

TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 6)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:9a

THEME: The Believer's Priesthood

NUMBER: 1PET43-0606

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Read Passage

Finish this section, this week and next. We still have to go through v. 9 & 10 (get thru part of v. 9 this AM and the rest next week).

Bring you back to v. 5 (key verse) ==>

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Every Xn is part of a Holy Priesthood; Every Xn is a priest B4 God.

What does that mean? What does it mean that t/CH is composed of believers who stand as individual priests before God?

Go back to our definition ==>

What is the Priesthood of the believer?

The privilege won for every Xn by X giving the believer access to God in prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word.

It is a privilege - By grace; it's a gift.

Won by Christ - He is our great H.P. who has entered t/holy of holies giving us access to the most holy place through Him (Heb. 10).

For every Christian - One of t/great principles of t/Reformation.

16th c. Reformer, Martin Luther declared that by virtue of God's grace, our salvation "consecrates us all without exception and makes us all priests. . . . Every shoemaker can be a priest of God . . ." [cited in the New Dictionary of Theology, s.v. Priesthood of the Believer]

Gives us Access to God -

Means that we don't require a man or men to mediate or come between God and us. We may "**Come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find mercy & grace to help in time of need**" (Heb. 4:16).

Priesthood of t/believer gives us = access to God. For what? Namely ==> prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word - We can pray to Him directly; we can confess our sin to him directly; we can read his word and hear from him directly and we can bring our spiritual sacrifices to him directly.

1 Timothy 2:5 **For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,**

I. The Church As A Royal Priesthood (vv. 4-10)

Three main points in this section

A. Established in the Living Stone (4)

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5)

C. Elected as the People of God (6-10)

The limitations of our memory, our ability to recall things we have learned, read, heard, is quite profound. Some experts tell us that we only retain 3% of what we hear or read. I find that quite frustrating.

Like the man who went to see his doctor. Doctor ran a battery of tests on his patient & later sat down with him & said, "I've got some pretty bad news for you." "Give it to me clean doc," the patient replied. "Well you've got some serious heart problems; but that's not all: you are also becoming senile." Patient looked at t/doctor & replied, "Gee, that is bad new, but at least my heart's O.K."

Sorta like the guy ==>

"I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I didn't see any."

I say all of that only to emphasize that it's difficult to come back to a passage like this, after being out of it for nearly a month, and pick right up where you left off. (I know Calvin did it . . .).

In the days before the Reformation, the Swiss city of Geneva was a pretty wild. They used to have very wild times—they used to actually run around naked, sing songs and that sort of thing. (Pretty much like CA) Geneva had a ruling body called the Council of 200, and they passed all kinds of laws against it, because they thought to have the city act properly you must have good laws. So they said you mustn't run around the city naked singing songs; it didn't do anything at all. So eventually they said, 'Well, maybe the answer is religion. We have been a Catholic country all this time, maybe we need to become a Protestant country.' And so, in 1535, they declared' as The Council, from that time on Geneva was going to be a Protestant country, they would align themselves with the Reformation. Do you know what happened? Nothing at all, of course! Same problems existed. But they did do something good along the way. They said, 'If we are going to be Protestant city we need a Protestant preacher.' Luther was occupied, of course. But there was this rather skinny intellectual from Paris; his name was John Calvin. And they said, 'Come on over here John and see if you can be our preacher.' So he came the following year, 1536. And he began to teach the Bible. You know what he was teaching in those days? He was teaching Calvinism, of course! And the people didn't like it then any more than they like it today or in the time of Jesus Christ. So he wasn't there very long, a couple years, and they said, 'Look, we've had enough of this, get out of here!' And so they sent him away and he went on down the Rhine to Strasbourg where he settled in for about 2 ½ more years—he liked it down there in Strasbourg. But things were not doing well in Geneva. All of the old problems were continuing. And finally they said, 'Look, we probably should bring this guy Calvin back.' And so they did; they persisted in asking him to come—he didn't want to go—but they got him to come. And so he came back in 1541. And the story is he picked up in 1541 exactly where he left off in 1538, 2 ½ years before. I don't know what verse that was, and I'm sure it wasn't in 1 Peter, but if it had been, he basically would have said, 'Now 2 ½ years ago we were in verse 8 and I'd like you to open your Bibles to verse 9 because we are going to study verse 9 today.' [Adapted from James Boice]

I guess I could learn something from that. But I go back & look thru my notes & I find all sorts of imp. points I wish I could revisit. Don't have time. Would encourage you, if you're serious about retaining God's Word, to go back from time to time & review your own notes, or go online and read through mine, or listen to some of the past messages.

I. The Church as a Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

A. Established in the Living Stone (4) *This is the Source of our Priesthood*

B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5) *This is the Structure of our Priesthood*

C. Elected as the People of God (vv. 6-10) *This is the Security of our Priesthood*

1. The Cornerstone of Our Belief (6a)

2. The Confidence of Our Belief (6b)

3. The Contrast of Unbelief (7-8a)

4. The Cause of Unbelief (8b)

Going to pick up where we left off (a month ago)-- That was in v 9. ==>

5. The Character of God's People (9a)

Could look at it this way: V. 9 returns to t/theme that we saw est. in v. 7

7 This honor (τιμη - "honor," "benefit" "reward") **therefore, is for you who believe. . . .**

What honor? (Context) - Peter adds a few parenthetical thoughts in t/rest of verse 7 through v. 8 (contrast) ==>

BUT for those who disbelieve: the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner. 8 And: a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble because they are disobedient to the word, unto which [ends] they were appointed.

Note how v. 9 begins ==>

But you are . . . (Do you see the contrast - return to t/main theme?)

What follows are what we could call 4 titles of honor –

IOW - these are things that you receive as Xns solely by God's grace.

You are these things. You didn't make yourself these things // didn't deserve // earn it. God unilaterally blessed you w/them.

Cf. Psalm 103:1-14 {turn there}

He grants you his wonderful benefits // pardons your iniquities // heals you of sin's curse // Has redeemed your life from t/pit // Has crowned you w/compassion & lovingkindness // Satisfies your life w/good things // gives you strength // Comes to your defense // Compassionate and gracious // Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. // He has removed your sin as far as E. from W. // He has compassion and love for you as a Father does for his precious children. (Today = Father's day . . .).

To bring it back to 1 Peter, in a similar fashion, we find ==>

This honor, therefore, is for you who believe. . . .

Each of these descriptive titles have their background in the OT. They were used of O.T. Israel; Peter here uses them of t/CH. What we have is a description of t/CH that transcends Israel.

4 descriptions followed by 1 purpose. Ea of t/4 consist of a noun & a modifier. They all have their background in 1 of 2 passages: Exo. 19:6 or Isa. 43:20-21.

1) **an ELECT RACE, - Isa. 43**

2) **A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, - EXO. 19**

3) **A HOLY NATION, - EXO. 19**

4) **A PEOPLE FOR [GOD'S OWN] POSSESSION - Isa. 43**

1st and last = Isa. 43; Middle two (2-3) = Exo. 19.

Look at how v. 9 begins ==>

But you are . . .

b. So essential for Xn living to know who you are

Who are you in X? What sorts of blessings & resources are yours?

I think of the true story about the two sons of a respected NY doctor, Homer and Langley Collyer. Both brothers had earned college degrees. In fact, Homer had studied at Columbia University to become an attorney. When their father died in the early part of the 20th his sons inherited the family home and estate. The two men--both bachelors--were now financially secure.

But the Collyer brothers didn't live like two wealthy men who had received a great inheritance. They lived in almost total seclusion. They boarded up the windows of their house and padlocked the doors. They had all of their utilities, even their H2O turned off.

By t/time WW II ended, the Collyer family name had been nearly forgotten--even tho Homer and Langley remained alive.

However, on March 21, 1947, police received an anonymous telephone call stating that a man had died inside the boarded-up house. Unable to force their way in through the front door, they entered the house through a second-story window. Inside they found Homer Collyer's body on a bed. He had died clutching the February 22, 1920 issue of the Jewish Morning Journal, though he had been totally blind for years.

It seems the brothers were collectors. They collected everything--especially junk. Their house was crammed full of broken machinery, auto parts, boxes, appliances, folding chairs, musical instruments, rags, assorted odds and ends, and bundles of old newspapers. Virtually all of it was worthless. An enormous

mountain of debris blocked the front door; investigators were forced to continue using the upstairs window for weeks while excavators worked to clear a path to the door.

Nearly three weeks later, as workmen were still hauling heaps of refuse away, someone made a grisly discovery. Langley Collyer's body was buried beneath a pile of rubbish some six feet away from where Homer had died. Langley had been crushed to death in a crude booby trap he had built to protect his precious collection from intruders.

The garbage eventually removed from the Collyer house totaled more than 140 tons. [adapted from John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 37-38]

Their father had provided an inheritance sufficient for all their needs – yet they lived their lives in poverty.

This story is a parable of sorts about how many Xns live in ignorance of who they are in X.

You need to know who you are. You need to know that you are an unworthy sinner deserving of hell who has been pardoned by the sacrificial death of JC // You were unable to save yourself, but God freely set his love upon you and rescued you from your sin // Now you are dead to sin; alive to righteousness // a child of God // a new creation in X // Heir of eternal life // You can do all things thru X // In X & that He is in you // You have been Chosen, Called, Redeemed, Justified, Sanctified, Sealed by & indwelt w/the Spirit of Holiness. I could go on (we will as we look at four more spiritual privileges that are yours in X).

Even as someone who may be listening who is not a genuine Xn - for that person it is imp. to know who you are: That you stand naked in your sin before a thrice-holy God who stands ready to judge you for your sin & condemn you to eternity in hell unless you repent & believe, casting yourself on His mercy in X.

But we are talking about genuine believers here, so back to verse 9 ==>

But you are . . . (first of 4 descriptions / privileges)

BTW - Might just mention at this point that each of these descriptions is in t/singular while t/pronoun "You" is in t/plural. Reason I believe is to remind us again that t/CH isn't about lone ranger, individualistic do it my way Xns. We are a company of t/redeemed. Plurality yes, but also unity.

a. #1 - An Elect Race

The CH, genuine believers, make up an elect or chosen race of people.

(1) "Elect" ἐκλεκτός is the same word we saw back in 1:1

Where it says that we were chosen, or elected to salvation.

Here it's used as an adjective, modifying t/word γένος "race or family" (γένος ==> genetics, geneology). So we have "chosen race."

Picture is pretty clear here (as it is in t/rest of this passage): The NT CH is t/fulfillment of t/privileged status of OT Israel (more on that later).

(2) I want you to focus on two things in this 1 description

(a) First, we see once again that the living stones, the members of the church, are chosen by God

He is t/one that walks through the quarry of sin breathing life into dead stones so that they can be placed into a living Temple.

We are talking about God's predestined plan to save you. To open your blind eyes, to bring your dead heart to life. To make you a part of his family - t/CH of JC.

i. Let me quickly suggest two spiritual benefits that flow out of this truth (two sides of a single coin)

(i) Our Pride Should be Checked

As John MacArthur observes:

"... election is absolutely the solitary decision of God, thus it is the most pride-crushing truth in God's Word. It devastates human's pride since nothing in their salvation derives from any merit in them—it is all of God." [MacArthur, 124-25]

Xns w/an understanding of God's sovereign grace should be among t/most humble & grateful people on t/face of t/earth.

"Pride is the only disease everyone hates except the one who has it."

(ii) Our God Should be Exalted

You can't exalt & worship God when you're busy exalting & worshipping yourself.

A salvation that is 100% of God's grace should illicit w/i us a heart filled w/100% worship!

Remember t/revelation of X given to t/Apostle John in t/Book of Rev., chapter 5. The 4 Living Creatures & t/24 Elders (perhaps representative of t/CH) ==>

9 . . . *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." 11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I

heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

Do you think there will be any ingratitude in heaven? Any apathy? No! Why? Because in t/eternal K.D. we will have a perfect understanding of t/greatness of God's grace! Let's not allow t/fact that we live not in t/sweet by and by but the dirty now and now deter us from t/passionate & heartfelt worship of our great God.

We need to wake up! Our leisure & our summer activities are not more imp. than t/worship of our God! We need to have t/attitude that coming together as a CH is better than any game, or picnic, or day spent sleeping in. I'm convinced that t/world is scheduling more & more activities on Sundays because they know that t/maj. of Xns would rather miss CH than some event scheduled by unbelieving X - rejecters! Wouldn't it be novel for a majority of Xns to stand up and say "enough is enough!" The CH of JC is more imp. than your event! // For t/world to start to notice & say, "You know what, we can't schedule this on Sunday because t/Xns won't come."

Why we need revival. Revival will evidence itself in two ways: 1) our passions and 2) our priorities. {expand upon}

(2) I did say that I wanted you to focus on two things in this single description (Elect Race)

(a) First being that we are chosen by God

(b) Second, we are chosen to be something: a race or family

But you are AN ELECT RACE . . .

Did you know that early on (the 2nd c.) word "race" became a common designation for Xns? We were referred to as a race of people.

One ancient treatise refers to believers as "the God-loving and God-fearing race of the Christians." And "the third race" (as opposed to Jews and Gentiles) [cited in Michaels, 108]

I like that "third race" idea. There no longer is any Jew or Gentile.

Galatians 3:28 **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

1 Corinthians 12:13 **For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.**

But you are AN ELECT RACE . . . (a third race if you will)

I can't help but think about t/contemp. fascination w/so-called Messianic Congregations – Jewish & Gentile Xns gathering together in modern-day synagogues. Many of these well-meaning folks observe OT laws and ceremonies, but I'm afraid that in doing so they are reverting back to what Paul calls in Colossians 2 "shadows" of t/substance that is in JC.

Ephesians 2:12-16 **12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.**

There's one CH (not 2); There's 1 people of God (not two).

I. The Church as a Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

C. Elected as the People of God (vv. 6-10)

5. The Character of God's People (9a)

a. #1 - An Elect Race

b. #2 - A Royal Priesthood

You are . . . A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD . . .

Verse 5 used t/phrase "Holy priesthood"

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood

Here we see t/CH as a "Royal Priesthood."

(1) Combination of Metaphors:

Royalty + Priesthood.

This comes right out of Exodus 19:6 in the LXX. Peter is quoting Exo. 19:6 exactly

I happen to have a copy of the LXX in my office and it reads ==>

"You shall be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation."

That was Moses speaking on behalf of God. Who was he speaking to? People of Israel.

Where does promise find its fulfillment? In t/NT CH. Has t/CH replaced Israel? I'd rather put it this way - The CH as a New Covt. Community has fulfilled Israel under the OT economy. Fulfillment of t/shadows and promises.

Even t/idea of being a "holy nation" is fulfilled in t/CH.

3 mo. after the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Israel is encamped in t/wilderness of Sinai in front of Mt. Sinai. Moses goes up t/mountain and God/YHWH calls to him from the mountain, saying,

“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.5 ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.” [Exodus 19:4-6]

They didn't keep His Covt.

Remember in Matthew 21 Jesus concludes his parable of the landowner by saying ==>

“Did you never read in the Scriptures, (He quotes Psa. 118:22, just as Peter does here in 2:7) ‘The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?

Then in v. 43 ==>

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.

Who or what is that "nation?"

a. #1 - An Elect Race

b. #2 - A Royal Priesthood

c. #3 - A Holy Nation

d. #4 - A People for God's own Possession

About 140 years ago, C.H. Spurgeon preached a sermon on this very topic of the believer's priesthood. He concluded that message with this invitation ==>

"There are some here that have never yet been priests to God. What have they been doing today? . . . Take care lest having lived to yourself, you died to yourself, having lived without God, you die without God, and find it a tremendous thing to stand and be judged without a Savior to be your helper or interceding priest. I say nothing to you about being a priest to God. You need a priest for yourself, first. Do not go to any man. No man has power to help your soul, except to pray and plead for you. The saving, pardoning power lies only with Jesus Christ. Look always to him: he died: trust in his sacrifice: he rose, he ascended: he is standing at God's right hand. There is life from a look at him. Look! trust! and you shall then be cleansed, clothed, anointed, consecrated, and so serve God. But your first business is to go to Christ. Oh, may Christ come to you, and save you now, and he shall have glory out of us, world without end! Amen. [The Priesthood of believers, No. 3266, preached on the Lord's day evening, August 28th 1864]