

“The Priestly Ordination”
Exodus 29:1-37
(Preached at Trinity, January 11, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 7** ended with an introduction to the Levitical priesthood.
Exodus 27:21 – “. . . Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.”
2. This served as a transition into **Chapter 28** where God began to give instructions concerning the priesthood.
 - A. The Tabernacle was designed by God as the place of Israel’s worship. It was the place where they entered into the presence of the living God. It was a place where sacrifices would be offered up in atonement for their sins.
 - B. But the service of the Tabernacle was not self-service. God ordained particular men who would be set apart for the service of the Tabernacle. Only the priests entered into the holy place.
3. As we’ve gone through the section of Exodus dealing with the Tabernacle we’ve seen a general description of some of the priestly duties.
 - A. The priests were to bake the holy bread and place it on the Table of Showbread.
 - B. They were responsible for all of the holy utensils associated with the Tabernacle.
 - C. They offered sacrifices on the altar in the courtyard
 - D. They were responsible for taking down, transporting, and setting up the Tabernacle throughout the journeys of Israel.
 - E. It was the duty of the priests to keep the candles filled with oil and perpetually burning.
4. **Chapter 28** dealt with two things given by divine order:
 - A. First, it gives God’s orders as to who would serve in the priestly office. In the first of the long line of priests Aaron and his sons were set apart.
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.”
 - B. Second, **Chapter 28** gives God’s orders concerning the clothing of the priests.
Exodus 28:4 – “And these *are* the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office.”
The priestly garments described the nature of the priestly office and their work.
Exodus 28:2 – “And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.”
5. As we enter **Chapter 29** Moses continues writing about God’s orders concerning the priesthood. This chapter describes the ordination of the priests. Ordination has always been a special moment in the life of the man called of God to a life of service.

- A. Paul reminded Timothy of his ordination.
1 Timothy 4:14 – “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”
- B. Men called to the office of pastor today are still blessed by this moment. After years of studying the Scriptures and systematic Theology and learning how to shepherd God’s people they finally kneel and are set apart through prayer and the laying on of hands.
6. Ordination of the Jewish priesthood was important. The priest was to be the one who represented Israel before God. He was the one who actually entered into the presence of God to offer up sacrifices on behalf of the people. He had to be consecrated, set apart as God’s holy priest.
7. God gave four elements in the ordination of the Old Covenant priest.
- First, there was a ceremonial washing with water.
Exodus 29:4 – “And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.”
 - Second, the priest was robed with the proper garments
Exodus 29:5-6 – “And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: ⁶ And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.”
 - Third, there was the anointing with oil
Exodus 29:7 – “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour *it* upon his head, and anoint him.”
Psalms 133:1-2 – “Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! ² *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments”
 - Finally, there was the offering of a sacrifice – **Verses 10-21**
 There were three types of sacrifices:
 1. First, there was the sacrifice of atonement. It was a sin offering.
Exodus 29:10-11 – “And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. ¹¹ And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”
 - a. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on the head of the offering signifying the transfer of their sins to the bull.
 - b. God required that the priests be holy before they could enter into His presence.
 2. Second, there was the first of two rams. This ram was totally consumed upon the altar.
Exodus 29:18 – “And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: *it is* a burnt offering unto the LORD: *it is* a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”
 This symbolized the total dedication of the priests unto God.

3. Third, they were to offer up the second ram.
Exodus 29:19-20 – “And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. ²⁰ Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.”
 - a. This offering was particularly for the priests. The blood was placed upon the tip of their right ear and the thumb of their right hand and the tip of their right big toe.
 - b. It symbolized their complete covering with blood – from head to toe.
 They were now consecrated as God’s priests.

7. This ordination and consecration of the Old Covenant priesthood has particular significance to us a Christians.
 - A. God made a unique promise to Israel
Exodus 19:5-6 – “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”
 - B. Peter makes it clear that this finds its fulfillment in the church of Christ
1 Peter 2:9 – “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:”
 - C. What does it mean that we are a kingdom of priests?
 1. It describes access to God
 2. It describes separation. We are a separated people, we are holy
 Separated from sin, from the world
 3. It describes consecration unto service, separated for God’s use
 4. It describes those who prepared and offered up the sacrifices to God
 . . . not expiatory sacrifices. Christ ended that once and for all.
 - a. Our sacrifices are spiritual
 Spiritual sacrifices must be a gift of the heart
 They must be offered with the right motive – the glory of God
 - b. We must offer up ourselves
Romans 12:1 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.”
 We have given up ourselves to Christ
Matthew 16:24 – “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”
 - c. Our sacrifice is our worship
Hebrews 13:15 – “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.”

8. The priestly ordination points to us. Our relationship to God through Christ.
Let me briefly take you again through the priestly ordination – this time as it applies to us.
- I. The washing of water
- A. This naturally draws us to the ordinance of baptism
Acts 22:16 – “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
Hebrews 10:22 – “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”
1. Sin has covered us with filth and defilement.
 2. Baptism symbolizes the washing away of our sins.
- B. Baptism doesn’t actually wash us but points to a much greater cleansing
1. We have been cleansed by the blood of Christ
1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
 2. We have been purified through the washing of regeneration
Titus 3:5 – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”
- II. Like the priest we have been robed in the proper garments.
- A. We’ve been robed with Christ
1. To stand in the presence of God the priest had to be covered with perfect righteousness. The priestly garments represented this righteousness.
 2. We too have to be clothed in righteousness – such righteousness can be found only in Christ. We must be covered with Christ
Galatians 3:27 – “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
Romans 13:14 – “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.”
- B. The Parable of the Wedding Feast
Matthew 22:11-13 – “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
1. Only those clothed with Christ shall enter into the joy of eternity
 2. Many will be found naked.
 - a. Their self-righteousness will be found as filthy rags.
 - b. Disguises will be stripped off

- c. Religious masks will be removed
- 3. The hypocrite hoped to blend in the crowd
 - a. It may be possible on earth - impossible before God
 - b. He was speechless – He had despised the invitation of receiving the proper garment.
- C. God’s holy priesthood today must be clothed with Christ.

III. Next came the anointing with oil.

Exodus 29:7 – “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour *it* upon his head, and anoint him.”

- A. The anointing points us to the work of the Holy Spirit
 - NAS **1 John 2:20** – “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.”
 - 1. Jesus began His earthly ministry with the anointing of the Holy Spirit
 - Matthew 3:16** – “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:”
 - 2. Believers have had the Holy Spirit come upon them. He indwells them
- B. Our anointing with the oil of the Holy Spirit is a work of God’s grace
 - 2 Corinthians 1:21-22** – “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”
 - 1. The anointing oil was poured lavishly upon Aaron
 - Psalms 133:2** – “*It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;”
 - 2. The Holy Spirit is poured out lavishly upon us

IV. Finally, there was the offering of a sacrifice – **Verses 10-21**

- A. Remember, there were three sacrifices offered
 - 1. First, there was a sin offering.
 - a. No one comes before God while defiled by their sin.
 - b. We need a sin offering – We have a sin offering – Jesus Christ
A pure offering, a perfect offering
 - 2. Second, there was a sacrifice of dedication.
 - a. The Christian life is one of total dedication
 - Luke 14:33** – “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”
 - b. The Christian has found a new Master – a new love
 - 3. Third, a sacrifice of purification that consecrated the priests unto God.
We are set apart unto the service of God
 - Ephesians 2:10** – “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
- B. We have a perfect sacrifice through which all these things are accomplished
Christ has redeemed us from our sins and called us to His service

Conclusion:

1. God has called us as His priests. He has washed us from our sin, clothed us in the righteousness of Christ, and we've been anointed with His Holy Spirit.
2. He has set us apart for His service. Ours is serious work, a sacred work. The priesthood is serious business. Ask Nadab and Abihu who were burned alive because they did not take their work seriously. May God grant us to serve Him with seriousness and with joy.