

Leviticus 8-10, 21-22

“Holy Priesthood”

Introduction

- Tonight we continue our study in the book of Leviticus - The theme of Leviticus is Holiness.
 - The idea of holiness literally translated means “wholeness”.
 - When you and I walk in holiness we are walking in the way God designed life to be, wholeness.
- As health is to the body, so Holiness is for the soul – it is just a blessing – holiness is the main theme of Leviticus. So we will be using holiness as an outline.

The Book of Leviticus – Holiness unto the Lord

Holy Offerings – Leviticus 1-7

Holy Priesthood – Leviticus 8-10, 21-22

Holy People – Leviticus 11-15, 17-20, 26-27

Holy Calendar – Leviticus 16, 23-25

- Last week we looked at the five Holy offerings that the priests would offer with the people.
 - And tonight we are going to zero in on those priests and learn what God required of them that made them holy.
 - That made them separate from the world around them.

Before we do, we need to make clear that we understand why this is relevant for you and me.

- Tonight is about priests. – Yes.
 - Oh why did we show up???
- Because, and hear me on this - It is clear from scripture that God has called every one of us who are believers to be in the ministry.

It is Gods heart that every single one of us, not just me, not just Pastor Rob or Eddie or Steve, but that every single one of us would be a Royal Priest.

- That is what the apostle Peter says in I Peter chapter 2.

“But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” – I Peter 2:9.

- Peter says all of us who know Christ, all of us who have been saved by His blood:
 - We are a royal priesthood.
 - It’s the same thing John tells us in the book of Revelation...

“Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” – Revelation 20:6.

- We are priests of God, and we will be priests of God for years and years to come.
 - So does tonight apply to you?
 - How to be a holy priest.
 - Absolutely!!!! – So take your notebook out, pray on these things, think them through, I know God has some heavy things to share with us tonight.

Chapters 8-10 of Leviticus and then again in chapters 21-22, God shares some things about what He requires of His holy priests.

- If you are taking notes tonight – There are seven of them, of course there are 7, the answer is always Jesus or 7.

Requirements for the Holy Priests

#1 – They were to be washed – Leviticus 8:1-6

In order for the priests to serve in Moses' day, they had to be washed, cleansed and purified for the ministry that was in front of them.

- And notice if you would, their whole body was washed once and for all – and from then on as we read later, all that was needed was to wash the hands and the feet while serving in the congregation.

The same principal applies to us as we, a royal priesthood, are washed once from our sins once and for all by the blood of Jesus.

- So we are clean, the blood of Jesus cleanses us.
 - But the reality is, as we go through this life, we come in contact with the world, and as we do there needs to be a daily washing, a daily cleansing as we minister to the Lord – just as it was for the Levitical priesthood.

Now how does our daily washing occur???

- Well I believe we then are washed daily by being in the Word of God.
 - David says in Psalm 119...

“How can a young man cleanse His way, by taking heed according to your Word” – Psalm 119:9

- We are cleansed and kept from sin by being in God's Word, taking heed to God's Word, hiding God's word in our hearts.
 - Paul says the same thing in the New Testament in Ephesians chapter 5 when he exhorts those of us who are husbands to...

“love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,” – Ephesians 5:25-26

- Christ washes us, cleanses us, by the washing of the water of the Word – it's the Word, it's the Word!!!

You see something supernatural occurs as we read the Bible, as we sit and listen to the Bible being taught as we chew on it and meditate in it.

- There is a washing of our hearts and a preparing of our lives for the things God has for us.
 - I believe there is even a softening toward the Lord, that we stay usable because we are washing in the water of the Word – why would I say that???

Well Jesus said in Matthew 9

“Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.” – Matthew 9:17

- Talking about the need to stay flexible and usable – Jesus reminds the disciples that new wine goes into new wineskins.
 - Because old wineskins are rigid and the new wine as the fermentations process continues would burst the rigid wineskin.
 - So new wine had to go into new wineskins in Jesus's day.
- But sometimes we use this word to begin to think this means that God can use the older generation –it's only those of us that are young that God has fresh vision for.
 - But be careful of that – because you who are young, soon and very soon, something you will not be – I know of what I speak.
 - So is there no hope for those of us who are older in the Lord – no way.

New wine = brand-new

New Wineskins = renewed

You see when Jesus says new wine – the Greek term in “Brand-new”, but when He talks about new wineskins, Jesus uses a different word that means, “renewed”.

- Jesus is saying us old wineskins, those of us who have been around for a while, we need to constantly be renewed if we are going to handle the new things God does.

- So do you know how they renewed wineskins?
- They soaked them in water - Same picture.
- We are renewed as we soak in this book.

The priests, to remain usable, needed to be once washed for their sins and then continually washed to be ready to be used by the Lord.

- And we as a royal priesthood, having been once washed from our sins by the blood of the lamb, we must, we must, we must – if we are going to remain unspotted from the world, if we are going to have victory over sin, if we are going to stay soft and usable for the kingdom, we must continually be washed in the water of the word.

Requirements for the Holy Priests

#1 – They were to be washed – Leviticus 8:1-6

#2 – They were to bear the people on their hearts – Leviticus 8:7-9

- The priests were given a special little outfit to wear, with a cool sash, a cool little hat, very sheik.
 - But included in the outfit was the breastplate and we learn from other places in scripture that this breastplate contained 12 stones that represented the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - Meaning the high priest was to bear the people on his heart in prayer.

I mentioned this to you, because as a royal priesthood, we need to bear the people God puts in our lives in prayer.

- Sometimes we think of phrases like, “I’ll pray for you” as cliché, pastors speak like it’s just something nice to say.
 - But please consider with me church – prayer is powerful.
- You can’t change people’s hearts, you can change people’s mind – you can soften their heart toward the gospel, you can’t win people to Christ.
 - But the Lord can.
 - And we see His will done on earth as it is in heaven – how – through the avenue of prayer.

The disciples wondering why they were powerless against the demonic boy asked Jesus in Mark chapter 9 and He says to them.

“This kind only comes out by prayer and fasting” – Mark 9:29

- This kind of what, this kind of demon? This kind of faith, this kind of power? - What kind of what?
 - Friend it doesn’t matter – what Jesus is saying is that there are things you are going to face, there are things your kids are going to face, there are things your friends are going to face that they don’t have the power to deal with on their own.
 - They need to be fasting and praying. But they don’t know God – then you need to be fasting and praying for them.

You want to see a great harvest of souls – what do you do?

“Pray to the Lord of the Harvest,” – Matthew 9:38

You fear falling into temptation – what do you do?

“Watch and pray” – Jesus said in Mark 14:38

You are sick and not feeling well – what do you do?

“Call upon the elders of the church and let them pray...” – James 5:14

I didn’t book you a ticket on the next guilt trip but when was the last time you really spent some significant time bearing the needs and burdens of the people God has put in your sphere of influence?

- God save him, God meet their needs, God set him free from sin and addiction.
 - How long has it been kingdom of priests?
 - Samuel said of the people God, put in his sphere of influence...

“Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you”- I Samuel 12:23

- We like the priests in Moses day, need to bear the people God puts in our lives in prayer.

Requirements for the Holy Priests

#1 – They were to be washed – Leviticus 8:1-6

#2 – They were to bear the people on their hearts.

#3 – They were to minister by inspiration not perspiration – Leviticus 8:10-13

- The priests in Moses’ day were to be anointed with oil.
 - Now the symbol of oil all throughout the Old Testament was a picture of the Holy Spirit.

These men were to do their ministry not by the power of the flesh, not by their own ingenuity, they were not to minister simply by natural gifting, they were to minister and serve by the inspiration and the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

- And we see that not just in picture of the anointing oil but also in the type of clothes the priests were to wear.

The clothing options were kind of limited in Moses’ day.

- You did not have all the synthetic material we had today.
 - You had wool or linen.
- And God choose linen – why?

The prophet Ezekiel tells us...

“They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with anything that causes sweat.” – Ezekiel 44:18

- They were to wear linen so they wouldn’t sweat.
 - In other words God wanted the inspiration of the Spirit not the perspiration of the flesh to be the moving factor in their ministry.

And I believe the Lord feels the same way today.

- Paul said in the book of Col 1:27-29...

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” – Colossians 1:28-29

- The word “labor” right there in verse 29 means to “labor to the point of exhortation” as Pastor Rob used to remind us all the time.
 - And we certainly understand – there is no more important work than the work of winning souls.
 - So we understand what Paul is saying.

But what we sometimes do is look to ourselves as the motivation.

- We are going to change the world because we want to.
 - We are going to save the nations because I love them.
 - And so I am going to sweat and get this done.
 - And that is a recipe for disaster.
- We are not to be motivated by perspiration but inspiration.
 - The inspiration of what Jesus did for me – that He loves me.
 - Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14 – for the love of Christ constrains me.

Listen

- It is not my love for the people, I love you guys, but people will disappoint you, I will disappoint you.
 - If the love of people is your motivation – then as royal priests you are going to sweat and burn out.
- It is not my love for the people.

- And it is not even my love for the Lord.
- For we get distracted and disillusioned.
- Yes, because we are wrong but never the less – Lord, I will do this for you because I love.
- That will turn into perspiration.
- It is because God loved us.
 - Talk about the cross.
 - Talk about the forgiveness.
 - I must serve the Lord – because He loves me so much.

The Love of Christ is our motivation.

- The Holy Spirit is our inspiration.
 - You can do ministry in the power of your flesh.
 - It will all be perspiration if you do.
 - That is why Jesus said to the disciples “wait in Jerusalem” –don’t you dare try to do ministry in the power of the flesh – it will fail.

God spoke through the prophet Zechariah when the men and women of his day were up against a task that was beyond them, God said...

“Not by power, not by might, but by my Spirit says the Lord.” – Zechariah 4:6

- The priests in Moses’ day were to be anointed with oil.
 - You and I as royal priests need to be anointed as well.
 - Not with our abilities, or our own ingenuities.
 - We must be anointed with His Spirit to do the work He has for us.

Requirements for the Holy Priests

#1 – They were to be washed – Leviticus 8:1-6

#2 – They were to bear the people on their hearts

#3 – They were to minister by inspiration

#4 – They were to be righteous – Leviticus 8:14-24

- These priests, as we are, were required to be righteous, to be in right standing before the Lord.
 - Now they accomplished this by a list of sacrifices described in the verses we just read.
 - We of course are covered by the one sacrifice of Jesus.
- And can I just say as go through this book, I am so thankful for Jesus.
 - Can you image going through the process of having your body parts dipped in the blood of the sacrifice, holding dead animals parts in your hands to be qualified for ministry.
 - Aren’t you glad we have Jesus? – I am.
- But as we consider this section, the sacrifice was to affect the priests in three ways and I think it is the same three ways the sacrifice of Jesus needs to affect us.

#1 - They were to be covered by the sacrifice – this speaks of Positional Righteousness.

- The Priests, when they were to come before the Lord, they were to not come on their own merits, they needed to be covered in the blood.
 - It wasn’t that they had earned a place at a table or they had lived a life so pure, God now accepted them.
 - Not they were accepted because of the sacrifice.
- And that is the same thing with Jesus and us.
 - We are not able to serve Him and walk with Him because we have earned a place at the table, or because we have lived such a great life.

Now, the reason we can be here tonight to minister to the Lord, the reason we can be effective in our culture, is not because we have lived such a great life, but because He did.

- And then He went to the cross and a great exchange took place.
 - My life for His, His life for mine.
 - The righteousness of Jesus was imputed, transferred to you and me.
- And because of that – I am, and you are, if you know the Lord – positionally righteous.
 - Positionally righteous meaning – you may have a long way to go, many issues that still need to be worked out in your life.
 - But when God sees you, He sees you covered in the sacrifice of His son, He sees you as righteous.
 - Not because of what you have done, but because of what He has done.

#2 - They were to be altered by the sacrifice – this speaks of Practical Righteousness

- God sees me as righteous, not because of what I have done, but because of what He has done.
 - But that does not mean – oh please listen to me church – that does not mean that the grace and love of Jesus should not be making me more and more like Him every day.
 - I will never be sinless, but I should sin less because I know and love God.
 - This is real.
- And we see this pictured with the priests – they were covered by the sacrifice, but they were also altered by it – as the blood was placed on their toe, and on their ear, and on their hands...
 - It was speaking – I can't just live anyway I want anymore – I have been blood bought.

Where I choose to go – needs to be altered by my relationship with Jesus.

- What I listen to needs to be altered by my relationship with Jesus.
 - What I touch needs to be altered by my relationship with Jesus.

The priests would wear this big plate on their hats that said “holiness unto the Lord”.

- And it was a reminder to them – I was cleansed by the sacrifice yes, not my work – but I am suppose to be Holy.
 - Separated from this evil world.
 - It was a reminder to them.
- And friends we need constant reminding.
 - Are we allowing God and His Spirit to separate us from the sinful effects of the world, not the people of the world, not being salt and light, but the corrupted things – am I allowing Gods spirit to separate me or am I defending my right to go there, to listen to that, to put that into my brain and before my eyes.
 - All the time declaring – saved by grace – yes you are.
 - But grace should alter who you are.

#3 - They were to keep the sacrifice between them and the ministry – this speaks of a picture of how Righteousness works out in our lives.

- It was kind of strange ordination process.
 - The sons of Aaron were to take the inward parts of an animal – the fatty this and fatty that.
 - And they were to mix it with bread.
 - And then praying, Moses, please don't make us eat this sandwich – they were to put this mess in their arms and wave it before the Lord.
- Not wave with the hands, but back and forth.

And what they were saying symbolically was – Lord as I serve my the sacrifice stay between me and you, between me and those I minister to.

- I don't want you or others to see me in my flesh; I want them to see the purity and holiness of the sacrifice.
 - And the picture for us is staggering.

Every sacrifice is a picture of Jesus.

- This one because the inward hidden parts speak of His deity.
 - The bread, speaks of His humanity.
 - And in Jesus these were all mixed together as He walked the earth.
- And as priest, if I am going to be any good for this world, I need to keep Jesus between me and the ministry, between me and a holy God, between me and my family.
 - I want them to see Jesus not me.
 - I want them to see His holiness – not my flesh.
 - So I must cling to Jesus, I must hold on to Jesus, and keep Him ever before my face.

And we see the how, how I keep Jesus between me and every one else in the closing verses of chapter 8.

- The priests were to stay in the place of meeting.
 - They were to hang out in the presence of God to be ready to minister to the people.
- And when I say, I know I am covered with His righteousness, I know its about what He has done and not what I have done.
 - But I want to be Holy, I want to be set apart.
 - But every time I try, I fail – what do I do?

You linger in the place of meeting.

- You determine not to fix yourself, not to make great promises before the Lord.
 - But you determine to be with Him – to linger.

Because I am convinced God would say to us – I am Holy – that is who I am.

- And if you will draw near to me, I will draw near to you.
 - And if Isaiah and Ezekiel could warn the children of Israel that one of the dangers of worshipping a false, blind, dead God is they were going to become just like him – blind, dead.
- If that is true of an idol, how much more true of the true and living God.
 - He is holy – and as I linger in the place of meeting, as I decide to hang out with Him.
 - I will become like Him, I will become like the one I worship - I will be Holy!

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#5 – They were to do it – Leviticus chapter 9

- It's not enough to learn about what we are doing, we are to do it.
 - It not enough that you can tell other how to walk with God, how to pray, how to have fruitful times in God's Word.
 - You need to walk with God, you need to pray, and you need to have fruitful times in God's Word.

You see up to this point Moses has been offering the sacrifices and now it is time for Aaron to do it.

- But I love it, did you notice what his first offering was to be, a young bull, in other words, a calf.

- Does that ring a bell for anyone?
- Let me jar your memory, the first thing Aaron, Mr. golden calf, Mr. I threw their earrings into the fire and a calf came out, actually offered a calf to the Lord.

Oh the grace of the Lord.

- Seen so clearly in the life of Aaron the high priest.
 - What He must have felt in his heart as his first official act was to offer this calf.
 - It must have reminded him of all his sin, and endeared him to the grace of God for all his life.
- And I love it because this is the same way it is for all of us.
 - None of us deserve to serve Lord.
 - But we can't use that as an excuse to not serve the Lord.
- And the Lord showed his favor by sending fire, and the people worshiped, but oh if the story ended there.
 - But how about chapter 10:1-5?

What happened in chapter 10???

- We have some indication from the text, first of all they offered profane fire before the Lord, but what does that mean?
 - Well whatever it was, they were not concerned with the holiness of God and they were doing whatever they were doing to bring glory to them, not the Lord.
 - We think this because of the Lord's response, He says, "I am to be glorified, I am to be set apart" – they were glorifying themselves; they were drawing attention to themselves.
- As we serve and as we minister, we need to be careful.
 - God gives us natural gifts and abilities and He works through our personalities.
 - But the danger of that is people are drawn to us.
- Again – there is a part of that, that is good and God uses – there are worship leaders I am just drawn to, to their style, there are certain teachers I just identify with – God uses personality and styles.

But God says in Isaiah, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory I will not share with another." – Isaiah 42:8

- It is so important as God uses you that you remember, it is Him, not you, it is His name we glorify, not our own.
 - For most of us, our sinful hearts are filled with pride, I know for me, any good thing God does in your lives, through my life, is just grace and the goodness of God.
 - But it is an easy trip, to look at the great things I have done.
 - And that is nothing to mess around with.
- We must glorify the Lord and we must not forget about the holiness of God.
 - Look I know He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, but He is also holy, and I fear the Lord.
 - I know He is graceful, I couldn't take another breath if He wasn't, but I don't want to live in such a way where God has to choose between me and the truth of who He is, because I know who will lose out on that one – I want to fear the Lord.
 - And do nothing to misrepresent what He is to His people or draw unnecessary attention to myself – I really believe this is what was happening to Nahab and Abihu.
 - They were ministering in a way unconcerned for God's holiness or God's glory.
- Another indication of what was wrong is given in verse 8-11 – God uses this incident to warn Aaron and his sons to be under the influence of nothing but the Holy Spirit when they minister.

We live in a day in age where drinking is glorified and especially among those who are pastors – when I was in Texas there was this guy who was a friend of many in the church out there and he was a former youth pastor, as I was, and so we would talk, but I will never forget when he asked me, “what do you drink, before you go out to minister to kids?”

- What do I drink – water???
- Now what adult beverage do you drink to take the edge off before you minister?
- And he was serious – I don’t want to take anything off when I minister – I need to be on!
- But this is the thinking more and more today.

Now again let me be clear, it is not a sin to drink, it is always a sin to get drunk, but not to drink – my theology is good.

- However, I also believe we also must make sure nothing influences our lives except for God’s Holy Spirit.

Oh but Jason, Leviticus 10 is clear, this warning to Aaron and His sons was only for when they were on duty, when they were in the tabernacle – yes, true.

- And friends, as a kingdom of priests – you are always on duty.
 - I don’t know how many times I have gotten a call in the middle of the night – an accident has happened, someone has passed away, a marriage just ended, and I am suppose to be on, not buzzed, on – I am to be influenced by the Holy Spirit not the spirits of this world.

Precious people you have the freedom to drink – my only question is, is it wise? - Because you are always on my friend.

- And God tells Aaron and his sons, you need to be able to discern between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, you need to be ready to minister to my people.

Apparently, being under the influence of alcohol had something to do with these boys not caring about the holiness of God and they drew attention to themselves.

- And God killed them because of it.
 - But this event leads to the 6th things I think we need to consider about being holy priests.

Requirements for the Holy Priests

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#2 – They were to bear the people on their hearts

#3 – They were to minister by inspiration

#4 – They were to be righteous – Leviticus 8:14-24

#5 – They were to do it – Leviticus chapter 9

#6 – They were not to handle trials like the rest of the world – Leviticus 10:6-20

- As we read, we realize that Moses does not allow Aaron to react to the death of His sons like the rest of the world would.
 - Now please understand what that means and what it does not.
- It does not mean that Aaron could not show emotion and grief, there is nothing unbiblical about grief.
 - In the New Testament we see Jesus, even Jesus weeping over the death of Lazarus, and He knew He would raise him from the dead, but the emotions He and his friends were feeling were real and okay.
 - It is okay to grieve when a love one dies, it is okay to be frustrated at tough circumstances of trials.
- The fact that they could not respond to trials like the rest of the world did not mean they could not grieve, nor did it mean they had hide their feelings.
 - The whole part at the end of chapter 10 is about just that.

The priests were normally to partake with the people when an offering was given.

- It was a time of celebration and fellowship.
 - But Aaron did not partake and Moses not wanting anyone else to die rebukes his brother.
 - But Aaron makes it clear – I can't celebrate and rejoice today, my sons have just died and if I did, it would be contrived – God doesn't want that.

To handle trials differently than the world as a kingdom of priests doesn't mean we can't grieve and show emotion, it doesn't mean we have to put on a show.

- But it doesn't mean that we must be careful not to mourn, or show emotion in a way that makes it seem like God has done something wrong.
 - That is what Moses was warning Aaron about.
 - Acting in a way, where God is reprehensible to the people makes it seem like God is in the wrong.

Because friends, God is not in the wrong.

- And one group of people that should know that above all others, are those who know and love Him.
 - Now that doesn't mean it's not a challenge in our humanness.
 - But we must remind ourselves - God knows what He is doing, and He takes all things and works them for His good.
 - And as a kingdom of priests – we above all others need to know this.
- It is okay to sorrow, but not without hope, that is what Paul tells us in I Thessalonians – we have hope.
 - Hope in God – that He is still in control.
 - And of course a hope that when it comes to the loss of loved ones, the earnest expectation, we will see them again! – We have great hope!

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#6 – They were not to handle trials the same

#7 – They were to be different than the world – Leviticus 21-22

- Now I am going to leave the last 2 chapters for you to read and work through on your own.
 - The basic gist of the chapters is that the Levities were to be different than the world around them.
- It mattered who they married, how they lived, how they handled their job.
 - Their life was to be different.
 - Now for them, it partly had to do with the succession of the high priest, it had to be a son of Aaron, so whom the high priest married was important to ensure they knew whose child was really his.

But being different than this dying world is important for us as well.

- We again live in a church culture that tells us, that we must become like the world if we are going to reach the world.
 - And I do believe we need to be sensitive or lead by the Spirit in the way we act at church, how we speak, so that we don't misrepresent God to people or sinners He loves and wants to reach.
- But that said, most of you who came out of the world, came to the church because it was altogether different than the empty experience of the world you had known your whole life.
 - We want to be different – by His Spirit.