

Aaron & His Sons: The Holy Priesthood

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the universal priesthood of believers, where every child of God has the privilege and responsibility to minister unto God.

Duration: 1:15:13

Scripture: Exodus 19:1-6, Exodus 28:1-4, Exodus 28:40-43, Ezekiel 44:15-24

Topics: "Priesthood"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the qualities of a man after God's own heart. He emphasizes the importance of being what God wants us to be, a man in Christ, in order for God to work through us. The speaker then explores three aspects of being a man after God's own heart: standing before God to present the fact and the blood, entering into God's sanctuary to minister and keep His charge, and teaching God's people to discern between holy and profane. The sermon references Exodus chapter 19 to highlight God's call for the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Exodus chapter 19. Exodus chapter 19. We'll read from verse 1 through verse 6. Exodus chapter 19 verse 1. In the third month after the departure of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

They departed from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and encamped in the wilderness, and Israel encamped there before the mountain. And Moses went up to God, and Jehovah called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thou shalt say, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. And now, if you will hearken to My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then shall it be My own possession out of all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine.

And ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak to the children of Israel. The same book, Chapter 28, Exodus 28.

We'll read from verse 1 through verse 4. 28, verse 1. And thou shalt take thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may serve Me as priest, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamah, Aaron's sons. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for ornament. And thou shalt speak with all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the

spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to hallow him, that he may serve Me as priest.

And these are the garments which they shall make, a breastplate, and an epault, and a cloak, and a checkered vest, a turban, and a girdle. And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother and his sons, that he may serve Me as priest. Same chapter, verse 40.

And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make vests, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and high caps shalt thou make for them, for glory and for ornament. And thou shalt clothe with them Aaron thy brother and his sons with him, and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and hallow them, that they may serve Me as priest. And thou shalt make them leaning trousers to cover the flesh of nakedness.

From the loins even to the hips shall they reach. And they shall be upon Aaron and his sons when they enter into the tent of meeting, or when they come near through the altar to serve in the sanctuary, that they may not bear iniquity and die, an everlasting statue for him and his seed after him. And finally the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel chapter 44. Ezekiel chapter 44. We begin with verse 15.

Ezekiel 44, verse 15. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zedek, that keep the charge, kept the charge of My sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall approach unto Me to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to present unto Me the fat and the blood, said the Lord Jehovah. They shall enter into My sanctuary, and they shall approach unto My table to minister unto Me, and they shall keep My charge.

And it shall come to pass, when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments, and no wool shall come upon them when they minister in the gates of the inner court and towards the house. They shall have linen tires upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins. They shall not gird on anything that causes sweat.

Verse 20. Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long, they shall duly pull their heads. Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court.

And they shall not take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away, but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that is the widow of a priest. And they shall teach My people the difference between holy and profane, and cause them to discern between unclean and clean. And in controversy they shall stand to judge.

They shall judge it according to My judgments, and they shall keep My law and My statutes in all My solemnities, and they shall hallow My Sabbath. Let us look to the Lord in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we do worship Thee, that we may come to Thee to hear Thy word.

We ask Thee, O Lord, that we may not only hear Thy word, but we may hear Thy voice. We ask that Thou will speak to us by Thy Holy Spirit. We pray that this morning we may meet Thee through Thy word.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, Amen. We have been considering for some time using different persons in the Old Testament to find out what is the man that is after God's own heart. We know that God is after the man of His own heart.

And no doubt, that man is our Lord Jesus. And all those who are patterned after the Lord Jesus. Indeed, God has to work lots of works in our lives in order to bring us to be that man who is after His own heart.

The eight persons in the Old Testament are persons we find in the book of Genesis. Show to us that how God works patiently, incessantly, until finally He has the one whom He wants. Now that is our being.

Because God always emphasizes our being more than our doing. Or to put it in another way, our being is unless God gets us, He is not able to use us. First of all, we must be what He wants us to be.

A man in Christ. A man after God's own heart. And then, without doubt, out of such a man, God is able to do the work that He intend to do.

So after we finish Genesis, we come to Exodus. And there we find Moses, the servant of the Lord. Moses speaks of servanthood.

We who are the Lord's, we are His servants. We are called to serve Him in His house, as Moses was faithful in all God's house. But we are not only servants, we are also soldiers.

And this is typified by Joshua, a soldier's soldier. We are to fight the good fight. We are to bring the purpose of God from heaven upon this earth.

Now this morning we would like to go to the third aspect of a man after God's own heart. What is it that God wants him to do? And that is, we who are the Lord's are a priesthood. Aaron and his sons typify the priesthood that we as believers have before God.

Now of course we know that after God had redeemed the children of Israel out of Egypt, He brought them to Mount Sinai. And according to chapter 19 of Exodus, God called Moses to the mountain. And there He revealed His mind through Moses to the children of Israel.

God said, I have brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand. I have borne you upon Me as on eagle's wing. I have brought you to Myself.

Now if you will keep My covenant, if you will keep My commandment, then you will be a peculiar people for Me. And I will make you a kingdom of priests. Now this is God's mind concerning those whom He redeemed.

The mind of God concerning those whom He redeemed was that they should be a kingdom of priests. In other words, every citizen of the nation of Israel, young and old, man and woman, of whatever tribe he or she may belong to, everyone who is in the nation of Israel is to be a priest unto God. That is to say, to minister unto God.

This is God's original purpose. But unfortunately while Moses was receiving the law on the mountain, the children of Israel on the plain, they broke God's law. They worshipped a golden calf.

And because of this, they disqualified themselves to be priests unto God. Now not in any sense that God did not want them to be priests, but only in the sense that they themselves made themselves disqualified from being priests unto God. So God called out of the twelve tribes, out of the nation of Israel, one family, Aaron and his sons to be priests.

Now remember brothers and sisters, this is not God's original purpose. This is only God's emergency measure. After the children of Israel sinned against God, we remember Moses came down from the mountain.

He saw the sin. He broke the two tables of law. He ground the golden calf into powder, cast them upon the water and asked the children of Israel to drink of their own sin.

Then Moses stood at the gate of the camp and he said, Who is on the Lord's side? Stand with me. And of all the tribes of Israel, only the tribe of Levi, they came out of the camp, a camp that was defiled. They came out of the camp, stood with Moses and they girded themselves with swords, went into the camp from one end to the other and smoked anyone that they met.

And by that they purified themselves. So God set apart the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron to be priests unto God. The rest of the children of Israel were disqualified.

They could not minister unto God. They had to come unto God through the mediatorship of the Levites and of Aaron and his sons. Again I say, this is God's emergency measure, not God's original design.

And I do believe that one day God's original purpose for the nation of Israel will yet be fulfilled. Because if we read Isaiah chapter 66, you will find there it is said that God will make Israel priests unto him. And if you read Zechariah chapter 14, you will find that every part in Jerusalem and in the land of Judea will be sacred.

In other words, the whole nation will be a nation of priests. Because God always fulfilled what he had designed. Now brothers and sisters, under the law there was emergency measure.

Because the law never makes people perfect. But under grace there is no provision for emergency. In other words, under grace, by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, he has made us priests unto God.

And there is no provision for any lack. You remember in Revelation chapter 1 verse 6. Unto him who has loved us, and has washed us with his blood, and has made us a kingdom, priests unto God. And again in Revelation chapter 5 verse 9 and verse 10 it is said, How God has purchased us by the precious blood of the Lamb, out of every tribe, every tongue, every people, every nation, and has made us kings and priests unto God.

And again in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 5 it is said, As we come to the Lord Jesus, we become living stones. We are being built up a spirit house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In other words, under grace, under the new covenant, through the finished work of Christ, everyone who is redeemed of the Lord, every child of God, every born again believer is made a priest.

This is what the Lord has done. Because this is God's original will. And he makes no provision for any otherwise.

That is to say, through grace, we all are made priests unto God. There is no such thing as, because of our weakness, God will raise up a house, a special family, or a special tribe to be priests, and the rest of the redeemed are just laity or common people who do not serve God. There is no such thing in the New Testament.

In under the Old Testament, God did make such provision. But remember brothers and sisters, under the new covenant there is no such provision. There is no such distinction as to laity and sacred class.

Because God does not provide for such failure. Furthermore, not only God has not provided for some believers to be priests unto God, and the rest of the believers not to be priests unto God, but according to the New Testament, we find that this kind of distinction or difference is something aided by God. You remember in Revelation chapter two, to the church in Ephesus, God said, there is one thing that you hate, which I also hate, the works of the Nicolaitans.

And again, in the same chapter, verse sixteen, you find to the church in Pergamos, God said, there are among you who have followed the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which God hates. Now who are the Nicolaitans? In church history, we could not find any record of something called Nicolaitans. There is no such record in church history.

Therefore, the only interpretation that we can do, and you find this is not only true in this case, but in other cases too, and that is, the Spirit of God is coining words together, put words together in order to teach us something. Nicol means conquer, laitans or laity means common people. Nicolaitans mean conquering the common people.

In other words, you find that gradually in the church, there has arisen a class of people, a special class of people, called sacred class. They conquer the common people. They are the holy people.

They are the ones who minister unto God. They monopolize all the spiritual work, and the rest of the people are just laity or commoners. They cannot, they have no privilege, they have no opportunity, they are not allowed to minister unto God.

These are the Nicolaitans. In the beginning, it was just the works of the Nicolaitans. In other words, there wasn't such a teaching yet, but there are people who are doing such a thing, but gradually this work has developed into a doctrine, a teaching.

It is something being taught, saying that not all God's people can serve God as priests. Only those who are specially trained, holy, sacred, they can minister unto God. But the rest of you people, now you have to be contented just to be ministered to and not to minister unto God.

Now this is something that the Lord said, I hate too. It is something God hates. Now brothers and sisters, isn't it very strange that how many of God's people today are so contented with what God is not satisfied? We should never be contented if God is not satisfied.

Only when God is satisfied then we are satisfied. But strange to say, you find among God's people there are so many, or may I put it in this way, the majority of God's people, the majority of the redeemed of the Lord, seem to be so contented not to function as priests unto God and let a special class, a few, a minority to minister unto the Lord. Why is it? Is it because we do not want to take responsibility? Is it because responsibility does cost something? We like to be babes.

We like to remain as babes because babes can enjoy, be served and never take any responsibility and there doesn't seem to be much cost involved. Babes cost other people a lot but it doesn't seem to cost them anything. Now isn't it the reason why you find even in today Christianity is such that we take for granted God's people are divided into two groups.

The larger group are laity, the smarter group the sacred class. Remember brothers and sisters, there is no such thing in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, yes, under the law God allows such thing to happen.

But ultimately, eventually, God will still make Israel a nation of priests. But under the New Covenant, in the New Testament, under grace, dear brothers and sisters, I do want you to see this and impress upon your heart, deeply inscribe upon your heart that in the New Testament there is no such distinction. And God does not allow such a thing.

There is no emergency measure. God has only one measure and that is His permanent will. So remember, every child of God, every believer, young and old, the moment you are saved, you don't need to wait until five years later, the moment you are saved, remember God has made you a priest unto Him.

You are a priest. Now you may not like to call yourself a priest because that title priest is so misused, abused, but in actuality before God you are a priest. Every believer is a priest.

The universal priesthood of believers is the teaching of the New Testament. Now do you know that even at the time of reformation, you know we know in the 16th century when God raised up the reformers? Now even in the 16th century, Martin Luther, he saw the universal priesthood of believers. Now you probably can believe it because as you look at Lutheran today, or as you look at the Protestant churches today, you even cannot believe it.

But if you go back to history, you will find that even in the 16th century when God raised up Martin Luther, he preached not only an open Bible, justification by faith, but he also preached the universal priesthood of believers. But unfortunately it was not received. Now we are in the 16th century.

Four hundred years have passed and still you find among God's people, we do not see the universal priesthood of believers. Or may I put it in another way, we may hear it, we may understand it, but we never act on it. Do you know that you are a priest unto God? Do you not know that you have such a high honor and privilege to minister unto God? Now why is it that we despise our privilege? Why is it that we do not fulfill our responsibility? I think it is time for God's people to wake up, that every believer must rise up and minister unto the Lord.

Unless this happens, you do not see the reality of the Church of God. Aaron and his sons, in one sense typifies the priesthood, the holy priesthood today. Christ is our high priest.

Aaron is a type of Christ. Christ is our high priest. Aaron's sons are the types of early Christians.

They are just believers. We are the children of God and we are the sons. So in one sense Aaron and his sons typify Christ, our high priest, and we as priests.

Of course in another sense, Aaron and his son are actually a contrast to Christ and to his people. Aaron and his sons, their priesthood are very limited, but our priesthood in Christ is full. But anyway, we would like to take Aaron and his sons from the Old Testament as a type of the holy priesthood of the believers today.

Now we will not go into the high priesthood of our Lord Jesus, which is a subject by itself. And I do believe that this is something that we should look into, because in Hebrews chapter 5 and chapter 7, in these two chapters you find especially the high priesthood of our Lord Jesus is being described. And this is most

important, because unless we know Christ as our high priest, we cannot live on earth as a Christian.

But this is not what we would like to enter in this morning. We would like to concentrate ourselves on Aaron's sons. In other words, the priesthood in Christ Jesus.

First of all, we must remember it is a priesthood. By a priesthood it simply means that it is not just one priest, nor is it many priests, but each doing his or her work separately, independently and unrelatedly. Now, we find Aaron and his sons.

That shows that the holy priesthood is a priesthood. That is to say, we who are priests, many, and yet we are one priesthood under the direction of the great high priest. Now that is the way that we minister unto the Lord.

You know sometimes when we think of priests, or priests, as we find in the Bible, God has made us priests unto God. Immediately we think of our being priests individually, unrelatedly, each doing something to the Lord, instead of seeing that the priests serve together as a priesthood under the direction of the great high priest. We are told that in the time of Christ, you know the temple was restored, and there were thousands, thousands of priests serving in the temple.

They served in the temple in twenty-four courses, and they served in turns. And we are told that the course of priests that served for that day, usually before day dawn, the priests for that day were gathered together in a large room, and there they were cast lots to determine who was to do what, because in a temple there were many things to do. So they were to be determined as to their works for the day by casting lots.

And after the lots were cast, then each priest knew what to do for that day, and they all worked together, coordinately, under the direction of the high priest. And this was done before dawn, before the temple gates were opened. So when the gates were opened, you find the priests were all ready, and they were all in their posts, and they knew what to do, in related with the other priests.

So God might be served. Now this is the Old Testament picture, but the New Testament reality is, we who are the Lord, we are a priesthood. And we serve God together.

We do not serve separately. We serve God together in His house, and we are His house, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. On the one hand we are a spiritual house, not this building, but we are God's house, and we are a holy priesthood.

And we serve under our high priest, our Lord Jesus. Now today of course, we do not cast lots anymore. Why? Because there is no need for it.

We have the Holy Spirit in us, and the Holy Spirit in us will reveal to us what is the mind of our high priest, our head. So in other words, we serve together under Christ, by the direction of the Holy Spirit. And if everyone will take order from the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, then you will find how we can minister unto the Lord together.

And what a harmony, what a beauty it will be. This holy priesthood, represented by Aaron and his son. As we come to Exodus chapter 28, you will notice three things.

How were Aaron and his son made priests unto God? First of all, in Exodus chapter 28, verse 1, And thou shalt take thee, Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him from among the children of Israel, and he may serve thee as priest. Thou shalt take thee, Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him. In other words, first of all, you will find, God's original purpose is to take the whole nation as a kingdom of priests.

But because of the failure of the children of Israel, so God takes Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel. The principle behind it is, that God has made us. We are made priests, not because of what we are, but because of His mercy and grace.

Not because we deserve it, but because He favors us. He calls us to be priests unto Him. Aaron and his sons do not deserve to be priests.

As a matter of fact, in the worship of the golden calf, Aaron was a chief sinner. Why? It was Aaron who made the golden calf. But strangely, you will find that in spite of the failure of Aaron and his sons, just as the rest of the children of Israel, God chose Aaron and his sons to be priests unto Him.

Why? Not because they had not sinned, but because they repented. But because they came out of the camp. They stood on the Lord's side.

But because they were willing to slay their own people, for God's sake, to purify themselves. So brothers and sisters, let us remember first of all, we are made priests because we are redeemed. Not because we are better than anybody else.

We are redeemed. He has redeemed us, and because He has redeemed us, He has called us to be priests. But many of the redeemed do not function as priests.

Why? Probably that rule still is good. Many are called, but few are chosen. So let us remember, all the redeemed are called, but few are chosen.

Now why? Why are the few chosen? If we can transfer what we find in the Old Testament to apply to us, probably we will say, all the redeemed of the Lord are called to be priests by the grace of God. This privilege is the portion of all believers. We are all being called.

But why is it that few are chosen? Now why are the few chosen? The few who repent. We have all failed. But if we repent, just like you find in Revelation 2 and 3, you find in these churches, you find how the churches have failed, and God is calling people to repent, and those who repent will be chosen.

Come out of the camp. The camp is defiled. Stand on the Lord's side.

Now who is willing to stand on the Lord's side? Probably most people would like to stand with the crowd. But who are willing to stand on the Lord's side and be unpopular? Who are willing to cut all the fleshly relationship off, drastically? In other words, who are willing to accept the cross, to work in their lives, that the flesh may be cut off, and in so doing they will find themselves chosen. But anyway, you will find, first of all, the redeemed are called to be priests.

Then secondly, you will find here in verse 2, garments for Aaron, thy brother, for glory and for ornament. Verse 4, And these are the garments which they shall make, a breastplate and an ephod, and a cloak and a checkered vest, a turban and a girdle, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron, thy brother, and his sons, that he may serve me as priest. You find not only the redeemed are called, but you find that Aaron

and his sons, before they could serve God as priests, must be called to be priests.

Clothed with holy garments for beauty and for glory. Now these are priestly garments. In other words, if they do not wear these garments, as you find in the 43rd verse of the same chapter, and they shall be upon Aaron and his sons when they enter into the tent of meeting, or when they come near to the altar to serve in the sanctuary, that they may not bear iniquity and die.

An everlasting statue for him, and a seed after him. In other words, if Aaron and his sons, they are not clothed with the priestly garments, and enter into the sanctuary to serve, they will bear iniquity and die. Now what does it mean? It means that not only we must be redeemed in order to be priests, but we must also be sanctified.

Sanctified by the holy garments. They have to take off their old garments and put on the priestly garment, being covered with the priestly garment in order to serve as priests. Now if you return to Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3 verse 9. Do not lie to one another, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new, renewed into full knowledge according to the image of him that has created him.

Here we find we are exhorted to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new, and the new man is renewed into full knowledge according to his image. Now again Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 22. You are having put off according to the former conversation, the old man which corrupts itself according to the deceitful lust, and being renewed in the spirit of your mind, and you are having put on the new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness.

Now I do believe that this can be applied as the priestly garments that we must put on today, if we are to serve as priests, and not to bear our iniquity and die. In other words, if we enter into the sanctuary, if we try to minister unto God with the old garments, that is with the old man and his deeds, with our fresh, freshly wisdom, energy, opinions, methods, ways, formulas, if we are to serve the Lord with the old man and his deeds, which is corrupted, we will bear our sin and die spiritually. We must put off the old man, the old garments, and we must put on the new man, which is created, recreated according to the image of Christ in holiness and righteousness, and only when we put on Christ in holiness and righteousness, and serve Him in the wisdom and the power of the new man, then we will not die, but our ministry unto Him will be accepted.

This garment is for glory and for beauty. Now, what is meant by glory and beauty? To be glorified, to be beautified, spiritually means we are being transformed and conformed to the image of Christ. Now, this is glory, it is from glory to glory, and this is beauty.

Do you not know that our flesh is shameful? Do you not know? Any time that our flesh is exposed, it is naked before God, it is shameful. Whether it is your bad flesh, or your good flesh, but remember, when our flesh is exposed, it is shameful, it is naked before God. But when Christ is expressed, it is beautiful, it is beautiful, it is glory.

So we must be sanctified. What is sanctification? Sanctification simply means we are set apart from God. It simply means the old man is put off, and the new man is put on.

It simply means that we are being transformed and conformed to the image of Christ. Now that is sanctification, that is holiness. And unless we are holy, we cannot serve God, because our God is holy.

Then thirdly, you find Aaron and his sons, they are not only called, taken, they are not only sanctified, put on the priestly garments, but according to Exodus chapter twenty-eight, we find in verse forty-one, And thou shalt clothe with them, Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, and shalt anoint him, and consecrate him, and hallow him, that he may serve me as priest. Aaron must not only be redeemed and taken, not only be sanctified and put on the priestly garments, but he must also be anointed and consecrated and hallowed, in order to serve God as priest. So the third thing is to be anointed.

Now when you apply it to us today, how are we to be anointed and made priest unto God, redeemed, sanctified and anointed? We need to be anointed. By anointed it simply means, in the Old Testament you find it is the holy oil. The holy oil will be poured upon Aaron.

And according to the Old Testament, when Aaron was anointed, the ointment was just poured upon him. A large amount of ointment poured upon his head, and it flows down his beard and all over his garment. And this is the picture.

If we want to minister unto the Lord as priest, we need to receive that anointing. And thank God that anointing is ours. Because when our Lord Jesus was risen from the dead and ascended upon high, you remember God has anointed him as Lord and Christ.

And the anointment, that is the Holy Spirit, came down on the day of Pentecost. And not only upon those on the day of Pentecost, but it flows down to the skirt of the garment. That is to say, every believer is in the good of that anointing.

We are in the anointing. And because we are in the anointing, therefore we are quickened by the Holy Spirit to minister unto God. You know one thing, as you read Exodus, you'll find in the tabernacle.

After the tabernacle and all the pieces of furniture were put in their proper places, the whole place had to be anointed. Everything had to be anointed. Not only the priest must be anointed, every piece of furniture in the tabernacle had to be anointed.

And after everything was anointed, then you'll find that tabernacle became a living tabernacle. Service began to flow. So brothers and sisters, how can we serve as priests? We can serve as priests only because we are in the anointing.

We can serve only when we obey the anointing. When we follow the anointing. When we serve in the power of the anointing.

That is to say, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The flesh has no part in God's service. Only the Spirit.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, said the Lord. Now another thing we would like to enter in this morning is this. What are the functions of the priesthood? We are priests.

We are ready to minister. Now what are the functions of the priests? Now first of all, we must remember that the functions of the priesthood are primarily towards God. If you read Hebrews chapter 5. Hebrews chapter 5 verse 1. For every high priest taken from among men is established for man in things relating to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.

And in 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 6, chapter 2 verse 5, it is said, yourselves also as living stones are being built up together a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by

Jesus Christ. Priestly functions are mainly towards God. To put it in other words, a priest is to minister unto the Lord.

Not unto the house, not unto man, but unto God. That is the basic understanding of the functions of the priesthood. In Old Testament you find the priesthood and the Levitical service.

The priestly service is unto God. The Levitical service is unto the house of God. The priestly service is unto the Lord.

The Levitical service is unto the people. The priestly service is spiritual in nature. The Levitical service is physical in nature.

Now of course that doesn't mean that priestly service has nothing to do with man. You will find that it does. But primarily, basically, essentially, priestly service is ministering unto the Lord.

And Levitical service is basically unto man, even though it is not exclusively so. So I do hope that you will first of all let us remember, we are priests. What do we do? We minister unto the Lord.

That is the basic concept. Not unto man, we will. Not unto the house, we do.

But we must remember that priestly function is basically, essentially, primarily, spiritual. We are mainly unto God. Minister unto the Lord.

Now this is priesthood. Now do we minister unto the Lord? In Ezekiel chapter forty-four you will notice three things concerning priesthood. You know the Levites and the other sons of Aaron, the sons of Aaron, the sons of Aaron they were barred from the priesthood because of their unfaithfulness.

But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, the family of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall approach unto me to minister unto me. Now that's priesthood. The sons of Zadok shall approach unto me to minister unto the Lord.

To minister unto the Lord. Now how? What do they do? Three things. Number one, they shall stand before me to present unto me the flesh and the blood said the Lord Jehovah.

Number two, they shall enter into my sanctuary and they shall approach unto my table to minister unto me and they shall keep my charge. Number three, verse twenty-three, and they shall teach my people the difference between holy and profane and cause them to discern between unclean and unclean and in controversy they shall stand to judge, they shall judge it according to my judgment and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my solemnities and they shall hallow my Sabbath. So here you'll find the priestly works are threefold.

Number one, they shall stand before the Lord to present to the Lord the flesh and the blood. Now of course we know this is connected with the altar. With the altar you'll find the priest will come.

They will present the blood of the sacrifice and also the fat must be burned on the altar and the work of the priest is to present the blood and the fat unto the Lord. Now often times we think of sacrifice in terms of what it does to us. Now thank God, sacrifice does many things to us.

Now of course today we do not offer bullocks or sheep or lamb or animals anymore. Why? Because all these sacrifices that you find in the Old Testament are types of Christ. Christ is the sacrifice and the gift.

So what we do today is to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We do not need to offer bullocks, we do not need to offer lambs, but we do offer Christ. You know we often think of sacrifice in terms of what it does to us.

Now it does a lot to us. Through the blood our sins are forgiven and the meat. Some sacrifice is a gift.

Some sacrifices have to be burned, but others you'll find they are meat for us to enjoy. Now that's true, but remember here you'll find Aaron and his sons are to present the blood and the fat unto God. In other words the blood is for God, the fat is for God.

It is for God to be satisfied and to be pleased. Blood speaks of the blood of our Lord Jesus that washes our sins away, yes, but it is the blood that satisfies the righteousness of God. Blood first of all is unto God and then unto us.

The blood of the Paschal Lamb was put on the house side of the doorposts and the lintels. That is to say not for you to see, but for God to see. The blood is basically to satisfy God's righteousness, so that God can righteously justify us.

It is to satisfy God's own righteousness. And the fat, you know what the fat is today? We don't like to have fat. But you know in the Old Testament terms you know the fat speaks of abundant life.

When life is so abundant it becomes fat. And you know in the Old Testament nobody can eat any fat. Fat is for God.

All the fat of the sacrifices have to be burned for God. In other words, it is to give God the life of our Lord Jesus is like fat. So abundant, so rich and it is all for the pleasure of His blood.

I come to do thy will. The fat is for God. And the priests, they are to offer the blood and the fat.

Now what does it mean? Brothers and sisters, do we not know that we are priests? And it is our duty, our privilege to present Christ back to God. The Christ is our Lord that we know and experience. His blood, His forgiving grace, His fat, His life, His abundant life that we know and experience.

These are like blood and fat ascending continuously to God for His satisfaction and pleasure. Daily we stand before God, not on our merits. We have none.

Daily we stand before God presenting the blood. It is because of the blood of Christ that we can approach the throne of grace. This satisfies God's heart.

And daily we stand before God presenting Christ as our life to Him. Whenever Christ, our life, is being expressed and offered up to God, God is not only satisfied but well pleased. You know if we try to present ourselves we are presenting the sacrifice of Cain.

We will be completely rejected. But if we present Christ we will be accepted. Because only Christ can satisfy God.

Spiritual sacrifices. We know Christ as the burn offering, voluntarily offering Himself without spot to God. And in union with Him we offer ourselves.

We know Christ as our meal offering. His life upon this earth is so pure. And in union with Him His life becomes our life and we present it to God.

We know Christ as our peace offering. He has made peace for us between us and God and between us with one another. And today we present Christ to Him as our peace offering.

We are at peace with God and we are at peace with one another. We present Christ as our sin offering, as our trespass offering. Our sins all forgiven.

Our daily sins all washed away so that we can commune with God. Brothers and sisters, daily we stand before God presenting we offer, constantly we offer. We do not just offer on Sunday.

When we come together to worship the Lord then we offer up the blood and the flesh. No. We are priests.

We are in God's house, wherever you are, wherever God's people are, we are constantly, continuously offering up the blood and the flesh. We are constantly offering up Christ to God. This is our worship.

Remember brothers and sisters, our worship is not limited just to an hour on the Lord's day. Our worship is in spirit and in truth. Our whole life is a worship because we are constantly offering up Christ back to God.

Not ourselves. God will never accept us in ourselves, but Christ. We appreciate His blood, we appreciate His flesh, His life.

And that is something that we need to offer constantly. That is the first thing. Then the second thing.

They shall enter into my sanctuary and they shall approach unto my table to minister unto me and they shall keep my charge. Now the emphasis here is the table. Actually in the holy place there are three things.

The lamp stand, the table and the golden altar of incense. But the table is especially emphasized here. Why? Because this table speaks of communion.

Communion. Brothers and sisters, as priests, what is our function? Our function is to commune with God. Not just in the morning when you get up, not just in the evening when you go to bed, you pray, but throughout the day.

We should be ministering to God. We should minister unto Him at the table. We should be in communion, in fellowship with Him all the time.

And as we fellowship with Him. Now this is priestly function. We are functioning as priests.

And of course, when you commune with Him, you cannot but praise and thank Him. Especially at the Lord's table, this is the time that we commune with Him. The Lord said, this is my blood, the communion of my blood, the communion of my body.

And as we commune with Him, we render our worship, our praise to Him. This is priestly function. Brothers and sisters, in our daily life, are we functioning as priests? Do we commune with Him? Through the day, through the week? Now if we do, then when we come together to remember the Lord at the table, there will not be any lack of worship, of praise, of thanks to Him.

Together with the table, you have the golden altar of incense. That's prayer. Not praying for yourself, we should pray for ourselves.

But as priests, this prayer is intercessory prayer. Because the priests, when they burn incense at the altar, they pray for the nation of Israel. So brothers and sisters, we are priests.

Do we pray? Do we function as priests? Yes, we pray individually, ourselves. But when we come together, do we come and pray together? Do we take up intercessory prayer? That is to intercede, just like in Timothy. Timothy, you'll find Paul said, I exhort you, first of all, to pray for all people.

Pray, intercede, supplicate with thanksgiving. And also the golden lampstand, that is the testimony, to keep the charge. We as priests are to keep the testimony of Jesus.

That the testimony of Jesus may shine and the world may know Him. Now these are priestly functions. Then thirdly, they shall teach my people the difference between holy and profane, and cause them to discern between unclean and clean.

And in controversy they shall stand to judge, they shall judge it according to my judgment, and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my solemnities, and they shall hallow my sabbath. Now here you'll find, the priestly functions are not only Godward, primarily yes, but they are also manward. So because they are ministering unto the Lord, therefore it follows they begin to minister unto the house, the people of God.

They shall teach the people to discern between the holy and the profane, the clean and the unclean. And they shall also judge the people according to the judgment of God. So this is also partly our priestly function.

Unless we minister unto the Lord first, our ministry unto the house of the Lord's people will not be effective. First we must minister unto the Lord, and then out of that we minister unto man. Then we are able to teach people what is holy, what is unholy, what is clean, what is unclean.

It is not just a bookish knowledge, it is an experiential knowledge of God, that you learn when you draw near to Him. And also you have the discernment to judge according to the judgment of God. So brothers and sisters, do remember this, that we are all priests.

And it is God's will that we should function as priests, not only on the Lord's day, but every day of the week. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, how we do praise and thank Thee, that Thou has called us with a high calling. Thou has even called us into that holy priesthood.

We do pray that we may not neglect our duty, but we may by Thy grace take up our responsibility, that we may function as priests, daily and together, in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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