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The Fragrance of the Anointing

Mary Craig Ministries
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¹ John 2.27 says: *But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any one teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.*

The interesting thing about this verse is the use of the Greek word *crisma*. The word means “anointing with oil; an unguent or smearing; endowment of the Holy Spirit; anointing, unction.” This verse says that there is something about the anointing with oil that teaches us things we need to know. So I thought to look into the compound of the anointing oil according to Exodus 30.22-25.

God commanded Moses to produce a compound, a mixture of spices and oil, like an apothecary. (Exodus 30.22-25) He gave a formula for it, specifying the ingredients and their amounts and said that it was not to be changed. Four spices and olive oil were used to make this holy anointing oil. The formula produced a distinct substance and fragrance formed by the chemical union of the ingredients. The anointing oil reveals to us things about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit along with things about the process of sanctification, of being set apart to God for a specific purpose.

The first spice was pure myrrh, 500 shekels. Myrrh is a short, thorny, ragged tree-shrub and part of the family of balsam trees. A gummy substance oozes out as a pale yellow liquid. This gradually solidifies and turns dark red or even black. Two kinds of myrrh could be gathered from the same shrub; pure myrrh which flowed freely and spontaneously, and a substance which flowed from incisions made in the bark. The free-flowing myrrh brought a higher price. Myrrh has medicinal value and was used in embalming. It was turned into a fluid by pressing and heating, a process which released its strong fragrance.

The root word for myrrh in Hebrew is *marar*, which means bitter, or grievous. Myrrh represents the grace needed for bitter circumstances, the dispensing of grace that comes as the Holy Spirit abides in a believer. There is twice as much myrrh in the anointing compound than cinnamon and calamus, showing us the great need for grace in our lives but also the abundant provision of grace from the God of all Grace and the Spirit of Grace. We are to

enjoy the sweet smell of the myrrh of grace and this myrrh is to be freely dispensed such that our lives reflect grace and return grace. Myrrh pictures the grace to die to self, and as we die daily, the myrrh of grace is dispensed by the Holy Spirit so as to yield its sweet fragrance into our being.

Cinnamon, more rare than myrrh, comes next, only half as much... 250 shekels. Cinnamon is actually a tree native to Ceylon (India). This tree grows some 20 feet high with stiff, evergreen leaves. It has white blossoms succeeded by a nut; but it is the bark that yields an oil of a golden yellow color. Refining the oil of cinnamon requires fire. The plant is boiled to separate the rind from the coarser shell of the plant and then the rind is further refined by fire to produce the oil of cinnamon. This process pictures the Holy Spirit burning the coarseness from us, burning out ungodliness, and producing a fragrance that comes with maturity. The outer shell of our being burned and refined by fire allows others to see the life of God within us unhindered. The Holy Spirit purges sin from our lives; but remember, there's twice as much myrrh in the compound, representing God's grace for healing.

Calamus, a third component of the holy anointing oil and 250 shekels in our compound, grew most likely in Asia Minor and Greece (Ezekiel 27.19). This reed-like plant has an unusually sweet fragrance which increases the more it is bruised and broken. We are reminded that our crushing sorrows and our bruised hearts release a sweet fragrance when the Holy Spirit is at work in us, sanctifying us, preparing us as a bride. (Song 4.13, 14) Calamus was found in the lily beds of the bride's garden; yet only the Holy Spirit can produce the meekness that comes as we yield to Him in our brokenness.

The fourth spice, cassia, is native to Arabia, and comes in at 500 shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary. Its small leaves provide a medicine known as senna leaves. Ancients burned it on their altars with frankincense. The word itself means "to split, to scrape off, to purge, or to separate"; and the Hebrew primitive root is *qadad*, meaning "to shrivel up." Cassia is gathered from the inner bark of a tree and strongly resembles cinnamon in taste and scent, yet more pungent and with a coarser texture. Cassia typifies bowing, bending, paying homage, demonstrating humility as the Holy Spirit further cleanses us.

The last component of the holy anointing oil is olive oil, an hin. Olive trees were beaten to loose the olives. The olives were crushed, pits and all, with the liquid then separated from the solid. An offering with olive oil was a sweet savor to the Lord. Wild olive trees did not produce good oil; they had to be grafted into the natural olive tree. The oil of olive provided a base in the compound for the other spices.

God commanded that the anointing oil not be counterfeited and that it not be put upon a stranger. (Exodus 30.32, 33) We are not to accept a counterfeit, an antichrist, nothing else or less than the sacrifice of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. (1 John 2.18-29) Where the blood is applied to our lives, there also is the anointing oil, representing the Presence of the Holy Spirit. (cf Leviticus 14)

This holy anointing oil was costly because the spices were rare and used in large quantities. There is a cost involved in God providing salvation. There is a cost involved for us to follow Jesus. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, yet there is a cost every time we choose God's will and deny our selves. There is a cost to submit to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, a cost to our minds, will, and emotions—our soul. The holy anointing oil speaks of consecration, of being separated unto the Lord as a person and as a temple, as kings and priests, as ministers to the Lord. (1 Corinthians 3.16; Revelation 1.6a)

There is a fragrance that comes upon us, the fragrance of the work of the Holy Spirit in our sanctification, a fragrance that flows out of us such that others are either drawn to Christ or repelled. This fragrance becomes an acceptable aroma to the Father and when it is just right, we come into the fullness of His Presence to dwell forever.

For we are unto God a sweet fragrance of Christ,

*In them that are saved, and in them that perish:
To the one we are the fragrance of death unto death;
And to the other the fragrance of life unto life.
And who is sufficient for these things?
2 Corinthians 2.15, 16*

May the fragrance you dispense before God and the watching world be acceptable to Him and be indeed the fragrance of life.

God's grace is sufficient. The Spirit of Grace is with us as our sufficiency. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. (2 Corinthians 13.14)

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PS My message of the month this month is on the anointing. If you're not on our regular mailing list and want to do this study, you will be able to find it in the next few days on our web site. God bless you as you grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ!

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