

A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF CONTEMPORARY USE OF ANOINTING OIL.
A CASE STUDY OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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ABSTRACT

The use of anointing oil has its root in the Old Testament as a sacred practice for the consecration of both human and material things for the service of God. The concept was transferred to the New Testament era whereby anointing oil was used as a medicine to relieve pain. The concept is seen as a symbol of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon individual believer in the New Testament. This research work has tried to examine the use of anointing oil among the Pentecostal churches today and found out that the primary purpose of this sacred practice has been distorted while the secondary which is the manifestations of the effect of anointing with oil are given priority. It is very necessary that the heretic teaching about the use of anointing oil should be guided against in order to prevent our people from material centered faith to God centered faith. Our people need to be guarded, trained and educated in order not to be the victim of these so called oil carrier ministers.

Although, the practice of the use of anointing oil is biblical, it needs not to be commercialized and if there is any need for it to be used at all, individual should be able to pray over it and use it as he/she wishes, having faith in God that He is the only one that has solution to human problems. The thesis also encourages believers to seek more of anointing of the Holy Spirit as He is the authentic enabler, energizer and power behind our effectiveness in the ministry and breakthrough in our various life endeavour.

Conclusions

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is what we really need in our generation to function as believers; we should covet for it; pray for it and by faith receive it from God. Without this power from on high it is not possible to fulfill the mandate of God in the ministry. Jesus promised it (Luke 24:49, Act 1:8). Peter emphasized it (Act 2:38-39). Jesus is the anointed of God.

The disciples experienced outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the author of anointing. The place of anointing cannot be over emphasized in the ministry of the church. The anointed man is God's answer to the cry of the people. The issue of anointing on any man is a matter of relationship with God, not oil. Many do not have genuine relationship with God but carrying anointing oil about claiming that they have

been harmed with the power of God. The Pentecostal churches do not help the matter as they laid more emphasis on all other aspects of human life rather than salvation and right standing with God. The use and misuse of anointing oil is subject of discussion with different denominations with different beliefs and upholding firm their positions. No matter any success people may arrogate to the anointing oil, it should not be idolized. It should not be misinterpreted to mean the person of the Holy Spirit or a medium through which the Holy Spirit works.

This essay takes its stand on biblical use of anointing oil as a symbol and oppose without any reservation any idea of misrepresenting the personality of the Holy Spirit. The anointing oil or the minister who administers it should not be rated over and above the Holy Spirit if at all it is used.

Recommendations

This essay has tried to look at the use of anointing oil by the contemporary believers. Through the research, it was found out that there are many believers, including the pastors of mainline churches who are using anointing oil against the divine purpose. The pressure mounted by the congregation on the minister in charge to practice what others were doing also contributed to this abuse in many Baptist Churches. As a result of this, the following recommendations may be found useful to us as the church of God in contemporary age.

First, the issue of the use of anointing oil is biblical, it is real and it was from God, through which he demonstrated his divine presence to the people of the Old Testament, which manifested in the person of the Holy Spirit. The anointing oil is now a symbol of the Holy Spirit. So, the church should strive after the anointing of the Holy Spirit and stop running after oil. Believers should know that without the

Holy Spirit indwelling us, we can do nothing.

Second, the church of God should be ready to teach the biblical perspective of the use of anointing oil in our various meetings, fellowships, conferences and seminars. When this is done with prayer, there will be correction and people will move from element centered faith to God-centered faith.

Third, the reality of problems cannot be overlooked among our people. It is high time our churches (Baptist) rise up to meet the challenges our people are facing before they run to somewhere else to seek solution to their problems. We need to be sensitive to their plight and show concern which makes them to be patronizing these Pentecostal churches.

Fourth, there should be a revisit to our beliefs and practices as Baptists. Our beliefs, practices and doctrine should be taught and impressed upon our people through our leaders so that, when we know the truth, the truth will set us free. By the time our people come across some heretical teachings, they will be able to stand against them and defend their faith.

Fifth, our convention should come out with a blue print on our stand about the use of anointing oil for our churches. This is because, many of our Baptist ministers are using it; unless we want to be hypocritical about it. Some even prescribed it for their members. If we want to go by what our General Secretary presented in "The Nigerian Baptist" March 2003 page 15-17 about significance of biblical anointing, then we are far from the right track or we may be termed hypocrite.

Finally, this essay is not conclusive. I, therefore, recommend that further research should be carried out on this topic without bias in order to ascertain the level of abuse of this sacred matter. We should not compromise the standard of God and jeopardize the great commission for any other ministry work.