

# Consecration of the priests

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[ 0 : 00 ]      sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. Then you shall take the garments and put on Aaron the coat and the robe of the ephod and the ephod and the breast piece and gird them with the skillfully woven band of the ephod.

And you shall set the turban on their head and put the holy crown on the turban. You shall take the anointing oil and pour it on their head on his head and anoint him.

Then you shall bring his sons and put coats on them and you shall gird Aaron and his sons with sashes and bind caps on them and the priesthood shall be theirs by a statute forever.

Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons. Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting. Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull.

Then you shall kill the bull before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And you shall take part of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger and the rest of the blood you shall pour out at the base of the altar.

[ 1 : 14 ]      And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them and burn them on the altar.

But the flesh of the bull and its skin and its dung you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering. Then you shall take one of the rams and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram.

And you shall kill the ram and shall take its blood and throw it against the sides of the altar. Then you shall cut the ram into pieces and wash its entrails and its legs and put them with its pieces and its head and burn the whole ram on the altar.

It is a burnt offering to the Lord. It is a pleasing aroma of food offering to the Lord. You shall take the other ram and you shall kill the ram and take part of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tips of the right ears of his sons and on the thumbs of the right hands and on the great toes of the right feet and throw the rest of the blood against the sides of the altar.

Then you shall take part of the blood that is on the altar and of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and on his sons garments with him.

[ 2 : 44 ]      He and his garments shall be holy and his sons and his sons garments with him. Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we ask again for your assistance with the opening of your word right now.

Lord, we have said before that these things seem very far removed from us, even gruesome in this instance. Lord, help us to understand the spiritual significance of your word.

Lord, help us to know why in your sovereignty and your providence, you deem this to be something that your people needed to know and hear.

And so, Lord, make us receptive to your word. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Well, we've been working our way through the book of Exodus, and we've looked at the furniture in the tabernacle, and we've looked some of the garments or the clothing of the priests, especially the high priests.

And now, today, we look at the process for ordaining Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. And what we're seeing, really, is the very beginning of the priesthood.

[ 4 : 04 ] This is the first time that Israel has had priests, and this is how it all began. And we see, much as we've seen with the other descriptions that have been given to us for the furniture and other things, that it must be done precisely as God has said.

It has to be followed exactly. I didn't want to go through the whole thing, but if you want to, you can look at Leviticus chapter 8, and you can see God actually instituting these things and how it came about.

I'm sorry, God's instituting it here. You can see them implementing it, putting it into practice. And what we see in Leviticus 8 is almost the same thing word for word with what we have here. And so a couple of things I want us to see in this passage.

First, we see that they are to consecrate them. And consecrate really means to make something holy or to set it apart for holy use. So if Aaron and his sons are going to serve God, they have to be consecrated.

Again, set apart to God for holy use in the tabernacle. And so there are a few steps to this process. We see in verse 4 that they had to be ceremonially cleansed.

[ 5 : 17 ] They had to basically take a bath there at the doorway to the inner tabernacle, the place of meeting. That's right outside the most holy place or the holy place.

And right before we get to the holy of holies further in. So this is the outside to the holy place at the entranceway. They had to have a full body washing at the doorway.

Now, just a heads up that, and again, I know we talked about this a little bit last week with the prescription of the underwear and the fact that they were not to expose themselves.

We assume the same is going on here. Later, he's going to describe clothing them and the underwear is not mentioned. So we have to assume that they were at least covered in this process, but they were to wash or be washed at the entrance of the tabernacle.

And again, this is for purification for the office. They are being cleansed and being prepared to enter into this office. In fact, later on, they're going to, when they go into the holy place or the holy of holies, each time they go, they are to wash themselves.

[ 6 : 24 ] But when they do so, they're only to wash their hands and feet. We have an example of that in Exodus 30, verse 19, just the next chapter, if you want to glance there. But in the future, it's just wash off your hands and feet.

It's a ceremonial, symbolic type of cleansing there. But in this instance, they're to be fully washed and prepared to serve as priests.

We also see in verse 4, they're told, you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. They're to bring them near, they're to bring them close to where God is.

That bring them to the entrance or bring them near is really a technical term for presenting something to the Lord. They are to be presented before God. And then there are to be three grain offerings we see in verse 2.

Unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers smeared with oil. You shall make them a fine wheat flour. And so, even at the very beginning, there's this offering of grain.

[ 7 : 29 ] And it talks about ordaining them to the office. And we're probably somewhat familiar with ordaining someone to an office. We think of even in our church, your elders and deacons are ordained to office.

Often that will involve, at the very least, publicly them being brought before the church, the other elders or deacons laying their hands upon them. We would pray for them.

There's even a pledge that we would take to the office. But it's to place someone in office. It's to set them apart for an office. And that's just 28.41. So what we saw last week, it says, And you shall put them on Aaron, your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them that they may serve me as priest.

And so, three parts of that, anointing, ordaining, and consecrating them. And then after they've been washed and we've had this grain offering, they were to be dressed in clothing.

And that's really the clothing that's already been discussed in chapter 28. We've gone through and looked at those parts of the clothing. And then verse 7, they're to be anointed. You shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him.

[ 8 : 47 ] I wanted to spend some time. I think it's Psalm 133. Forgive me if I'm wrong. But I had it in here and took it out for the sake of time. But it speaks of how pleasant it is for that oil running down on the head of Aaron.

And so, this anointing oil that they're to place on Aaron's head was a fragrant. It was fragrances mixed with olive oil. So a fragrant oil. And it was placed on the head really to represent sanctification of the Holy Spirit to the office.

The work of the Holy Spirit upon these people. We see this not only for the high priest and the priest. But also, we see the same thing happen at different times for the prophets and the king.

Are all anointed in very similar ways with oil. And so, for example, Elisha and David were two who we see anointed with oil in similar ways to this.

And so, this was a repeated process to set them apart. And this anointing really would symbolize God's blessing upon them. And often, maybe always, be tied to the idea of the Holy Spirit being given to them for their service in the work.

[ 10 : 00 ] And the recipe, we might say, for this anointing oil is given specifically in chapter 30, our next chapter. Verses 22 through 25 and verses 30 through 33, we see this.

The Lord said to Moses, Take the finest spices of litwood myrrh, 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon, half as much, that is, 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, 24 and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hint of olive oil, 25...

I'm sorry, that's the verse number, sorry. And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil, blended as by the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. And then further down in verse 30, You shall anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.

And you shall say to the people of Israel, This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person. And you shall make no other like it in composition.

It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people. And so there we have the recipe for it.

[ 11 : 19 ] They all knew what the recipe was. You can see there from that myrrh and sweet-smelling cinnamon. It's the best of the spices. Aromatic cane. Aromatic cane. This would have been something like a cologne or perfume that would have been placed upon them with olive oil as the base.

And so they're washed. They're anointed with the sweet-smelling oil. But notice also that it's never to be used in any other instance. This specific formula, or anything even close to it, was not to be used on anyone but the priest.

Again, there would have been a different formula for the king and the prophet. But the point was, this was not for ordinary use. This wasn't something you could have. I think about if you guys have been in Walmart, and just there's one whole aisle of body washes.

Right? We have choices of thousands of body washes. And if you're like me, I kind of go through sometimes and just smell, trying to see which one's the best one. And a lot of them smell a lot alike.

There's different varieties, different brands. In some ways, this is like that, but this is something reserved specifically for the priest for a holy purpose. To set them apart to the office.

[ 12 : 31 ] To ordain and anoint them. And again, it would have been tied with the giving of the Spirit for the work. Further down, I think this still fits with the consecration.

Verses 20 and 21 talk some of what happens to the blood in relation to the priest. They have some blood placed on the extremities. We see in verse 20, the right earlobe, the right thumb, and the right big toe.

And really, again, it represents their total cleansing from impurity. These are the extremities, the outside of the body, what might come in contact with other things. And they're purified. And then in verse 21, we see that there's oil mixed with the blood of the sacrifice that's then sprinkled to them.

So they've been washed. They're clean. They put the anointing oil on them. They look good. They smell good. It's not that dissimilar from some of the process that you guys went through this morning.

Getting ready for church. You wash. Maybe you put on some cologne or perfume. So you'd smell a little nicer. But then I assume none of us went any further than that.

[ 13 : 36 ] And they smeared some blood on the ear and on the thumb and on the toe after being cleansed. It didn't defile them. It further purified them.

And then finally, they would take oil and some of the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it on them. So here they are. They've been cleaned. They've got good smelling stuff on them.

And by the time it's all over, them and the garments have had olive oil, which, you know, oil doesn't come out, right? And then blood sprinkled all over them, speckled all over these holy garments.

I think even as we were talking about the ephod and the robe and some things like that, how we talked about this, the clothing and what it might have looked like. And we tend not to give much thought to the fact that these garments would have been sprinkled with blood.

Let's talk about the sacrifice that's described here. Now, by the time this is over, by the time even we get to verse 9, even as we talked about verses 20, 21, by the time it's over, the priests looked the part, didn't they?

[ 14 : 52 ] They looked like what they should look like. They even smelled like what they should smell like. They were exactly as God had wanted them prepared. But there was still a problem, wasn't there? They were still sinners.

Even though they've had these outward consecration, anointing, they've been prepared and set apart for the office, but they're still sinners. So what has to be done? Well, for them to be fully consecrated, something had to be done with their sin.

Something had to take place to address the problem of their sin. And so we see a number of offerings or sacrifices being given here. The first is the bull of the sin offering.

Leviticus 8.2 actually gives some more proper names to it. I said you could see Leviticus 8, the whole process of what they did. But this is the bull of the sin offering. And Aaron and his sons had to lay their hands upon the head of the bull.

Now that's to symbolize a transference of their sin to the representative animal. So when they place their hands on the bull, they're saying this bull is representing me.

[ 16 : 03 ] This bull is in my place. My sin is upon this bull. And it's a public recognition that the animal is substituting for the person.

What's about to take place for the animal is what I deserve. I should be the one sacrificed for my sin. But in my place, this bull will be sacrificed.

And so we're reminded as we see this happen for Aaron and the priests that this is what should happen for every sinner. The wages of sin is death.

And all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And so what's symbolically taking place here is true for all of us. In God's mercy, he allows a substitute.

It's not them. God's anointing and consecrating them for the office that they may serve him. And they can do a lot better job serving him alive than dead.

[ 17 : 08 ] And so they don't die. Because God is merciful and allows sinful men to serve him. And I think of this every time that I read this.

Just what it would have been like to have your hand on the bull. And it says, and then the throat of the bull is cut right there under you. I know some, by now even years ago, we watched dispatches from the front.

Missionary videos here during Sunday school. And I remember this one in particular that shows a bull being sacrificed. And how it was such that I think a lot of people turned away.

It's not something you want to see. It's not something I want to belabor in talking about. But I do want you to consider the visual aspects of that. That your hand's on that when you see the blood spill out.

And the thought that would go through your head is, that should have been me. That should have been me. That's what I deserve. And then some of that blood they would take and place on the horns of the bronze altar that we spoke of a few weeks ago.

[ 18 : 27 ] And then some parts of it were to be burned. We see in verse 13. You shall take all the fat that covers the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them and burn them on the altar.

Now, there's two possibilities that are going on here. That word fat in the Hebrew kind of means, think of the fatness of the land. You've heard that phrase. The fat being spoken of here means the choicest parts.

Now, that's probably not the choicest parts we would think of in terms of the fat around the entrails or the kidneys. Or the fat on the long lobe of the liver.

There's one member of our family who will sometimes eat liver. And the rest of us kind of, it's not for us. But these are the good parts.

These aren't the leftovers that are being dealt with here. In fact, he talks about what happens with the leftovers. The leftovers are going to be carried outside the gate. And to be burned as a whole burnt offering to the Lord.

[ 19 : 30 ] And with it, the dung. But these are the good parts that will be burned here on the altar as a sacrifice to the Lord. One other possibility even with that, and again, it does mean the best parts.

But at the same time, the understanding is that other cultures in that area would worship their false gods by removing those parts and using them for processes of divination. Trying to understand what is God's will based on what the parts look like.

Maybe the way the veins are. But that was not to be for God's people. They would be burned. And again, partly maybe to keep them from practicing the same practices of those in other countries.

Now the rest of the bulls taken outside the camp. This is the first time that phrase outside the camp is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. And I'm going to talk some about the significance of it in a little bit.

But you're probably already aware of that. But the idea of the outside the camp, it's a place that's cursed. It's a place where you go if you're ceremonially unclean.

[ 20 : 41 ] You can't be... Not only remember the levels we've talked about before. You have the Holy of Holies. The high priest goes in once a year. You have the holy place where the priest minister. You have the outer gates, which other people can enter into.

And it's where the priest minister. But you had to be ceremonially clean to enter into that. Later on with the temple, you're going to have the outer courts that the Gentiles could enter.

Then you have the city. And then you have that which is outside the gates. Those people who were cast outside the camp or the gates would be those who couldn't even be in the presence of the town unless they, in some way, make others unclean.

And so we have examples of this. The leper was to live outside the camp as long as he had signs of the disease. While he had the infection, he had to be outside. We also see examples of a blasphemer and someone who was collecting sticks on the Sabbath.

Both of them were carried outside the camp and then stoned to death, put to death. But their death was to happen outside the camp because they had made themselves ceremonially unclean.

[ 21 : 52 ] And this is also the place where the refuge, the trash, was taken. And so this is a cursed place. It's a place for that which is diseased and cast out and unclean.

Later, the idea of casting someone outside the camp was to really, I mean, what we might think of as communication. It was to remove them from God's people. It's to say publicly they don't belong to the people of God.

They are unclean. They're not part of us. Now, I want to spend some time later on speaking on Jesus, but I can't help but touch on that here.

You're probably familiar with the wording that's used, but because of our sin, Jesus suffered those same words outside the camp. Hebrews 13, 11 through 13 says the following.

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. That's exactly what we're looking at.

[ 22 : 59 ] They're talking about the same thing we're seeing right now. So, Jesus, so, therefore, because that's true, so, Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. And so, Jesus is put to death outside the camp.

Why? Why? Why? He's sinless. If there's anything that's ceremonially clean and holy, it's Jesus. So, why would he be sacrificed outside the camp?

It's the same thing we've just seen with the bulls. The bull. And then later, we're going to see the same thing with the ram. But the priest placed their hands on the head of the bull and the ram.

And there's this transference of their guilt and their sin placed upon the bull. And there's this transference of their sin. Temporarily. The sin again. It needs to be repeated over and over again.

[ 24 : 08 ] But the same is true for Christ. That he took upon himself our sin. Our sin, it's as if we were by faith placing our hands upon the head of Christ. It's transferring our sin to him so that he became sin.

It's what we're told in God's word. He wasn't a sinner. But he became, because of our sin, ceremonially unclean. He's cast out of the city.

He's put to death because of our sin being placed upon him. He endured the death that we deserved outside the camp. He's sinless, but he suffered the curse for us.

He is our substitute for all who would place their faith in Jesus Christ. All who would, by faith, place their hand upon his head. That he would take upon himself their sin.

He is their substitute. And as I said, we see something very similar with the ram. There's one ram that's a whole burnt offering.

[ 25 : 13 ] Again, Leviticus 8, 18 talks about that. And we see this in verse 15 of our text. It was a pleasing aroma to the Lord. Now, I don't know about you, but you guys know that I smoke meat and like making barbecue.

Our whole family loves the smell of hickory and applewood smoking. The meat mixed with that. It's a pleasant aroma to me.

But something more is being said about God here. He's not just saying, the meat smelled good when it was cooking. Remember, the whole thing is completely burned up.

There's a point at which you cook it too long and no one wants to eat that. The smell coming off is no longer pleasant. The dung was also burned with the animal.

Haven't tried that as a barbecue technique, but I don't imagine it in any way improves the aroma. What's pleasant to God about the aroma is that it is a sacrifice for their sins.

[ 26 : 17 ] He finds it pleasant because atonement is being made for the sins of his people. And then the third animal sacrifices a second ram.

That's a peace offering, we're told, in verse 19 of Leviticus 8. I'm sorry, in verse 19 of our text. In verse 22 of Leviticus 8, it's called a ram of ordination.

So this is really for purification to further purify them and make them ready for it. And in all these cases, the animals had to be perfect without defect. And their lack of blemish really highlights the blemish of the sins of the people that's placed on them.

They're not being killed because they're not worthy. They're not being put to death because this is the runt, the one that's no good for food. They're being put to death because of the sins of the people that has been placed on them here of the priest.

And I thought about as this happens, three sacrifices have taken place. We've seen what's happened with the blood. But there would have been blood everywhere by the time this is over.

[ 27 : 33 ] John Curit says, verse 21. So let's just refresh our memory when we get to verse 21. Then you shall take part of the blood that is on the altar and of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and his sons garments with him.

He and his garments shall be holy and his sons and his sons garments with him. And even back in verse 20, take part of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear. We talked about the thumb, the toe, and then throw the rest of the blood against the sides of the altar.

Probably haven't done this with blood, but you ever thrown water up against the side of a building or something? I know even when we wash cars sometimes, the leftover water in the bucket, I toss it over and it splashes everywhere once it hits the car.

John Curit said, blood now covers all aspects of the scene. The horns, sides, and base of the altar.

The priest's right earlobes, thumbs, and big toes. And the priest themselves, along with their clothing. All have been purified and set apart unto service to God.

[ 28 : 42 ] And so by the time it's all over, this is a very bloody scene. The altar's covered in blood. The ground, the base of the altar, the ground by the altar, covered in blood.

The priests are covered in blood. And invariably, there's going to be blood that has been spilled elsewhere as they've gone about the sacrificial process, including cutting one of the rams into pieces. It's a bloody scene.

Now my guess is that makes a lot of us uncomfortable. We don't like thinking too much about that. But I think it's important as we think about this that they were reminded of the cost of their sin.

This blood is because of my sin. This animal died in my place. Hebrews 9.22 gives us some insight into this. It says, under the law, almost everything is purified with blood.

And without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. There has to be a substitute. Blood has to be shed if there's going to be forgiveness of sins. So what does that mean for us today?

[ 29 : 46 ] What about the priesthood today? Well, first let me say that there's not an office of priest today.

God doesn't set people apart to be priests in the sense of that holy office. God does call people to the office of elder or overseer or pastor. Those words are used synonymously.

Or bishop. But the office of priest is not used in the New Testament church. So what of the priesthood? Well, first we need to see that Jesus is our high priest.

God has given Christ as a high priest. If you've been here in past weeks, I think we've seen this the last four or five weeks. But Jesus is our high priest. He's also the sin offering that atoned for our sin at the cross.

Remember what we saw in Hebrews 9? Under the law, almost everything is purified with blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. What's true for the priest and what's true for Israel is true for us today.

[ 30 : 54 ] Apart from the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins. So if we're to have forgiveness of sins, there has to be blood that's shed. And we see that that is exactly what Jesus does. He is the high priest.

And yet he's also the sacrifice. Ephesians 5.2 says, And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us.

A fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. A fragrant offering and sacrifice. Those are the two elements we've seen already in the consecration, the anointing of the priest.

Their purification was based upon them being an offering. Both a burnt offering as well as a sin offering.



A sacrifice. And then a little bit further in Ephesians 5. Verses 25 and 26. It says, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

[ 32 : 00 ] So as we move on, we see another reference back to what we see here. What happened for the high priest is also true for us. Husbands are to love their wives the way Christ loved the church.

And how did he love the church? Well, he gave himself up for the church. And sanctified the church by cleansing them by the washing of water with the word.

Just as the high priest is taken to the doorway of the place of meeting. The tent of meeting.

And they're washed there. They're cleansed. So too, that's true for every Christian. They have been washed. They've been cleansed. And it says, By the washing of water with the word.

God has sanctified us. He's purified us by the death of Jesus, by his sacrifice. And then by his word, he continues to sanctify and cleanse us for his service.

[ 33 : 06 ] And so, as I've said, we see Jesus as our high priest. This is given to us that we might better understand him. But we're also encouraged, as we think upon Jesus, that we lay our hands on him by faith.

As I spoke of earlier. That our guilt and our sin would be transferred to Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 is probably the best demonstration of this.

It says, For our sake he made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. He made him to be sin, who knew no sin.

By faith that's true for each and every one of us. That our sin is placed upon Christ. He who knew no sin becomes your sin. And then likewise, as he goes to the cross, your sin is atoned for.

And unlike the sacrifices of the animals that had to be repeated year after year after year. Hebrews tells us that Christ is a superior sacrifice.

[ 34 : 14 ] He is a once for all time sacrifice. He atoned for all sin. The blood of the bulls and goats covered sin and allowed God to temporarily overlook the sin.

Until even those priests, even Aaron, would be sanctified and purified by the blood of Jesus Christ. Who he looked to in faith.

Though he had not yet come. His hope was in that coming Messiah. So too, we look to Christ. And it's his death that takes the place of our death. It's our sin that's placed upon him.

He is our atonement. And the other side of that is, Jesus gives us his righteousness. He perfectly obeyed the Father. And that perfect obedience is given to us.

So that God the Father looks on us, not in our sin. And I want to say, in a way, even superior to Aaron and the priest. He looks upon us and he sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us.

[ 35 : 15 ] When we think about Jesus and his work as a high priest, Jesus' baptism.

Remember when Jesus goes to be baptized and John the Baptist says, Wait a minute. You've got this mixed up. You should be baptizing me. And I think the undercurrent is, Because I'm a sinner.

I need to be cleansed, just like all these other people. Not the other way around. It should not be John the Baptist baptizing Jesus. Jesus was clean already.

So why did Jesus undergo baptism? Well, I think Jesus' baptism was at the beginning of his ministry and really an ordination to the ministry.

It is a ceremonial cleansing. He had not yet taken upon himself our sin, but he's being prepared for the office of being our high priest. And just like those priests, he had to be prepared for the office, consecrated to the office by this washing in water of baptism.

[ 36 : 27 ] For his ministry is high priest, not because he's done clean. And then what happens at his baptism? Luke 3, 21 through 22. The heavens were opened.

And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven. You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased. What happens there?

Jesus is anointed. Not with oil symbolically like the high priest to symbolize that the Spirit's being given to them that they may minister before God.

But the Holy Spirit himself descends in bodily form like a dove upon Jesus. People witness the Holy Spirit descending upon Christ. And then accompanied with that is the proclamation by God the Father that this is his Son in whom he's pleased.

This is one who's fit to serve as our high priest. He's been ceremonially cleansed for the office. He's been anointed with the Holy Spirit. He's been called pleasing by God himself.

[ 37 : 41 ] In John 17 we have the high priestly prayer where Jesus intercedes for the sake of his people. And in verse 19 of John 17 in the midst of that prayer he says and for their sake I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in the truth.

He's consecrated. He's cleansed. He's anointed. He's gone through the ceremonial purification. These are all the tasks of the priest so that his people may be sanctified on earth.

And that really leads to a further thought about the priesthood. As we think about the priesthood today who are God's priests today? We've already seen that Aaron's representative of Christ.

Our great high priest. But God's word also speaks to us of the priesthood of all believers. Luther's the one who kind of coined that phrase the priesthood of all believers.

But we see it repeated throughout God's word. 1 Peter 2.9 But you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellent deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

[ 38 : 59 ] Peter here speaking of the church as a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession this is exactly what Israel was intended to be.

God's preparing Israel to become that. And yet they turn away. And God still does it with a new Israel a new people of God including Gentiles and Jews in that people but he makes them into a priesthood a nation a people who comprise completely a priest.

In Israel they'd have that one tribe of Levi that would be the priests and those who would serve in the temple. But in the new Israel we are all a part of that tribe. We're all those who are serving God in that way.

And we see the same thing repeated in Revelation at least three times we see this speaking of God's people. 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. And then Revelation 5 9-10 And they sing a new song saying Worthy are you to take the scroll and to 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 have made them a kingdom and priest to our God and they shall reign on the earth.

[ 40 : 36 ] Gentiles people from every tribe tongue and nation purified and made priests. 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.

And so the church today God's people we are all priests before him. What about our consecration to the office?

How are we prepared for this office? Well much like Christ we symbolically are washed in baptism. We're clothed with Christ's righteousness not the outward garments not the ephod not the turban with the holy crown we are clothed with Jesus Christ we're united to him and so we don't just have that crown that says holy to the Lord we are holy to the Lord in Christ Jesus and they were anointed with the Holy Spirit 2 Corinthians 1 21 and 22 and it is God who establishes us 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 as far as we can discern in the Old Testament God anointed people with his spirit for specific works at specific times and even removed that spirit from them at various times when they sinned

David who had witnessed what happened with Saul prays in Psalm 51 take not your Holy Spirit from me but in the new covenant all of God's people are given his spirit we are all anointed for the work of service as priests to our God and then we have the sacrifice the substitution we've already seen is Jesus Christians are consecrated to the service of God by the blood of Jesus Hebrews 9 13-14 and I think this is important as we think about this sacrifice that we see here of the blood of bulls and goats it says 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 to serve the living God if those things could prepare the priest for their office and their service how much more so the blood of Jesus Christ and what does it say purify our conscience from dead works to what purpose to serve to serve the living God

Hebrews 10 verse 10 and by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all and again in verse 14 a few verses later for by a single offering he is perfected for all time those who are being sanctified and so that sacrifice a one time sacrifice is perfected for all time all those who have faith in Jesus Christ and it's for a purpose that we might serve him and I think that's really important as we consider this that this sacrifice this consecration that we have undergone is for the purpose that we might serve God that we might be consecrated to his service Romans 12 1 says 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 he's consecrated us he sets us apart to be priests we're to offer sacrifices and then what are those sacrifices to be well it's not the state when you get home it's not our pets or any animals we have we don't have to sacrifice animals in those way in that way instead what do we do what is our sacrifice the sacrifice for sin has been taken care of and so instead we offer ourselves up as a living sacrifice to God holy and pleasing to him and it says which is our spiritual worship what does worship look like it's an offering up of ourselves and then we also know that this is true in terms of our service all that we do is to be for God and for his glory and I've talked about us being a kingdom of priests

[ 45 : 33 ] I want to say that doesn't mean that God doesn't distinguish offices we know in the New Testament church there's an office of elder and deacon and they have roles that are given to them so let me just clarify the fact that we're all priests doesn't mean that we all have the same role but it does mean that we've all been set aside for service to God we all have a responsibility to serve our God and so part of that is just our everyday life we live our life as a living sacrifice to God it's the fact that all of life is to be worship everything we do is to be for God and for his glory we're to worship him in it but it's also specific service we've been spending a lot of time in Sunday school and we're going to continue to spend some weeks talking about evangelism evangelism is one way that we serve God we share the gospel with others we bring others into his kingdom because we share with God the father the love he has for the sinner remember we've read two different verses already today that said in love

Christ gave himself up for his church in love and so in love we serve both love for God and love for others discipling we talked a lot in the church about discipling one another we seek to edify to build one another up there's even times where we have to rebuke one another and address sin we were in the elders meeting yesterday and I won't disclose anything hopefully that will get me in trouble with the elders but I was just struck by this shared there's been someone who we've been addressing a sin issue with and they haven't been at church and unknown to some of the men in our church they just saw this person hasn't been there where have they been and so three men got together and they went to his house where you been brother come back and of course that meant that he had to share some of what was going on I imagine and they called him to repentance we didn't have to tell them that we didn't have to say look we want you to go talk to so and so there's an issue going on there can't give you details but go talk to they noticed someone wasn't there and they sought him out that's part of what being a

Christian is serving in the church being a part of this body it's praying for one another and I'll say again if we're going to pray for each other we have to know each other we have to be involved in each other's life we have to ask sometimes difficult questions but we're to pray for one another one that I don't speak much of but it's also giving it's our financial serving to God in fact listen to Philippians 4 18 Paul says I've 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 a fragrant offering a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God that's the words of our passage this is the sacrificial system what is it that they gave through Epaphroditus they sent money to the church to help those who were in need to meet a need especially with a famine but they gave to the church and he says it's a fragrant offering and a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God hospitality

I worry sometimes that as a church I don't think we're very hospitable on Sundays people come in we should be welcoming to people this should be a place where they feel welcome but I think if that's not happening here I imagine it's not happening in many of our homes either that we're having not just church members but having neighbors over coworkers over that we might build relationship with them with the hope and prayer that one day God might work in their heart to save them and if they don't if nothing more than we've showed them the loving Christ in our service to them I want to end with a bit of encouragement from Hebrews chapter 10 verse 22 Hebrews 10 verse 22 says let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water we've taught some about our drawing near remember that's the same wording that's used for the priest when they're brought to the holy place to the entrance to the tent of meeting to meet with God we too are to draw near to the presence of

God with a true heart and full assurance of faith I've taught some about this in prior weeks but there's no reason that we ought to have confidence to enter into God's presence to walk into the holy of holies except for one thing with our hearts sprinkled clean from the evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water and we've already seen how did God wash us with pure water that pure water is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from our sin that consecrates us that makes us holy and so brothers and sisters I want to encourage you to serve the Lord as a priest knowing that you've been washed and purified in Christ Jesus that God looks upon you and says holy to Yahweh but I want to encourage any of you who don't know Christ Jesus to look to him in faith to understand that much as that bull and that ram was sacrificed for the sins of the priest you are a sinner you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and your only hope that you don't face the judgment that you deserve

[ 51 : 46 ] I even think of the whole burnt offering and we think of the description of hell all of us deserve hell but God in his grace and mercy has sent Christ to be our substitute to atone for our sins and so in faith place your hand upon Christ put your hand on his head know that he takes upon himself your sin so that you are cleansed and made holy to the Lord I pray that would be true for you today let's pray together dear heavenly father we thank you that you have not left us in our sin but you have provided a holy sacrifice Lord we ask that you would consecrate us from our sin you would make us to be holy Lord we know that we have been perfected and yet Lord we are being made perfect we pray for that process that you would wash us with your word

Lord help us also to serve you as priest that we would know that our life much like these priests their life was given into your service so too as ours Lord as we've acknowledged earlier and as we've prayed already Lord we are a people who are given to so many other things we've been distracted we have sought things that never satisfy we have drunk from broken cisterns Lord we pray that we would go to the fountain head that all who are here today would know that their sin has been placed upon the head of our savior Jesus Christ and that Lord they would never face the curse the judgment that we deserve for our sin because Christ has already taken that upon himself we pray this all in his name amen please stand for our closing hymn it's number 533

I am thine O Lord it is a hymn of consecration and like Hebrews 10 22 calls us to draw near to God your quizzers and like Phil and like Jesus as you heard and like when he is alone in his mind my gloom and like man and like yeah that's his favorite would not Fed I know, Lord, I've heard my voice, I've been told my love to be.

I long to rise in the arms of Him, as we close turn on to Thee. From here, we are blessed, Lord, we are lost, where Thou art's mine.

From here, we are the purest core, through our gracious pleading side.

[ 55 : 00 ] God, you bring me now to the service, Lord, provide a power of praise divine. Let my soul alone, this day, and so, where I will be lost in mine.

From here, we are blessed, Lord, we are lost, where Thou art's mine. From here, we are blessed, Lord, through our gracious pleading side.

For the glory, I'll sing, all our happy Lord, I know I stand. When I kneel in prayer with Thee, I know I will live as friend with friend.

Come here, we are blessed, Lord, through our gracious pleading side. From here, we are blessed, Lord, through our gracious pleading side.

There are gifts of love that I have not known, till I cross the narrow sea. There are heights of joy that any of our dreams, where I rest in peace with Thee.

[ 56 : 34 ] Come here, we are blessed, Lord, through our gracious pleading side. Come here, we are blessed, Lord, through our gracious pleading side.

Now 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.

Amen.