

## Living Beyond Myself, pt.2, 8.6.06

### The Priesthood

#### Introduction:

1. MLK quote: Not everyone can be famous, but all can be great, b/c greatness is determined by service;
2. The Incredibles– The father was bored & frustrated, the mother had given up, & the children didn't know who they were...the family was a mess...not a lot of joy...they were supposed to let the police do the work...in the end they all are using their strengths & come together to function as one and evil is vanquished & good prevails...there was a lot of excitement.
3. Fairly good description of the body of Christ both positively & negatively.
4. In New (explain the Kingdom...just came preaching “repent the kingdom of God is at hand” this was more than just turn from your sins, but also change your mind about how God operates...he's no longer confining himself to one nation – Israel – and one tribe – Levites)kingdom living, we each have super powers given to us by the HS & we use them for the good of others...we each serve as priests ministering the love, peace, power and grace of God to others.

#### 1 Peter 2.4–10:

Peter is addressing the collective nature of spiritual growth; Christianity isn't just an individual spirituality, but a collective one also...my growth in the Lord is connected to your growth in the Lord...just like a spouse can only go so far in her growth in the Lord with an unbelieving spouse, so also can I only go to a certain level spiritually based upon your growth in the Lord.

Illustrate with a group holding hands and walking together up the platform (You don't even notice a drag); another group holding hands, but some tugging one way, another tugging this way, one pressing ahead, one has let go, one fell on the ground, etc. A church can move

ahead easily when all are united and pressing into God, but more difficult when we're disjointed and apathetic about our relationship with God.

Great metaphors:

The central metaphor is the Temple

Verse 4 – Living Stone – The word stone being used here isn't rock, but a stone that has been made ready for building purposes. Jesus, a solid foundation to build our lives on; paradoxical metaphor – stones aren't living, they are dead & immovable; yet Jesus is immovable, yet living & full of life.

Verse 5 – back to v.4, “as you come to him...you also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house.” v

“Come” –drawing near...both an intention to stay and for personal interaction/fellowship...it is the picture of the priest approaching God. “living stones are being built up to a spiritual house” – we are not stones scattered across a field. As followers of Jesus, we have been shaped into His image and then joined together on top of the sure foundation in Christ and we have a living & breathing relationship with each other.

Illustrate with a Southern style plantation home, elegant, but all the curtains are drawn, windows shut, no natural light, on a beautiful spring day...inside it's dark, musty with a hint of mildew, the floors creak and it's depressing...suddenly you open every window & shade & door & life comes streaming in from every side (wonderful smells, sights, noises & sensations touch your person). This is what we are as the children of God united together in both a local church & the church universal.

“to be a holy priesthood” – switches metaphors from stones to priest.

1 Pet.2.10 – “royal priesthood.” – what it means to be a priest.

**The Old Kingdom Living & New Kingdom Priesthood**

Intro: The death of Christ & the coming of the HS opened the priesthood to everyone. He came upon all flesh and empowered all to serve and through the blood of Jesus gave everyone direct access to God.

**OK:** God chose only 1 of the twelve tribes (Levites) to be priests and only one family among the Levites could directly approach God in the holy of holies (Aaron's family). Hierarchy developed: God chose Israel -> Tribe of Levi -> Aaron's family.

**NK:** God chose all of us (Christ followers) to be priests and b/c of the blood of Jesus we can each approach God. (1 Tim.2.5) Jesus is the great high priest and we go directly to Him. We all have the same standing (Gal.3.28). Some aren't more forgiven than others; some aren't more special than others. WE'RE ALL GOD'S FAVORITE!!

Appl: This OK mentality still hangs on in two ways: 1. We make a distinction between clergy and laity. We are all in the ministry. We're all priests. Ministry is serving others. My primary ministry outside of my home is serving in this church, whereas most of your primary ministry is either at home, school or work. There is nothing I do (baptisms, serving the LS, preaching, funerals & marriages - state requires a license for performing weddings, praying for the sick, etc.) that you can't do according to the Bible. Under the OK, the priests were designated to perform task that no one else could perform. Some of us God has called to serve in church leadership roles to give guidance & direction, but we aren't at a higher level of priests. The deacons serve the Lord's supper not b/c they are more qualified or holier than others and therefore can handle the body and blood of Christ. They distribute the bread & juice b/c they are servants and servants serve others. 2. We think we aren't worthy to approach God, but others are (the preacher, the good person)...we are all unworthy, but the blood of Jesus has taken away my unworthiness & I can stand in confidence before God.

**OK:** Each priest had both general responsibilities (ceremonially clean, certain procedures they had to follow, general rules to live by, etc.) and specific duties (certain family groups had specific duties God assigned

them – cleaning, moving, sacrificing, teaching, fix, etc). They weren't cross trained.

**NK:** As a priest, I have general responsibilities (serve others, living a set a part life) and specific duties (use my spiritual gifts, specific calling, following the promptings of the HS, – Eph.2.10).

Appl: My life

Summarize: A NK priest is chosen by God and has direct access to Him. A NK priest serves God by living a life devoted to Him and others and fulfilling specific assignments (using sg, following promptings, etc) .

TS – The last two weeks I've talked about living a life devoted to God & serving others. Let's consider the specific duties as it relates to our spiritual gifts and passions.

### The Specific Duties of a New Kingdom Priest

#### 1. Use my spiritual gifts

- a. Definition – A spiritual gift or ability given to a person by the Holy Spirit to be evidenced in his/her life for the building up and completing of the body of Christ.
- b. Purposes
  - i. To serve others – 1 Pet.4.10. We experience the grace of God when someone is using their spiritual gift or ability to serve God. Give examples
  - ii. To complete the body of Christ &
  - iii. To show who God is – 1 Cor.12.4–7 (The Message)
  - iv. To build up the body – Eph.4.12–16
- c. Degrees of gifting/ability – Matt.25.14–30; Rom.12.3, 6
- d. Developing the gift/ability – Matt.25.14–30
  - i. God expects you to develop the gift.
  - ii. Disuse – there can be a withdrawal of the Lord's presence on the gift if you don't use it...you probably won't be able to pick up as quickly or at all.
  - iii. Misuse – God has placed giftings on everyone and some use it in a honorable way and others don't

2. Walk in my passion – I think this is most important.
  - a. Definition – Passion is a sustained yearning to serve God and his people through a particular way.
  - b. Purpose: To give direction to the spiritual gift and enhance its effectiveness.
  - c. Discovering your passion: What has excited you about serving God and others? Keeps you up at night; you don't tire at doing

Summarize...you are a priest

If you call this your church home, you need to be involved in some ministry of this church. Like the Incubators, God didn't give you superhuman abilities to only be enjoyed by you; they were given to serve others. God didn't call you to Willow for you to sit on the bench and watch everyone else play the game. Don't wait for someone to ask you. Go ask a ministry leader, talk with me or LT, look in the Ministry Booklet, etc.

Just think what our church would look like if...