

SPIRITUAL PRIESTHOOD

TEXT: I PETER 2:1-10

Introduction:

1. Many years ago, the great preacher, H.A. Ironside, was traveling by train in Canada from one preaching engagement to another.
2. Seated next to him and his family on the train was a Roman Catholic priest, a Franciscan wearing a long robe.
3. H. A. Ironside initiated a friendly conversation, and soon the priest asked him what type of work he was engaged in. Ironside replied that he was "a catholic priest engaged in missionary work."
4. The priest looked suspiciously at Ironside's plain business suit as well as his wife and children, and said, "I think you are jesting with me. Surely you are not a Catholic priest."
5. Ironside: "Yes. I am indeed a priest; I am thoroughly serious with you."
6. "But you're not wearing a Roman collar," the priest said.
7. Ironside explained, "I did not say I was a Roman priest. I said I was a catholic priest."
8. From this point on Ironside was able to explain the Scriptures to the Roman Catholic priest and give him the Gospel.
9. I have never tried this approach when witnessing to priests, but Ironside was correct (I Peter 2:5, 9). All true believers are priests.
10. And the word "catholic" means "universal."
11. Baptists generally shy away from some of these words, and others such as bishop, sanctuary, and sacrament because they have been corrupted by the Roman Catholic Church.
12. But the priesthood of believers is a Bible doctrine and one of our Baptist distinctives.
 - Bible is our only authority.
 - Autonomy of the local church.
 - **Priesthood of the believer**
 - Two ordinances (Believer's Baptism and Lord's Supper)
 - Individual soul liberty (freedom of religion -- Rom. 14:12)
 - Saved church membership
 - Two offices (Pastor & Deacon)
 - Separation of church and state
13. Tonight we will consider this important doctrine -- the spiritual priesthood (I Peter 2:5).

I. SPIRITUAL GROWTH (2:1-3)

1. "Wherefore" (2:1) connects chapter 2 with chapter 1. Because we are "born again" by the Word of God (1:23), we need to grow spiritually "as newborn babes" (2:2).
2. Just as little babies need much guidance and instruction, so do baby Christians (2:2).
3. Christians are to lay aside "all malice and all guile" (2:1). Some believers lay aside some malice and some guile, but we must lay it all aside!
4. "Malice" is the harboring of evil thoughts against another person. Malice encourages antagonism and hostility, anger and bitterness. It is the opposite of love.
5. "Guile" is deceit, trickery, and dishonesty. This would include students cheating on exams, and adults cheating on their taxes. It would include money scams, Ponzi schemes, shady business deals, bribes, etc.
6. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies..." (2:1). Insincerity and pretense is always offensive but especially when practiced by religious people.
7. Our Lord's sharpest words were directed at the scribes and Pharisees. In Matthew 23, our Lord said over and over, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).
8. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies..." (2:1). Envy is a terrible sin. Acts 7:9 says Joseph's brothers "moved with envy" when they sold him into Egypt.
9. Matthew 27:18 says Pontius Pilate knew that "for envy" the Pharisees wanted Christ crucified.
10. Proverbs 27:4 says, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?"
11. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (2:1).
12. Evil speaking would include gossip. I heard about a woman who came forward at the invitation and told the pastor, "Pastor, I am laying my tongue on the altar." He said, "Sister, this altar isn't big enough for your tongue!"

13. Evil speaking would include backbiting, slander, and character assassination.
14. This is all part of our carnal nature. That is why Ephesians 4:22-24 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."
15. For spiritual growth, we must "desire the sincere milk of the word," that we may grow thereby (2:2).
16. The sins referred to in I Peter 2:1 stunt our spiritual growth. Studying God's Word nourishes spiritual growth (cf. II Peter 3:18).
17. It is a great blessing for me as a pastor to see Christians growing in the Lord. On the other hand, it is discouraging to see others remain immature and carnal (cf. I Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14).
18. In I Peter 2:3, Peter is quoting Psalm 34:8, "O taste and see that the LORD is good."
19. I love that old song:
*Have you "tasted that the Lord is gracious,"
 Do you walk in the way that's new?
 Have you drunk from the living Fountain?
 There's Honey in the Rock for you.*

II. SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION (2:4-8)

1. In these next five verses, there are four references to the Lord Jesus Christ being our chief corner stone."
2. The corner stone represents the entire foundation of the building. Ephesians 2:20 says, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."
3. Our Lord is also called "a rock of offence" (2:8). Christ is the Rock of Ages. The church is built upon Christ, not Peter (as the Roman Catholic Church teaches).
4. First Corinthians 3:11 says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
5. First Corinthians 10:4 says, "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

6. *This Rock is Jesus, Yes He's the One*
This Rock is Jesus, the only One
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock.
7. Daniel the prophet referred to Christ as "a stone was cut out without hands" (Dan. 2:34).
8. When He returns, this Stone will smite the image that became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). That is a prophecy of our Lord coming back to defeat the antichrist and his one-world government.
9. To those of us who have trusted Christ, He indeed is "precious" (I Peter 2:7). But to those who do not believe He is "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" (2:8).
10. Sinners stumble at the Word of God but unless they repent they will stumble into hell.
11. Sinners "stumble at the Word" (2:8), not because they cannot understand it, but because they will not obey it. Note the word "disobedient" (2:7, 8).
12. Mark Twain said, "It is not the things in the Bible that I cannot understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand that bother me!"
13. Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 -- "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner" (cf. I Peter 2:7).
14. Our Lord quoted this Scripture several times. He said in Mark 12:10, " And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner."

III. SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES (2:5, 9).

1. All New Testament believers are priests (2:5, 9). Ours is a spiritual priesthood.
2. Ours is a "holy priesthood" (2:5).
3. Ours is a "royal priesthood" (2:9).
4. A holy priesthood is important. Isaiah 52:11 says, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD."
5. It grieves me that so many of the Roman Catholic priests are immoral. Many are drunkards. Many are homosexual.
6. And it grieves me that many sincere Roman Catholics follow them blindly. Our Lord said, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14).

7. Unlike the Levitical priests who offered up animal sacrifices, our sacrifices are strictly spiritual.
- For example, our bodies are to be presented as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1, 2).
 - We are to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).
 - Sacrificing our time doing good (Hebrews 13:16).
 - The sacrifice of giving and sharing (Hebrews 13:16).

CONCLUSION:

1. Our priestly ministry involves showing forth the praises of God who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light (I Peter 2:9).
2. Isaiah 43:21 says, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."
3. Israel often failed to show forth God's praise, and regrettably the New Testament church has often failed.
4. Those without Christ are in "darkness" (I Peter 2:9). It is our job to reach them with the Gospel.