

Sermon #22 — *Discovering Christ in Leviticus*

Title: **“AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD”**

Text: Leviticus 8:1-36

Subject: *The Priesthood of Believers*

Date: Tuesday Evening — October 16, 2018

Readings: *Merle Hart and David Burge*

Introduction:

Everything in the ceremonial worship of the Old Testament was typical. The whole system of carnal ordinances in Jewish worship was designed by God to show us in type and picture the way of true, spiritual worship by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Aaron was a type of Christ our great High Priest, who made atonement for the sins of his people by the sacrifice of himself.
- The paschal lamb, slain on the day of atonement, represented Christ, the Lamb of God who, by his death, put away our sins.
- Laying hands on the head of the sacrifice to be slain portrayed faith in Christ.
- And the tabernacle was typical of the whole work of redemption accomplished by him, showing forth the great glory of the Triune God in salvation.

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It is idolatrous for men and women today to call upon any priest, other than Christ our High Priest. It is blasphemous for sinners to offer any sacrifice to God for sin, other than Christ who was once sacrificed to put away sin. And it is base superstition to look upon any material building as a holy place, as though it were the tabernacle or temple of God. God’s church is his temple. The church universal is the house and temple of God. Every congregation of true believers, gathered in the name of Christ, is the house and temple of God. And every individual believer is the temple of God. God dwells in his people! And our worship of God, if it is true worship, is entirely spiritual (John 4:23-24; Philippians 3:3).

In this spiritual worship of God every believer is a priest. The Roman church has its priests. The Episcopal Church has its priests. And the Mormon Church has its priests. In each of those societies of wickedness, blind, ignorant, deluded men are kept in bondage and taught that they cannot approach God

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except through the medium of the priest, who is himself only a sinful man. I tell you, upon the authority of God’s Holy Word, that no man will ever draw near to God in faith, until he approaches God, not through the medium of some pretended earthly priest, but through Jesus Christ himself, our only true Priest.

Proposition: And all who come to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are themselves priests unto God (1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). **Every true believer in Christ Jesus is a priest, one who has perpetual access to God by faith through the merits of Christ.**

My text is Leviticus 8:1-36. But, before we look at that chapter together, I want you to turn for just a minute to 1 Peter 2.

This is what Peter tells us (1 Peter 2:5). — “*Ye also, as lively stones, (you who come to Christ the Living Stone), are built up a spiritual house, an holy*

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priesthood.” That is my subject — **“AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD.”** You who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are **“AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD.”**

As priests of the most high God, it is our privilege *“to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”* **Read verse 9** — *“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”* **We need no earthly priests, for we are priests ourselves.**

You may not be able to read or write, but if you are truly converted, you are a priest unto God. You may never stand behind a pulpit, or even lead the people of God in public prayer, but if you believe on Christ you are a priest unto God. You ladies are commanded of God to be silent in the public assembly of God’s saints. Yet, you, too, belong to this holy priesthood. All the children of God are priests.

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As in the Old Testament there was one sin atoning high priest, though all the sons of Aaron were priests in the service of God, even so, the Lord Jesus Christ alone is our great, sin-atoning High Priest and all the sons of God are priests in him.

Divisions: In Leviticus 8 the Holy Spirit shows us how priests were made under the Mosaic law. In this chapter we are given many things which are richly suggestive and typical of our spiritual priesthood. We will come back to this chapter again; but in this message, I want to show you seven things by which believers are made to be priests unto God. **Here are seven characteristics of those chosen, redeemed sinners who are “an holy priesthood” unto God.**

1. Those who are priests unto God have been chosen by God himself (v. 2).
2. Every priest must be cleansed before the Lord (v. 6).
3. All the Lord’s priests are clothed with the same garments (v. 13).

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4. The only way anyone can enter this priesthood is by birth.
5. All this holy priesthood is anointed for the service of God (v. 30).
6. Every member of this holy priesthood is consecrated to the Lord (vv. 22-24).
7. All this holy priesthood offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing to God by Christ Jesus (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

CHOSEN BY GOD

1st — **Those who are priests unto God have been chosen by God himself** (v. 2).

(Leviticus 8:2) “Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread.”

The Lord said to Moses, “*Take Aaron and his sons.*” The priesthood was not something men decided

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upon, voted upon, or chose for themselves. Only those chosen, elected, and ordained by God were allowed to serve as priests (Exodus 28:1; Hebrews 5:1-5; 1 Peter 2:5-9).

(Exodus 28:1) “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.”

(Hebrews 5:1-5) “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: (2) Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. (3) And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. (4) And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. (5) So also Christ glorified

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not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.”

(1 Peter 2:5-9) “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. (6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (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.”

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If you are a part of God’s “*holy priesthood*,” it is because God from eternity chose you, elected you, and ordained you to be his own. Salvation does not begin with man’s will, but with God’s will. Salvation is not caused by man’s will. It is caused by God’s will. Men and women are not saved because they will to be saved. We are saved because God from eternity willed to save us. All who are born of God readily confess that they are debtors to sovereign grace alone.

‘Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For Lord that could not be;
This heart would still refuse Thee,
But Thou hast chosen me:
Thou from the sin that stained me
Washed me and set me free,
And to this end ordained me,
That I should live to Thee.

‘Twas sovereign mercy called me,

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And taught my opening mind;
The world had else enthralled me,
To heavenly glories blind:
My heart owns none before Thee,
For Thy rich grace I thirst,
This knowing – if I love Thee,
Thou must have loved me first!

MUST BE CLEANSED

2nd — **Every priest must be cleansed before God**
(v. 6).

(Leviticus 8:6) “And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.”

“*Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.*” — That is one cleansing. It was done with water, ceremonially. But throughout the chapter we see that these priests were cleansed several times, not by water only, but by blood and water. In verse 2 we are told that they brought a

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bullock for a sin-offering and two rams. The blood of the bullock was poured out at the bottom of the altar. And the blood of one of the rams was sprinkled upon the altar. In this manner the priests were cleansed before God. Without the shedding of blood, none were clean. This is exactly the way we are cleansed from sin before God.

Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

This typical, ceremonial cleansing of these priests is full of spiritual instruction.

Our cleansing from sin was accomplished at Calvary. — When Christ was slain, we were cleansed from all sin and guilt before God. When Christ died, we were redeemed. When the Son of God offered his own precious blood, atonement was

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made and our redemption was obtained (Hebrews 9:12).

But the atonement, effectually accomplished at Calvary, must be applied to our hearts experimentally by the Spirit through the Word. —

Though we were cleansed of all sin before God when Christ died, we knew nothing about it until the blood was applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Our consciences were yet defiled with the guilt of sin, until the Holy Spirit showed us what Christ did for us by the gospel. Then, in regeneration, we were experimentally cleansed. **This is what the washing with water represents. It does not represent baptism. It represents the regenerating grace of God and the cleansing power of the gospel, the Word of God** (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:4-7; Hebrews 9:13-14).

(Titus 3:4-7) “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
(5) Not by works of righteousness which we

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have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

And the cleansing atonement of Christ must be personally received by faith (vv. 18-19).

(Leviticus 8:18-19) “And he brought the ram for the burnt offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. (19) And he killed *it*; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.”

As Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram slain for their cleansing, we who believe lay our hands of faith upon the head of Christ, the Lamb of God, trusting him alone to cleanse us from all sin, accepting him as our sin-atonement Substitute.

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God will have no priests in his sanctuary who have not been cleansed by the blood of Christ. Until you trust Christ, all your religious exercises are vain oblations, unacceptable and abominable in God’s sight. Before you can serve God, you must be cleansed. Go to Christ, the true Altar. By faith in him lay your sin upon Christ, the true Sacrifice, as God laid your sin upon him at Calvary. Until you do, you cannot be cleansed from sin. And you cannot be a part of this holy priesthood.

Another thing that strikes me about the cleansing of the Aaronic priests is the fact that **they had to be cleansed every day.** — Initially they had to be completely bathed, washed from head to toe. But each day, before they began their service, they had to wash their hands and feet. We who are the priests of God know the need of this daily cleansing (John 13:1-10).

CLOTHED WITH THE SAME GARMENTS

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3rd — Now, look at this *third* feature of the priesthood. — **All the Lord’s priests are clothed with the same garments** (v. 13). No matter how clean they were, these men had to be clothed with suitable attire, or they could not appear before the Lord. **Aaron, as the high priest, was distinctly arrayed in gorgeous garments** (vv. 7-12). **But all the sons of Aaron were clothed alike.** None of them had even a thread of their own stitching.

- The garments were made for them,
- given to them,
- and put upon them by another.

(Leviticus 8:13) “And Moses brought Aaron’s sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Every priest had a coat put upon him. — These priestly coats were like the coat worn by our Lord Jesus, all of one piece, woven from top to bottom, hanging from the shoulder and draping the body.

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You know what that coat represents. — The righteousness of Christ imputed to us and given to us at the moment of conversion.

Illustration: *“Bring hither the best robe!”*

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Until God puts this robe upon you, you cannot serve him. But I tell you, as soon as you come to Christ he will put this robe upon you.

Every priest was also girded with a girdle. — We are told that our Lord Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest, is *“girt about the paps with a golden girdle”* (Revelation 1:13). That is the girdle of his faithfulness, truth, and love. And Christ Jesus gives each of his own a girdle of faithfulness, truth, and love.

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Girdles were used as huge belts to hold up the long, flowing garments men used to wear, as well as to lend strength and support to the body. Men engaged in labor, travel, or battle strapped on a girdle to brace themselves and hold their robes up. Every priest of Christ is given a girdle of faithfulness to carry him through his appointed labors.

And each priest was given a bonnet, or a turban.
— These turbans distinguished the priests from other men. They were given for glory and beauty. This too applies to us. **The Lord God has made his people glorious, honorable, and beautiful in his own eyes.**
We are not merely accepted, but beloved. We are not merely washed, but admirable. We are not merely free from condemnation, but full of imparted beauty (Ezekiel 16:8-14).

(Ezekiel 16:8-14) “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and

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covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. (9) Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. (10) I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. (11) I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. (12) And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. (13) Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. (14) And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.”

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The Lord Jesus says to every saved sinner, “*Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee...Thou hast ravished my heart!*” (Song of Solomon 4:7, 9). Our Savior so falls in love with his own image in each saved sinner, that his own heart is captured.

ONLY BY BIRTH

4th — I want you to notice that **the only way anyone can enter this priesthood is by birth.** — The only way anyone could be a part of the Aaronic priesthood was by being born into the family of Aaron. And the only way you can become a part of that holy priesthood of which Jesus Christ is the Head is to be born again into the family of God. In order to be a priest, capable of serving God acceptably, “*Ye must be born again.*” You cannot and will not serve God until you are given a new heart, a new will, and a new nature by the sovereign, regenerating grace and power of God the Holy Ghost.

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ANOINTED FOR SERVICE

5th — **All this holy priesthood, all who are washed in the blood of Christ, clothed with his righteousness and born of God, are anointed for the service of God** (v. 30).

(Leviticus 8:30) “And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which *was* upon the altar, and sprinkled *it* upon Aaron, *and* upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons’ garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, *and* his garments, and his sons, and his sons’ garments with him.”

Aaron was anointed with the holy oil poured upon his head. Then all the sons of Aaron were anointed. Even so, the Lord Jesus Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure and all who are in Christ by faith are also anointed as priests unto God.

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All of God’s elect have the anointing of the Holy Spirit symbolized by the holy oil (1 John 2:20, 27).

(1 John 2:20) “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

(1 John 2:27) “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

I know that men talk about this anointing of the Holy Spirit, as though it were some mystical, second work of grace, which some believers have and others have not. But that is not the case. This anointing flows to all believers freely from and through the Lord Jesus Christ. **According to John, the thing that distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever is this anointing of the Spirit** (1 John 2:19-20).

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(1 John 2:19-20) “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (20) But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

NOTE: I do not suggest that there are no special fillings of the Spirit, demonstrations of divine power, manifestations of the Spirit’s presence, by which we are enabled to carry out the work he would have us to do. Without the power of the Holy Spirit our praying, preaching, worship, singing, witnessing, writing, all our labor for Christ is vain. We must have the Holy Spirit. I do not minimize his person, his power, or his work. Without him we are nothing and we can do nothing for Christ. But I do mean for all to understand that all of God’s children are complete in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the “Heirloom” which our Savior passed along to his children (Galatians 3:13-14).

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(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

- Thank God for the anointing of the Spirit he has given you.
- Pray for the power of the Spirit to be upon you.

This anointing of the Spirit is our sanctification in the experience of grace. — As Aaron and his sons were sanctified symbolically by the anointing oil poured out upon them. And we are truly sanctified, made holy, by the Spirit of God’s anointing in regeneration.

- In election we were set apart for holy purposes, separated unto God and sanctified (Jude 1).

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- In redemption we were declared to be holy, sanctified by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:10).
- And in regeneration we are made holy, sanctified, by the grace of God imparting to us and creating in us a holy nature (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

CONSECRATED TO THE LORD

6th — I want you to see that, like Aaron’s sons, **every member of this holy priesthood is consecrated to the Lord** (vv. 22-24).

(Leviticus 8:22-24) “And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. (23) And he slew *it*; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put *it* upon the tip of Aaron’s right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. (24) And he brought Aaron’s sons, and Moses put of the

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blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.”

The blood of Christ, when applied to the hearts of men and women by the Holy Spirit, causes them to be consecrated to the Lord. **This consecration is not perfect, but it is entire.** The whole man is consecrated to Christ. God’s priests are not partially consecrated to Christ. They are entirely consecrated to him.

The believer’s ear is consecrated to God by the blood of Christ. — The consecrated ear hears the voice of God. The believer hears what unregenerate men cannot hear. He hears the voice of God in his Word, in the preaching of the gospel, and in providence. He listens, not for an audible voice from heaven, but for the still, small voice from within saying, “*This is the way, walk ye in it.*”

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The believer’s hand is consecrated to God by the blood of Christ. — The hand refers to work and labor and to all the activities of life. The believer is a person who works for God. All that he does is done with an eye to his God. Whether he eats or drinks, works in the factory or labors in the ministry, all that he does he does for the glory of God. His garments are praise. His meals are feasts unto the Lord. His work is God-service. All his days are sabbath days. The blood is upon his hand, so that all he does is consecrated to God.

And the believer’s foot is consecrated to God by the blood of Christ. — As the ear refers to hearing and the hand to working, the foot refers to your manner of life as you travel through this world. The consecrated foot follows his Master. The believer’s life is governed not by riches, pleasures, or comforts, but by Christ. He seeks not wealth, or even economic stability. He seeks Christ (Song of Solomon 1:7).

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(Song of Songs 1:7) “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?”

- Consecrated feet carry a man to the house of God, never away from it.
- Consecrated feet carry a man in the way of obedience, never in the way of rebellion.
- Consecrated feet pursue the cause of Christ, not the interests of self.

NOTE: Anything not consecrated to and used for God must be destroyed (v. 32).

(Leviticus 8:32) “And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread shall ye burn with fire.”

SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

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7th — **All this holy priesthood offers up spiritual sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing to God by Christ Jesus** (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

(1 Peter 2:5) “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.”

(1 Peter 2:9) “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

God’s priests always come to God through the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. They offer no sacrifice of expiation. Christ alone is our sacrifice of atonement and expiation. But **we offer the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.**

- The believer first sacrifices himself to Christ (Romans 12:1-2).

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- Then he offers to God the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving — the calves of his lips (Hebrews 13:13).
- He sacrifices his possessions to the cause of Christ and the service of the gospel (Philippians 4:19).
- All the sacrifices made by believers to their God are willing, voluntary sacrifices (2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:7).

APPLICATION

Thanks be unto our God, the God of all grace, that there is a Priest before God through whom sinners may come to God and be saved (Hebrews 7:24-27).

(Hebrews 7:24-27) “But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. (25) Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make

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intercession for them. (26) For such an high priest became us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;* (27) Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”

Now, I have one more word to you who believe, to you who by the grace of God have been made “*an holy priesthood.*” — Let us one and all consecrate ourselves afresh to God as priests dedicated to his service, whose ears and hands and feet have the mark of blood upon them. — *“Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). — *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Amen.