just enough oil is not enough for the midnight hour and the coming storm. The foolish virgins found that out the hard way. They were unprepared for the coming of the Bridegroom. In addition to oil in our lamps, we need a vessel as the wise virgins possessed for the supply of extra oil.

"Those who were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. But the wise took jars of oil with their lamps" (Matt. 25:3-4).

Too many Christians have just enough or not enough oil. They do just enough or not enough to get by in their relationship with God. They don't seek God. They don't read their Bible much. They don't think about God much. They don't talk to God much. They may do their religious duty and attend church on Sundays, but they don't seek God much during the week. They never fast. They never pray in tongues. They do just enough or not quite enough, but their hearts are cold, and they have no fire. Oil is the fuel for the fire. Oil is what keeps our spiritual motors running well. Make sure you buy extra oil by surrendering your life to the Lord, staying close to Him and living in obedience to what He tells you to do, both through the written Word and the spoken Word.

Sometimes pastors and ministers are to blame for the lack of the supply of oil in the people. Many sheep are not being fed the living word. Many are drying up because there is no flow of the Holy Spirit. Many churches have compromised the Word and are limiting the operations and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. People are bored in church, and at times, pastors are bored themselves. They're bored in their call and lukewarm in

their preaching. The ministry has become a job and a means of income for many of them, and they do whatever is necessary to keep the money coming in. There is a better way, but it will cost pastors and churches much to change, especially those who have compromised and built on a wrong foundation. In urgent times, we often need a crucifixion before a resurrection can come.

I see the Lord providing great protection, spiritual and financial increase and multiplication to the praying and uncompromising Church of today. The majority of that increase will come to numerically small churches because their foundation has not been set in stone and can be more easily reset. Conversely, numerically large churches have a foundation and systems built into them that are much more difficult to be broken up, reset and changed in order to accommodate the true counsel of the Lord.

Here's an example of the false counsel that is being prescribed to many pastors today:

Pastors talk to their congregations about connecting with visitors and engaging in community. They go to conferences and they hear things like "Unless your visitors make several friends in the first few months of coming to your church, they will leave." So they make every effort to create community in their churches by building cafes and coffee houses and setting up lounges for people to connect socially. There's nothing wrong with any of those things, but what is your motive? If it's just to have more people to grow your church, to pay for buildings and expand your programs, then you have been corrupted by worldly methods. That is not a gospel motivated church.

True community is created with people who love God's ways and want to be true disciples. It is Christ followers with burning kindred spirits who bond in true community. Can you imagine Peter and John or any of the early apostles sitting down and

strategizing about how to keep the 3,000 new converts who came into the church at Pentecost from leaving? Yet this is what many of these church conferences teach you. They had just experienced a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and Peter's message was so freighted with the Spirit of God that it produced genuine repentance and conversion as people began seeking God with all their being. That is how the church is supposed to grow.

There is great temptation out there for pastors who see their churches dwindling to compromise their values and use worldly means to try and grow their churches or keep the people from leaving. But there is no scriptural standard for drawing more people into the local church, or for building a bigger audience, in order to keep the funds coming in to maintain buildings and expand programs. These motives are tainted with man's wisdom that runs the church like a for-profit business.

Here is the word of the Lord: When pastors and ministers restore the pattern of Acts 6:4 in their churches and ministries today they will see a restoration of the protection and multiplication of the work of God.

When we obey the counsel of the Lord there is protection, financial provision and spiritual multiplication for the church. When the disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions to launch out into the deep there was a great catch (Luke 4). After His resurrection, He gave them similar instructions again, but this time it was to cast their net on the other side. Once again, there was a great catch (John 21). Hearing and obeying is all that is required. It's one of the great secrets that runs through the entire Bible, but today men don't pray much, and they don't listen to the counsel of the Lord.

Return to the original pattern and you will see the original results they saw in the gospels and in the book of Acts. Fervent effectual prayer will produce the power of God (James

5:16), which in turn will bring provision, protection and a multiplication to the church. {eoa}