

The Priesthood of All Believers

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Date: 20 August 2023

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter 29. Exodus, chapter 29.

This is where we were last time in the book of Exodus. I know you've all already realized that, but last time in Exodus, we were in the same passage. We've focused in on a little section of this now.

Last time, we were really looking at the process of ordaining Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Now, at the same time, we know that today Jesus is the only priest who can offer a sacrifice that can atone for us.

And we saw that in last week's sermon or last time's sermon. But there's another priesthood I mentioned briefly in application. I want to spend some time talking about that.

That's our priesthood as believers, the priesthood of all believers. So the priesthood of believers really is a call to service. The fact that we are seen by God, called by God to be priests is also a call upon our lives that we would serve him.

[1 : 32] That we would really, as it were, exercise our priestly function before God. So let's look at this passage. We're going to look at verses 4 through 9 of Exodus 29.

Verse 9.

Let's pray together.

Dear Heavenly Father, again, thank you that you've given us your word. We pray that as we look at this ordination of the priest, that Lord, we would also see our calling as priests and how we are to serve you.

And Lord, as we see that, we pray that you would give us by your spirit the strength, the ability to carry out that to which you've called us. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

[3 : 04] Now, as we look at the passage, we see in there that he talks about the middle of verse 9. And the priesthood shall be theirs by statute forever. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

So the priesthood is theirs forever. And yet here we are in the new covenant and no such priesthood exists today. How can that be? What's happened? Well, we have to understand and we see in the New Testament that that priesthood that's given to Aaron and his sons then becomes an inheritance for all of God's people.

So as it were, in the new covenant, there is but one tribe of Israel, the Levitical tribe. We all belong to the priestly tribe. We all serve before God as priests in the kingdom.

And so I want to begin just by showing that from God's word. Take a little time and look at a few passages that show us that. And then we'll get into more detail of how we become priests and even our role as priests particularly.

So the priesthood of all believers, there's five or six passages depending on how you look at it that specifically teach this in the New Testament. Hebrews 13 verses 15 through 16.

[4 : 16] It says there through him, that's through Jesus, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. That is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Now I started here but this is one that doesn't specifically say believers are priests.

But you notice the role of the believer. The believer is to offer up sacrifices to God. We see in two places there.

In verse 15, offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. And then in verse 16, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. And it was specifically the role of the priest in the Old Testament to offer sacrifices to God.

And so now here as we come to this passage, what we find is that believers are called to function in that role as priests to offer sacrifices to God.

[5 : 17] Then we have 1 Peter 2 verse 9. But you, speaking to Christians, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We'll talk a little bit about this more detail. But we see here specifically that as Christians, a chosen race, much as the people of Israel, a chosen race or nation out of all the peoples of the earth, and a royal priesthood, that contains even other offices.

We have the office even of Christ as king. But we are a priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession. Specifically, to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We'll talk more about this, but one of the roles of the priests in the Old Testament was to proclaim the law. They were to proclaim the law. In the new covenant, we see Christians start to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And again, we'll discuss that difference in a bit. Thirdly, Revelation 1, 5-6. And three of these passages actually come from the book of Revelation.

[6 : 43] But Revelation 1, 5-6, To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priest to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. So Revelation kind of begins with that assessment that as Christians, what has happened to us? We've been freed from our sins by the blood of Jesus.

We've been made into a kingdom. And specifically, it says, priest to his, that's to Jesus' God and Father. And so, as Christians, we've been made into priests because of the work of Jesus Christ.

A little bit later in Revelation 5, 9-10. And they sing a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And you made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. So just in case we looked at Revelation 1 and wondered, well, who's John or the Spirit talking of here when it says they've been made a kingdom and priests to our God?

[8 : 02] Well, we see here that by the blood of Jesus, people from every tribe, tongue, and nation have been ransomed for God. They've been bought out of that slavery to sin. And they've been freed from sin from every nation, not just of the Jews of Israel, but of all the nations of the earth.

God has saved some, and He's made them into a kingdom and priests to our God. And they will reign on the earth. And then much further on, Revelation 20, verse 6.

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Him for a thousand years.

So again we see those who are participants in that resurrection, it says that they will be priests of God and of Christ.

And I thought another passage, though again not specifically saying that we're priests, but as we think about the role given here, we've talked about our purpose statement as a church.

[9 : 11] And one of the purposes we have of a church is to equip the saints. And the passage we really looked at for that was Ephesians 4.12. To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

I thought about even this idea of the work of ministry. To whom does the work of ministry belong today? It's not just the Levitical tribe.

It's not just Aaron's sons. It's not just Aaron as the high priest. All of God's people have been brought into that relationship so that we all are ministers as it were.

We are priests. And I said last week, and I'll say again, that's not to say that God doesn't distinguish a certain office of pastor or elder.

Or even the office of deacon. God does distinguish such offices. But in the New Covenant, we're all given a responsibility of ministering to one another, to others, and ultimately we're ministering to God as we minister.

[10 : 13] So I want to look next at our consecration. Second point, our consecration. Verse 4 of our passage says, You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.

We talked about last week that they had this initial ordination. There was this full body wash. And then afterwards, when they come to serve, they only had to wash their hands and their feet.

But there was this ceremonial cleansing. They were being washed really of dirt, of dust that was on them, but symbolically a washing of their sin to prepare them for a holy, sacred service that they had unto God and for the sake of his people.

Listen to Hebrews 10, 22. Let us draw near with the true heart, in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from the evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

What is that pure water he's speaking of? Well, again, though it carries no ability to accomplish this in itself, symbolically, ceremonially, we're proclaiming that we have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ in baptism.

[11 : 41] And so, as it were, the ordination of the person, the Christian, to ministry, to the priesthood, they go through that ceremonial washing in baptism.

Again, not for the purpose of saving them, or purifying them, but to symbolize the washing that has already happened. And that washing is not a washing with water, but a washing that's far greater.

A washing in the blood of Jesus Christ. I thought of Jesus in the upper room. You may remember, Jesus, the night he's betrayed, he's going to be taken to the cross.

And in that night, his last supper with the disciples, what did Jesus do? You remember, he went around and washed the feet of his disciples. He's going to be leaving them.

They're going to be stepping into that role. They're going to be serving him as ministers of the gospel. And what does that look like? Well, it begins with, he washes their feet. You remember what Peter said?

[12 : 46] This is John 13, verse 8. Peter said to him, you shall never wash my feet. And Jesus answered him, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me.

If you're not washed by Christ, and again, the feet wasn't the important thing. The symbolism was there, that if you're not washed in the blood of the Lamb, then you have no part for me.

You cannot be a minister of God. You cannot serve me, unless you be washed by me. And so then you remember, Peter backtracks and says, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, not my feet only, but all of me.

And Jesus responds that, you've already been washed. Now you need only that cleansing of the feet in this instance. I think a clear reference to what's going on with ordination.

Peter has been saved. And now this is a reminder, our ongoing ordination to the ministry as Jesus leaves him for the work. It's symbolic, what Jesus is doing there at the Last Supper, of what he's going to do in a few hours on the cross.

[13 : 58] You're going to be washed in the blood. I thought about a hymn that we sometimes see in Rock of Ages. In Rock of Ages, it says, let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flowed be of sin the double cure.

Cleanse me from its guilt and power. And that's really what we're talking about here. It's the water, it's the blood that God washes us and cleanses us from our sin that we might serve him.

And in both instances, both with the high priest Aaron and with his sons, they are then clothed after being washed. The clothing is slightly different from them but they're put on these garments and we talked about how they represent holiness.

And we see as well in the book of Revelation how Christians have been clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. garments washed in the blood of the Lamb.

And so too, we're washed in his blood. We're symbolically representing that in baptism. We're then given as our robes the righteousness of Jesus Christ that we wear.

[15 : 18] So that God looks upon us and sees us not in our sin but he sees us as as righteous as his son. He sees the righteousness of Christ on us.

And then there's also this anointing we talked about last week but we see in our passage verse 7 you shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him.

We talked about some of the symbolism of this but for the Christian the anointing is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit to the Christians.

Listen to this in 2 Corinthians 1 21-22 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us and who has also put his seal on us and given us his spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

So as Paul is speaking to the church here he's saying himself and all of them in Christ he has anointed us. And specifically he's given us the spirit in our hearts as a guarantee of that anointing.

[16 : 33] And so everyone who has the spirit in the new covenant is a priest to God. Is called to minister in his church in his kingdom.

And who is that? Well Paul includes all the church in Corinth and we talked about it a few weeks ago. The church in Corinth isn't exactly the role model church.

They're a church filled with struggles. But every Christian has been given God's spirit as an anointing into his service into his ministry. Even as we talk about salvation we've spoken of freedom from bondage to sin and instead what does Paul call himself?

I'm a bond servant of Christ Jesus. We've been brought into his service. Again Paul says to the church in Corinth this is 1 Corinthians 3.16 he says do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?

And so what Christian is it that is a temple for the spirit of God? It's every Christian. We are a temple. Again all these things get mixed.

[17 : 46] We see all the representative symbolism in the temple even now as we look at the tabernacle that tabernacle has been replaced and we now serve as that tabernacle.

The spirit's within us and we are ministers to God as it were even internally in that tabernacle in the heart no longer externally in one location which is what enables us to worship God in spirit and truth wherever we are.

We're not bound to one location. The spirit isn't resting inside of one building in one place in the world that we have to go to if we're to meet with God nor do we have to go through an earthly mediator.

We don't have to wait for opportunity from a priest. God has made us priests to go to God in spirit and truth wherever we are. And we think of the sacrifice that the priest was to bring.

It was the sacrifice of substitution. That sacrifice was to die in the place of the people who were sinners. And Christ is for us that sacrifice of substitution. I said already Christians are consecrated by the blood of Jesus Christ.

[19 : 02] We saw last week that the blood of the sacrifice was put on the earlobe and on the thumb and on the big toe.

And then I'm one of those people who like things neat, organized. Then the blood's taken and it's thrown, sprinkled all over the garments of the priest.

That beautiful ephod with blood sprinkled, covered all on it. Listen to Hebrews 9, 13-14.

For the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify for the purification of the flesh. How much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God purify our conscience from dead works and for what purpose?

Do you remember this passage? to serve the living God. So again, our consecration is through a sacrifice. And if God allowed the blood of bulls and goats to be enough of a sacrifice to consecrate his people in the Old Testament, how much more will the blood of Christ sanctify us to serve the living God?

[20 : 29] Hebrews 10-10 and then a few verses later, verse 14. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

For by single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified or perfected. So a little bit of a tricky passage here.

But what we see is this, that we've been sanctified. And we talked about sanctification. Being sanctified God is to be set apart as holy. And so the Christian is one who has been set apart as holy.

Which is what the process of consecration was. It's what we saw last week. It's what was being done to the priest. They are being set apart of all of Israel. This tribe is to be holy.

Aaron is to be holy. His sons are to be holy. They are sanctified unto the Lord for His service. They are not like the rest of the nation who are still God's people. But they are not like the rest of the nation.

[21 : 28] They are set apart for the service of God. And so we're told that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ through that sacrifice once for all.

And then that's reiterated in verse 14 for by single offering, the offering of Jesus, He is perfected for all time those who are being perfected. He is sanctified for all time those who are being sanctified.

And so there's this proclamation that God says we are holy. We might oftentimes think of this even in terms of justification. We've been justified.

We've been made right with God. But we have been sanctified, declared holy to God. But are we holy? Some of you are hesitating on that. I'm not. I don't know about you guys.

I'm not in my actions. I'm not in how I live. And so God has declared holy all those whom He is making holy.

[22 : 26] We have not yet been glorified but we already have the status of being holy and God is in the process of conforming us to the image of His Son and making us holy.

But as we think about that we think oftentimes of sanctification in terms of sin being put to death maybe even righteous living following God in all we do. But in terms of the priesthood think of it as consecration.

God has declared you Christian when you are saved He has declared you to be holy sanctified and set apart to Him for His service.

And we don't do a great job on that service. Often we want to serve ourselves more than we want to serve God. And so God is working in us to make what has been declared true in how we live.

And as we grow in that as we look more like Christ as we look more like the priest that we're called to be we yet know that we're never going to reach that in this life. But God in His grace upon our death He glorifies the Christian so that we can no longer sin.

[23 : 36] So that we are fully totally sanctified even as has already been accomplished by the death and sacrifice of Christ. Thirdly I want us to look at our service.

So if all this is true if every Christian is a priest before God and we've seen how God has consecrated us really in much the same way as those priests were and yet in a greater way He's consecrated us to the priesthood what then is our role?

And so I want to spend the rest of our time really thinking about our service to God. So I hope by now I've established the argument my point that you if you're a Christian today that you've been set apart by the blood of Jesus Christ you've been consecrated to serve the living God.

That's what we're to do. I think we could step back and think even broadly what is the chief end of man? Why has God made man? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

As we think about that we know that's the role of all people. But specifically for the Christian that's to be carried out in our service to him.

[24 : 53] We are bond servants of Christ Jesus. We are saved to serve the living God. And so it is our great privilege as priests that we get to draw near to God.

That's what the priests in the Old Testament did. They entered into the presence of God. Remember how we saw on the mountain the different levels as people got closer and closer to God. We had Moses there in the very presence of God in the cloud.

And then we had even Aaron who would become high priest with some of the elders close but a little bit further down from the mountain. They are near the presence of God but not there in God's presence.

And then as we move further out we have the people who are saying keep that away from me. That's scary. And so they are far off. That even if they stepped foot if anything touched the mountain they would be put to death.

And we talked about how even as the temples made that the Gentiles there was even a further court an outer court for them that they couldn't get very close at all to God.

[26 : 01] But now today Gentile by faith you become a priest to God. And so you have the great privilege of entering into his presence and offering up to God spiritual sacrifices.

And that's what I want us to look at. What is our service? What are those spiritual sacrifices that we offer? So first kind of define what is spiritual sacrifice?

What am I talking about? I think later on we'll look at this passage more but Romans 12:1 let me first go there. I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship.

So as I think of these spiritual sacrifices I'm kind of combining these two things. Living sacrifice spiritual worship. It's our role today to offer up to God sacrifices that are holy and acceptable to him as our spiritual worship.

So what is that? What do we mean when we speak of spiritual sacrifices or spiritual worship? Well it's whatever we do in this life when we do it spiritually.

[27 : 11] Okay whatever we do in this life when we do it spiritually. Now when I say that I don't mean like our spirit separates from our body like it's some ghost and goes off on it's someone who does something. Nothing crazy like that.

When we do things spiritually there's a few points we might say. To do something spiritually is first of all to do it in reliance upon the spirit of God. We're depending upon God and his spirit as we do that thing.

Whatever that could be. Secondly it's to do it according to the will of God. God. We think of even God's laws. We cannot explain or justify our sin as something that we're doing spiritually.

I'm spiritually sinning in this moment. Well no that doesn't work right. It's what we do for the will of God and then according to the will of God and then thirdly it's what we do for the glory of God.

so what we do relying upon his spirit working in us to accomplish according to his will and for his glory. And so as Christians we're called for everything we do to be that.

[28 : 21] That we are to rely upon his spirit that we do it according to his will and that we're to do it for God's glory. That's our spiritual service. John Piper says the following.

He says spiritual sacrifices are sacrifices from Christ and through Christ and for Christ. They get their power from the spirit of Christ they get their content from the word of Christ and they have their goal in the glory of Christ.

And they flow only from a heart devoted to his power and his word and his glory. So as we think about these spiritual sacrifices we might summarize even what he's saying.

it's works that are centered upon Christ. Christ is the focus. Christ is the goal of that which we do. Now even as we say that we think of spiritual sacrifices.

Spiritual sacrifices can even be internal things that we do. Prayer that maybe we don't speak out loud. Worship that we declare to God when we're by ourselves.

[29 : 33] Christ is the sacrifice. And so as we do that is our sacrifice inferior to the priesthood of the Old Testament? Well no. Again another quote but this is A.W.

Pink. I think he does a great job of this. He says our altar is not one of wood or stone, brass or gold, but of Christ himself.

So our sacrifices are not the fruits of the ground or the firstlings of our herds but the adoration of our hearts and the devotion of our lives.

The contrast then is between the outward and ceremonial and the inward and spiritual. And so it's not as though because it's not a physical animal or the first fruits of our grain that we're bringing before God that that's somehow inferior.

Far from that. That was outward and ceremonial. What God calls us to is we think of spiritual sacrifices and spiritual worship is something that is internal to us.

[30 : 42] Something that is spiritual within us. And so it's not just the outward conformity. And we've talked about this in terms of salvation. It's not the things that we do that save us.

It's not our church attendance. It's not our kindness. It's not even our service to our neighbor that saves us. But what happens as Christians is we have a heart of love for God and of Christ that desires to honor him.

We want to serve him and that's displayed in our spiritual worship and sacrifices that we bring to him. Our service to the living God. I think that also gives us a reminder of our ability.

I think of the priesthood of all believers as it was proclaimed in the Reformation. Part of what was communicated when that doctrine was taught was this.

That any Christian can read the word of God and by the enlightening power of the spirit can understand the word of God. Doesn't mean we're going to understand everything but that God's word is clear and all that we need to know for life and salvation.

[31 : 56] And so God's word was by his grace in the Protestant church no longer limited to being read only by the priest. There were times where men like Tyndale laid down their life burned at the stake because they had a Bible for themselves.

It was a capital crime to read the Bible on your own. But part of the priesthood of the believer is, of all believers, is that we're giving God's word. We can read it.

We can study it. We can understand the word of God. And so as we think about our spiritual service, I think we have to understand that part of our spiritual service to God is not neglecting his word.

It's spending time in God's word. That is a blessing and a privilege that we have. We're not relied upon even a prophet to speak to us audibly and we try to remember it.

We're not even limited to there being one set of scrolls that are read once a year at a spiritual or religious gathering. Guys, we have God's word. Probably most of us have multiple copies in our house.

[33 : 07] If you don't have one, we have plenty that we give out at food distribution and we're glad to share with you. We have access to the word of God, but are we using that as part of our spiritual service to the Lord?

Also in our service, I want us to see that our bodies and really all of our life is meant to be service to God. I read earlier the passage, but really it's fitting here. Romans 12, 1.

I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holding it acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. So as we think about what is our spiritual worship as priests to our God in the new covenant, part of it is to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Now, that's a little complicated concept, a living sacrifice, because sacrifices are given so that they may die, right? Sacrifices die. And so a living sacrifice, we are, our life is an ongoing act of sacrifice to God in service to him for his glory.

I said our lives, we can say as well, to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. Oftentimes, the body is the realm in which we act upon our sinful desires.

[34 : 32] Our bodies are a holy temple of the Lord. And so Paul asked, do we then join the temple of the Lord with a prostitute, he asked in one place?

Honor God with our bodies, present our bodies as living sacrifices. That's our spiritual worship. Now, what does that look like? Well, part of that is already what I've said. I think it's in what we do, how we use our bodies, we use it for God's glory, not for our own gratification, not for sin.

But also, we have to understand that all we do is to be for the glory of God. Around the time of the Reformation, that same principle, the priesthood of all believers, also, I think, rightly argued that if we're all priests, then whatever job we do, if we do it to the glory of God, is honorable and of great esteem.

And so, me being your pastor doesn't inherently make me more holy or get me brownie points in heaven. God has called us to serve in this world, in various roles.

He's gifted us with various abilities that we're to use for the glory of God. And I wish I could remember the exact wording, but I think it was Tyndale who said that his desire, oh, that was, they would know more, but I forget who it was now that said that even the farmer in the field plowing to the glory of God would have greater esteem than the priest.

[36 : 15] So, all of life is worship. All we do with our bodies, then, is an act of worship. And so, we read passages like 1 Corinthians 10, 31. 1 Corinthians 10, 31. For whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Why should we do it all to the glory of God? Well, one, that's how he made us. But secondly, as Christians, that's our spiritual worship. That's our service to God. And he even deals with the things that are so mundane as eating and drinking.

Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, what's included in whatever you do? That's right. Everything else in life. Paul speaks of the church, and he says in 2 Corinthians 8, 5, they gave themselves first to the Lord, and then by the will of God to us.

They gave themselves to us. We see, again, that service. I thought about even the high priest who has the crown of holiness, that plate upon his head that says, holy to the Lord.

Maybe it would be helpful for us if we think about that holy to the Lord ought to be written on every aspect of our lives. What I'm doing right now is service to God, holy to the Lord.

[37 : 33] This is holy to the Lord. And we can consider then, if that's true, are we sometimes going to do things that we think, I don't know if I can write this off as holy to the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, that ought to be a reminder to us, right? If I can't stamp holy to the Lord on this, I ought not do it. Our fifth bit of service under this point is a broken heart for sin.

In Sunday school, we've been looking at Psalm 51. But in Psalm 51, 17, you remember this is where David repents of his sin with Bathsheba. It says the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, oh God, you will not despise.

So here's another example of a sacrifice to offer to God. A broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. That's the sacrifice God will not despise. Sittsely, we can offer to God praise.

Hebrews 13, 15. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. That is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

[38 : 55] The fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. So again, that same wording. We are to offer up a sacrifice. That's the role of a priest. And what is that sacrifice to be?

Praise to God. And we might raise our hand and ask the question, well, wait a minute, what is praise to the God? And the passage tells us that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

And again, as we think about all of life, we're acknowledging his name. That's that holy to the Lord stamped across it. I'm doing this for God. I'm acknowledging it. that whatever we do in life is for the praise of God.

I even think, how do we respond then if we, if we have that mentality, we're working hard at our vocation and our boss says to us, you know, you're doing a really great job here. Where does the glory go?

Fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. It may be as simple as praise God for that. Because what we're saying is, praise God for giving me the ability, the strength.

[40 : 09] Even changing my heart that my desire is to honor him in all I do. But ultimately, we want to acknowledge him. We want the glory to go to God and not to ourselves. I thought of the words of John the Baptist about Jesus.

May he increase and I decrease. That's our act of service. Throughout our life that we're seeking to see God and his glory increase with no concern for our glory.

I even thought about our worship as we come to God. Of all things in life that we might think of as spiritual sacrifice, sacrifice, our time of corporate worship ought to be a time of spiritual sacrifice to God.

So is our worship spiritual service to God? Is that what you're doing when you're here? Is that what's going through your mind? As you hear the preaching of the word? Or as you sing?

Or as you hear scripture read? Or as you pray or hear others pray? Is that spiritual service to God? Seventh, love and giving ministry to others.

[41 : 22] Philippians 4.18, I have received full payment and more. I am well supplied. Having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

So here's another reference to an offering and sacrifice. Even fragrant, which is one of the words that was used in our passage about the sacrifice that they would present as a fragrant offering to God. And what is that fragrant offering?

Well in this instance it's specifically meeting the needs of God's ministers and those who are being served. I think also here reference to the church in Jerusalem who was in a famine.

Hebrews 13.16, do not neglect to do good and to share what you have for such sacrifices are pleasing. to God. To do good and share what you have are sacrifices that are pleasing to God.

I think under that heading we might put things like hospitality. God's given us homes. God's given us the ability to put food on our table. That we would share that with others. That we would bring them into our home.

[42 : 27] But it might be financially supplying the work of ministry or missions of the church. It might be other ways that we help those in need. I know some of you do things like Samaritan's Purse or help.

Children who are financially deprived. Eighthly, evangelism. Eighthly, ninthly. I wonder how many, or how this might go.

But the eighth thing, evangelism, is a form of service to God. 1 Peter 2.9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

So part of your role, why have you been made a priesthood? Part of your role as a priest is to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

What is that? Well, I think at the very least, that's the gospel. It's what's changed our heart. It is what has called us out of darkness into light.

[43 : 34] We're to proclaim that to others, and the excellencies of him who did it, God's worship, God's praise. We're to proclaim that to others. So I think from this passage alone, I can make a pretty bold argument that every Christian is called to the work of evangelism.

It's part of our priestly duty. We've been called as priests to proclaim his excellencies. So therefore, if we are not proclaiming the excellencies of him who called us, we're not fulfilling our duty as priest.

We're not doing what God has saved us for. And so, therefore, the work of evangelism is the work of every Christian. I said earlier, the role of the priest in the Old Testament, part of their role was to proclaim the law.

And then to deal with the fact that God's people have broken the law, so the sacrifices that they may be in the presence of God, that they may meet with God.

The New Testament is really not all that different, is it? We still, as it were, can proclaim the law of God. And we acknowledge that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.

[44 : 54] No one's measured up to that standard. And at the same time, we proclaim that there is a sacrifice for sin. Our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And that through him, all who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ are saved. And so, just as the priests proclaim the law, we proclaim, ultimately, the excellencies of him who saved us, whom he called us.

Romans 15, 16 says, To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

So, Paul's speaking of his own ministry, but he's saying, My service to God as a priest is to offer up a sacrifice, and what is that sacrifice he offers? The Gentiles.

Now, my translation, what Paul's saying is this. God's called me to be a priest, and part of my role as priest is to share the gospel, and the sacrifice I offer up to him, that's a pleasing aroma to God, is those who are saved by the preaching of the word.

[46 : 06] What a great offering. Wouldn't it be great to share the gospel, as part of your service to the Lord, and then to offer up to him a sacrifice of, now, that doesn't mean kill them, okay, but the sacrifice of their salvation, those who have been saved through the sharing of the gospel.

And even as we do so, we know that it's not ultimately a work we accomplish. God's Spirit works in them to save them. It gets easier and easier for us, doesn't it? I'm sorry if evangelism is sounding too easy at this point.

You tell the essences, you proclaim them, God works in the Spirit, and then you get to offer up the believer to God, as a sacrifice to him, as something that's honoring and pleasing to him.

Discipleship is a form of service to God, where we edify brothers and sisters, we may rebuke them, but we're checking in on one another, we're doing the one another, even that, I think some of what will be addressed in our ladies' book study coming up.

Prayer, Revelation 8, 3, and another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer. Think of the role of the priest to bring incense in. With the golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne.

[47 : 34] So just like the Old Testament priests that carried the names of God's people on their shoulders, and upon their chest, our priestly service is to go to God with the names of others upon our hearts and pray for them, to intercede for them.

And then I want to encourage you that this is all to be done continually. Hebrews 13, 15. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Continually offer it up. In other words, we're not occasional priests, are we? We're always serving God as priest.

If that's going to be sustained, we need daily communion with him. We need to meet with God in his presence. But I want to encourage you that we think, not as, well, I have my time, and then I have the time where I'm going to be a priest.

It's not a job we clock into and clock out of. It's not a one day a week job on Sunday. Christian, God has called you to serve him. And I want to spend more time on this, but I'm kind of out of time.

[48 : 52] But let me just say that none of this is possible apart from Jesus Christ being our high priest. We serve Christ who is our high priest. His sacrifice is what enables us to be able to serve God as priest.

None of us could stand in the presence of God apart from that. Now I want to encourage you, Christian, press on in your service. By the power of the Spirit in you.

But I also want to challenge, if any of you in this room don't know God, then know that, in many ways, what I've said here doesn't apply to you. God has called you, He's made you to glorify Him, and you're doing a lousy job at it.

But you are not yet a priest of God. And in Psalms it says that God despises the sacrifice of the wicked, the unsaved.

Even their sacrifice He despises. And it says, but God hears the prayers of His people. And I want to encourage you, there is no other approach that we can have to God apart from Jesus Christ.

[49 : 59] We have to look to Him by faith as our sacrifice, as that Paschal Lamb, that Passover Lamb for us, and place our faith in Him that we might become priests.

And then, when we do, know this. I don't know how that sounded to you. Maybe that sounds like a lot that God's called us to. But never discount the fact that, Christian, there is no greater privilege in this life than to be called by God to be a priest in His kingdom.

Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You that You have counted us as worthy of serving You as priests.

And Lord, even as we say that, that sounds so contrary to what we know to be true of us. But our worthiness comes not from who we are in and of ourselves, but of our Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom we've been united, in whose righteousness we have been clothed, that we might serve You.

Lord, we pray for all who are in this room, that they would place their faith and trust in Jesus. Lord, we pray for those who are saved in this room, that we would not be content to let anyone leave today, to whom we have not yet proclaimed the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness, into Your marvelous light.

[51 : 24] Lord, help us to serve You, that You may be glorified in our life, that all our lives might be a spiritual worship and service to You. We pray this in Christ's name.

Amen.