

BLESSEDNESS OF THE TRUTH: EVERY BELIEVER, A PRIEST

Intro: - Last week we saw that Christ Jesus was anointed to be our only high priest. The title priest tells us that it is one who approaches unto God.
 - What a lovely priest he is. And the oil of gladness runs down from his head to his beard and to the bottom of his garments. Not one of his saints left out.
 -We share his anointing, we are made priests unto our God. What is this work and service?

I. PROMISED.

- A. Our original creation
 1. When God created humanity, we were God's friends and servants. We could approach God in worship and obedience.
 2. We were created so that with our volitional side of our human nature, we willed the will of God.
 3. We did not need another to approach unto God. But since our fall, the way to God is cut off.
 4. God loves his precious people and he must bring them unto himself (Ex.19:4). This is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- B. God's message points to the character of his peculiar treasure.
 1. They will be to him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).
 2. The essential idea of priests is that of consecration and service in love. God's people know and love God.
 3. We are to be consecrated to God with all our being.
 4. This priesthood is realized in Christ and through outpouring of the Spirit all God's people are priests.
- C. The OT priesthood.
 1. Not all were priests in the OT. Moses by the law sets up the priesthood of Aaron and the tribe of Levi (Ex. 28).
 2. God displays his consuming holiness by his coming in the thick cloud.
 3. The inner spiritual holiness of the people must be typically manifested in their being sanctified when God comes to speak
 4. Their fellowship with God is limited: they tremble and stand afar, and can come only by way of bloody sacrifice .
 5. This shows how inferior the people were then compared with today.
 6. The law at Sinai must drive the people by way of promise and hope to Christ in whom alone is holiness.

II. FULFILLED!

- A. Christ causes all those who are his to be priests of God.
 1. In Luke 4:21, Jesus preaches that Isa. 6:1-6 is fulfilled. It is through Jesus' death and resurrection and Pentecost.
 2. This is the gospel that continues to be preached (I Pet. 2:9).
 3. Through Christ we no longer stand afar off; all is peace and joy and fellowship in Christ Jesus.
 4. This is true not just of men, or of deacons, or ministers.
 5. This was the great issue of the Reformation, and continues to be our present objection to Roman Catholicism!
- B. The work of NT priests compared first with the work of Christ as priest:
 1. The catechism makes this comparison. Christ is the anointed. But his anointing drips down upon his garments.
 2. But there is a radical difference between Christ's and our priesthood. He is the Only High Priest.
 3. Christ has presented **the** sacrifice, the only sacrifice that removes sin (Heb.9:28, 10:12-18).
 4. There are other kinds of sacrifices that can be made: peace/fellowship and thank offerings.
- C. The sacrifice of New Testament priests:
 1. These offerings come not by law but from **a heart of love** (II Cor. 8:1-12, II Cor. 9:6,7, Gal. 6:9-10).
 2. Our sacrifices arise out **the antithesis**: in holiness we say yes to God and no to all that is opposed to him (Heb. 13:15,16).
 3. It is a work in which the priest **offers himself** to God (Rom. 12:1,2).
 4. Is there anything that you will not sacrifice if it gets in the way of your approach to and joy & fellowship with God?

III. PERFECTED.

- A. Now a small beginning. Do not despise small beginnings! There is a place for those of service and consecration!
 1. Christ is our altar!
 2. In Heb. 13:15 we are called to offer the sacrifice of praise. We do this individually and collectively as a congregation.
 3. There must be the **continual** praise of our lips, giving thanks to his name.
 4. In Heb. 13:16 we are commanded "to do good and to communicate..." We do this through the office of deacon.
 5. In Prov. 11:14,15 we read of the need to scatter liberally, wherever the Lord places us, beginning first with family.
 6. We are priests who approach God in prayer, making continual intercession (James 5:16): Self, family, church, kingdom.
 7. We serve and love God and approach him through the personal holiness of each saint (Romans 12:2).
- B. We are brought near to God.
 1. We may enter boldly unto the throne of grace, confident that we will find mercy.
 2. We enjoy constant fellowship with God by his Word and Spirit. We do not stand afar off, but brought near.
 3. We have already joy unspeakable. Do you experience this in our worship, in your home life, in your work and walk?
 4. Let the fire upon our altar be ever burning, offering up all that is ours unto God as a living sacrifice of thanksgiving.
 5. Priests of the Lord lift up the hands which hang down and feeble knees.
- C. One day we will be with Christ.
 1. Then we will not longer have to fight a sinful nature or endure constant temptations.
 2. We will see him face to face, perfectly worshipping and serving him forever as the angels do.
 3. What a lovely priesthood, day and night in God's presence in serve and love forever. Come Lord Jesus!