

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS Part 1

We've been talking to you about the importance of 'spiritual gifts'. In this next series we hope to expand on this topic further. My plan is to help us understand WHY operating in our spiritual gifts is so important. However, to begin we must go back to the Old Testament.

Numbers 3:5, 6

⁵ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, ⁶ Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

The tribe of Levi was chosen to "minister to Aaron" (assist him as priests). The interesting thing is this responsibility was originally intended for the *whole* nation!

Exodus 19:3, 6

³ And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

So, God's original plan was to have an entire nation or KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.

In fact, I'm entitling this series...

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

I'm using this title because I believe the same thing is intended for the Church!

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

The Church, like Israel, is intended to be a kingdom (nation) of priests who are intended to assist our High Priest in His ministry!

The problem is, if we're all called to be priests, why are so few operating as such? Why are a *few* forced to do what the *many* is meant to do? I think the answer, at least part of it, is found right here in our text!

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

The reason so few Christians are operating as priests is because to be a priest...

YOU MUST BE HOLY

Romans 12:1

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The word “present” means to place a thing at God’s disposal. That’s *holy*! Also, the word ‘holy’ is placed alongside another word—acceptable. I believe the two words are related.

Romans 8:8, 9

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

If we want our sacrifice to be holy and acceptable (well-pleasing), then we must offer it by the Spirit. This means, being a priest unto God requires that we offer *spiritual* sacrifices or Spirit-led sacrifices!

1 Peter 2:5

⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Exodus 19:5

⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

In addition to being “holy”, as a priest...

YOU MUST OBEY HIS VOICE

An inability (or unwillingness) to hear and respond to the voice of God will prevent you from being a true priest unto God.

Hebrews 5:11–12

¹¹ Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. ¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

The writer of Hebrews says, “When you ought to be teaching (or performing spiritual service), you are in need that one teach you.” Why are they not ready to perform spiritual service? Because they’re dull of hearing (i.e. slow to obey)!

Moreover, he calls them ‘babes’. This tells us that it takes a certain level of maturity to be a priest.

Ephesians 4:11–14

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Doing spiritual work is what brings us (and others) into a perfect man or maturity.

Incidentally, “doing the work of ministry” is another requirement for being a priest!

Numbers 3:6–7

⁶ Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. ⁷ And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

Notice, the Levites were expected to assist Aaron in ministering to the congregation and the tabernacle. Therefore, as a priest...

YOU MUST ASSIST CHRIST

Whenever we assist Christ in His service, we are performing a priestly duty!

Romans 15:16

¹⁶ That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

The word “ministering” in this verse means to serve as a priest. Therefore, Paul is comparing preaching the gospel to temple work!

Romans 15:16 Good News Bible

¹⁶ of being a servant of Christ Jesus to work for the Gentiles. I serve like a priest in preaching the Good News from God, in order that the Gentiles may be an offering acceptable to God, dedicated to him by the Holy Spirit.

When we assist Christ in ministering to His Church, we are performing a priestly duty. It's important to understand that "preaching" isn't the only priestly duty we can perform.

Romans 15:26–27 Common English Bible

²⁶ Macedonia and Achaia have been happy to make a contribution for the poor among God's people in Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were happy to do this, and they are actually in debt to God's people in Jerusalem. If the Gentiles got a share of the Jewish people's spiritual resources, they ought to minister to them with material resources.

Again, the word "minister" carries the idea of perform a 'religious (priestly) service,' only this time it is in the form of charity or an offering. There were many responsibilities the Levites were expected to carry out like: make sacrifices, teach the Law, bake bread, offer incense, trim lamps, etc.