

Leviticus 8–9

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Preacher: Milton Taylor

[0 : 00] Amen. Good morning. As you are being seated, allow me to rush to give you my welcome.

Those of you who are visiting this morning, we're grateful that you're here. You can be anywhere in the world, but the Lord has brought you here today. You have chosen to lock arms with us in worship, and for that, we're grateful. My prayer for you is that the Lord will meet you here today. Before we get into the proclamation of God's word, I would like to say to the unbeliever who's in the building, we know you are in the building. We're grateful that you're here, that the Lord has brought you here. A wise man once said that you can belong before you believe. You can eavesdrop on holy conversations. My hope for you is that the Lord will bring you into the fold and that you will abort the ark of safety before time is run out.

I want you to know that as you visit, this may be your first, your second, your third time visiting. This may be your first, second, or third church that you visit, but as you visit us today, my prayer is that the Lord visits you and that you have an encounter with the Lord that would change the trajectory of your eternity. Tomorrow is not promised. Today is the day of salvation. Choose ye this day who you will serve. Do not take this moment, this meeting haphazardly as if the Lord brought you here for nothing, but we take it seriously that you're here in the building. We've been praying for you and we love you. To the believer, I'm talking to all of us who believe. Time is over for us just going through the motion. I get it. We've been saved for a long time, right? This is clockwork for us. We get up. It's time to go to church. We go to church. It's time to give. We give. It's time to serve. We serve. It's almost like the program you was handed when you walked through the door. My prayer is that you are not programmed, that there's room left in your life for God to move and have his way in your life. We desire to see this building filled, not just because we want seats, but we want true disciples in these seats.

That won't happen if we throw the Great Commission over our shoulder. Matthew 28, 19, go and make disciples of all men and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have taught you and I will be with you even until the end of time.

It's not going to happen through programming, which is good in this place, but if we don't go out and share our faith, if we don't pray like we used to, I know some of you are like, man, what's going on?

[3 : 04] Is he mad at us? I love you all, but I love the Lord more, and I just want to share my heart. Something that you may not know about me, I come from a black church.

Yeah, happy Black History Month. But in a black church, it's something about the move of God's Spirit and allowing him to have his way. I mean, sometimes what we prepared wouldn't even get preached because God just wants you to pray. What you've prepared won't even get preached because God just wants us to worship. And so I just want us to be keen to God's Spirit, sensitive to God's Spirit.

And don't worry, I will preach what I've prepared. But let me pray for us. Father, we thank you for your presence here in this place.

As the songwriter said, you are our help. And Father, I ask that you help me even right now to communicate your truth. I pray for the heart, the stony heart, that you will remove it and replace it with a heart of flesh, that you may penetrate it with your word. Lord, I pray that the confidence will exude from this stage and this passage. Lord, that we will grow from it and that we will be convicted by it and that we will forever walk differently. Lord, have your way in this place.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. This morning I would like to banner the text before us today, set apart to bless the people of God. Set apart to bless the people of God. In hospitals, cleanliness is very important. In fact, the more, the closer you get to the operating room, the more important it is. Doctors in the operating room are very concerned that the scalpel not only is not muddy, but that it's not even dusty because the smallest amount of impurity contaminates the procedure.

[5 : 24] Great effort is made to sterilize the equipment so that all the impurities is removed and no infection set in.

Hear me. If human doctors go through great detail in the operating room to make sure that the environment is totally free from contamination, then it ought not shock us that God himself must function in an atmosphere of perfection.

If human doctors can recognize that you can't do surgery with contaminated devices, then it ought not make us too upset that God can't do the surgery on our lives that he desires to do without sterilizing our lives first.

In this text set before us today, there's some sterilization going on. Remember, the closer you get to the operating room, the closer, the more important cleanliness is.

There are some things that God is commanding take place before the people of God. Even the priests can draw near to God. There's three movements in this text. I want you to see the first one is chapter eight.

[6 : 44] We will see men, Aaron and his sons, the priests of Israel set apart for service. Set apart for service.

The second movement, chapter nine, verses one through 21, we will see the service for which they were set apart. The service for which they were set apart.

And then finally, in verses 22 through 24 of chapter nine, we will see that the acceptance and the glory and the blessing of God settles in.

I want to argue from this text today that you can receive the blessings of God, but it depends on the priest you choose and God's acceptance of the sacrifice of that priest.

If you are here for the first time, you have missed the first seven chapters of Leviticus.

[7 : 59] And I just want to let you know right off the bat, you're wrong if you think or expect for me to recap all those chapters for you. I have enough heavy lifting to do in chapter eight and seven, I mean eight and nine alone.

So I'll do it quick. In the first seven chapters, we dealt with the sacrificial system, describing the different sacrifices and the different offerings. Where we are today, some of us may remember from Exodus 29, God gave the instructions for the ceremony for the consecration of priests.

Here in chapter eight, the ceremony is being fleshed out. So now as Israel's sacrifices has been described and instituted, now the nation needs a consecrated priesthood to administer them before the Lord.

And God chose Moses' brother Aaron and his sons to do this holy assignment. And he gave Moses specific instructions for the priest's anointing and the ordination to ministry.

Now what I want you to see right away is that the importance of this section is marked by the opening statement. Look at verse one.

[9 : 19] The Lord spoke to Moses. Everything concerning the priest's consecration was to be done according to divine revelation.

And this ordination was to be a public ceremony. Verses one through three, God told Moses to bring Aaron and his sons along with everything needed for the ceremony and to assemble the whole congregation at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

And the Bible says that Moses obeyed and he made it clear to the congregation that this is what the Lord commanded.

This is a repeated phrase that we're going to see throughout chapter eight and chapter nine. Moses did as the Lord commanded.

In fact, you will see it 16 times. It highlights the importance of the strict obedience in serving the Lord.

[10 : 27] See, we've been talking about the different sacrifices and the different offerings. But the Bible says in 1 Samuel that obedience is better than sacrifice.

Why is obedience better than sacrifice? Well, I'm glad you asked. I do have an answer for you. Because disobedience is an act of rebellion. Because disobedience is sinful.

No. Because disobedience is a form of idolatry. Because disobedience disrespects the word of God. Because disobedience is rooted in looking good to others rather than to God.

We'd rather perform our religious duties than to obey God. No, seriously. We would rather give money to charity than to obey God.

We would rather come to Sunday morning service week in, week out, month in, month out, year in, year out than to obey God.

[11 : 35] We would like to pray in public. Holding hands on a corner while people walking by. We looking good to everybody else. Than to obey God.

Moses did as the Lord commanded. Now, as the ceremony begins, we'll see three things. We'll first see the priest set aside.

Then we'll see the place set aside. And then we'll see Moses presenting the sin offering and the burnt offering and the ordination offering.

The ceremony begins with a ceremonial washing of Aaron and his sons. This symbolizes that they are sinful.

Right? That they needed to be purified before they could minister before a holy God. Some of y'all don't even get up good enough in the morning before you get in the face of God.

[12 : 39] Teeth ain't brushed. Face ain't washed. Stinch coming off your body. You wouldn't dare come in the presence of your favorite celebrity if invited to their home. And show up in their presence the way you show up in the presence of God.

Can I go deeper? We show up with unrepentant hearts in the presence of God. We get in God's presence and we want to represent his people with a life full of sin.

We need to be purified before we can serve in the presence of God.

They need it to be washed before they can minister before a holy God. See, this points to the forward. This looks forward to the spiritual cleansing that believers receive through Christ who washes away all sins.

As we continue, once the priests were washed, Moses dressed Aaron in his high priest garments. He put the coat on him.

[13 : 50] He put the sash around his waist. He clothed him with a robe. He put the ephod on him. He placed the breastplate on him.

And on the breastpiece, he put the urim and the thummim. He set the turban on his head. And on the front of the turban, he set a golden plate. Man.

Aaron was wearing the Dolce Cabana, the fear of God, the essentials, the Louis Vuitton of his day. The culture would say that Aaron was drippy.

I get this a lot. And even sometime in here, people would approach me like, man, I like your shoes. I like the hat. I like the colors, the way you put it together. But clearly, I got nothing on Aaron. So don't be surprised when you see me come in here and I got the coat on.

I got the sash around the waist. I got the robe on. And I got my chest out. I got my shoulders back. And I don't know what the ephod is, but I got one on. And y'all probably wouldn't even say, I like what you got on.

[14 : 59] But the priest's garments are highly symbolic. Every piece that Moses put on Aaron signifies the holiness and the dignity required for the priestly awfully.

Take the urim and the thummim. We don't actually know what it is, right? Some, I forgot how to tell up here. Some people think that there are two stones that sit in the front of the pouch.

One white, one black. We don't know if it's marked on both sides or either side. But what we do know is that they were used for discerning God's will. The priest will seek God's guidance on behalf of the people.

We don't see the urim and the thummim in the New Testament because the Holy Spirit is given. And he dwells on the inside of us. He dwells in our hearts and he leads and he guides us to all truth.

You may remember in Acts 1 when the disciples were replacing Judas and the text said that they cast their lots. And the lot fell on Matthias and they made him the 12th apostle.

[16 : 14] But you and I know that Paul was chosen because Matthias, he doesn't show up again. It was good intentions, them casting their lots, but it wasn't led by the Spirit.

As we continue, we see the priest set aside. Now we will see the place set aside.

Look at verses 10 through 13. Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it and consecrated them.

And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all of its utensils and the basin and his stand to consecrate them. And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.

Even the place needs to be set aside. Anything involving God's presence needs to be sterilized, needs to be set aside.

[17 : 21] It said that Moses sprinkled some of the oil on the altar and then he poured some of the oil on Aaron.

This isn't the type of pouring you see in revival services, right? Where you have a line, a long line for healing and a long line for prayer.

And the preacher got the Crisco in his hands and he's dabbing it on his thumb and people are, he's praying for people and he's leaving a shining spot on their head. No. In Psalms 123, David said that when brothers dwell together in unity, it's like the precious oil on the head running down on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar to his robe.

Aaron was drenched in oil. Aaron was thoroughly anointed to serve the Lord. And when Moses also, the text said that he dressed his sons in their priestly garments.

This reminds me of a story in my own life. About 12, 13 years ago, I was serving at a church in Masson, Illinois.

[18 : 36] God's harbor for all souls. What up, Rudy? What up, Rudy? We, I and a few other brothers, we were being ordained to be deacons.

Yes, I was an ordained deacon. We was being ordained to be deacons and we were trained, went through some training. And I remember the day of ordination service like it was yesterday.

We were all dressed in black, symbolizing death, dying to ourself. And my bishop, Odell McFarland, grabs the oil to anoint us.

Now, bishop is not like the man with the Crisco that just dab you with a little bit of the oil. No, that's a man of God.

Bishop was a man of God. He would take the oil with a D. Yeah, a man of God with a D. He would take the oil and he would pour it on his hands and it's dripping down to the floor.

[19 : 39] And he would catch it and he would rub it all in his hands. And he would take your head and he would, from the crown of your head to the sole of your chin, begin to rub the oil all on you.

And other men would lay their hands on you and they would begin to pray. And he would begin to pray, Father God, in the name of Jesus, the Son of the living God.

That's why I started some of my prayers like that. I got it from my bishop. But we were being set apart for service. Now, here is where Moses begins to present the sin offerings, the burnt offering, and the ordination offering.

Because even though the oil plays a very important part in the consecration of the priest, it wasn't enough by itself.

So the next steps, blood was required to atone for sin. So the next steps of the ordination were offering to purify Aaron and his sons and even the altar from the contamination of sin.

[20 : 54] This sin offering was made for atonement. Aaron and his son laid their hands on the head of the bull. And that signified this transfer taking place, their sins to the bull.

Here's another opportunity to just point to Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5, 21. For our sake, he made himself to be sin who knew no sin so that we may become the righteousness of God.

Jesus took upon himself the sins of humanity, offered himself as the ultimate sin offering. Can you envision it?

Can you see it? Aaron on one hand, Aaron and his sons got their hands placed on the bull and his transference is taking place. And then on the other hand, you see Jesus on the cross in your place, dying for your sins, the transference of your sins on him and his righteousness on you.

Moses applies the blood to the altar. The text says that he basically he dealt with the rest of the sacrifice as God instructed him back in chapter four.

[22 : 17] Except in this case, the blood was applied to the altar of burnt offering instead of the altar of increase. Then Moses presented the sin offering.

Aaron and his sons also laid their hands on the ram. And this completed. This was or the ram was completely consumed on the altar as a pleasing aroma, a burnt offering to the Lord.

The burnt offering signifies total devotion, complete dedication to the Lord. The third offering presented was the ordination offering.

This offering completely or completed the purification that Aaron and his sons needed to be able to serve as priests. There's a uniqueness to this particular offering that wasn't like the others.

It wasn't a part of the people's offering. Aaron. The uniqueness was that there was an application of blood to the right earlobe of Aaron and his sons, the right thumb of Aaron and his sons, and the right big toe of Aaron and his sons.

[23 : 48] Two questions come to mind for me. Why the right side? And why these particular body parts? Right side is pretty easy and a little biased.

I'm right-handed, so I'm just going to say it's the strongest side. No slight to my left-handed and left-handed brothers and sisters. If it makes you feel any better, if I was left-handed, I would say the left-handed.

The left side was the strongest. Why these body parts? Well, they represented the activities of hearing, doing, and walking.

The body parts were being consecrated to the Lord's use. They needed their ears set apart to hear from God.

They needed their hands set apart for the doing of the work of the Lord. Service to God. Service to his people.

[24 : 52] They needed their feet set apart for where they were going, the direction they will walk concerning the Lord.

Same for us. We need our ears set apart. What are you inviting into your ear gate?

What are you listening to? Let me go deeper. What pastor online are you listening to? Because here's a gem.

If you don't know the truth, you can't identify a lie. So sometimes we're listening to pastors online, and we got our favorite pastor, and he's the most popular pastor, and we don't know that he's leading us astray because we don't know truth from a lie.

We're just hearing what it is we want to hear. Somebody posted, and it sounded good, and it spoke to our emotions. We need our ears set apart for the Lord.

[26 : 00] What are you doing with your hands? Are you hurting people with them? Are you serving them? Are you using them to serve people?

Are you using them to serve the Lord? Same with your feet. Where are you going? What places do you show up in? The Bible says, beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel.

I started this off by saying we need to get back to the Great Commission. Are you out there sharing your faith? Or is that just elementary for you?

Something you did when you first got saved. You moved past it because you're a mature Christian now. We need to be set aside for the Lord.

And then there was the wave offering. Aaron and his sons presented before the Lord. And Moses' final act of consecration was to sprinkle Aaron and his sons in their garments with oil and blood.

[27 : 04] And once Moses did all that the Lord commanded, the priest had one more requirement to fulfill. They were to eat an ordination meal at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

What meal was they eating? Parts of the ordination ram and the consecration bread that was not burnt. The priest also had to observe a seven-day confinement period.

They couldn't leave the area of the tabernacle. And if they did, the penalty was death. Probably get real serious at that point.

Ha ha, look, you got blood on your ear. We can't leave this place or we will die. It's time to get serious. This means that they ate and they offered the same sacrifice day in and day out for seven days.

At the end of which they were fully ordained to serve God. Now, before we get to the service in which they were set apart, if you like me, some questions arise like, all right, I get it.

[28 : 19] We saw the priest set aside. We saw a place set aside. We saw the offering of sin offering and the ordination offering and a burnt offering. And even between the time in between, you said some things that spoke to us.

But what does this actually mean for me today? This all the way back in the Old Testament. Are we still sacrificing now? This was for the priest.

Is he talking to us or he's talking to them? Well, let me help us out. Because Leviticus 8 is a window into 1 Peter 2 for us today.

You don't have to go there. But verse 5, I'll read it for you. You yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.

You see in the parallel? To offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Verse 9, but you are a chosen race.

[29 : 24] Another version said a chosen generation. A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for its own possession. A peculiar people. That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

That's what it means for you. That there's no longer a need for a mediator. That the Old Testament priests, they were chosen by God.

They wasn't self-appointed. And they were chosen for a purpose. To serve God with their lives by offering sacrifices. But when Jesus Christ sacrificed his life on the cross and that work was completed, God tore the two into the temple of the veil that covered the doorway to the Holy of Holies.

And that point, the Old Testament priest was no longer necessary. Now we, you, me, we are able, we can come directly to God through the great high priest, Jesus Christ.

That's what it means for you. Hebrews 4, 14 through 16 tells us, Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.

[30 : 44] Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest that is unable to sympathize with our weakness. But one who is in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then, with confidence, draw near. Remember, this whole thing about Leviticus is drawing near to God. Let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in a time of need.

That's what it means for you. That's what it means for me. The Old Testament points to the New Testament.

Let's move on. This is following the seven day period.

The seven days they spent separated. This is the eighth day. Representation of new beginnings. This is the eighth day, but it's the first day on the job.

[32 : 05] Usually, your first day at work, right? It'd be kind of chill. You're not really doing too much. You may get a little double down on orientation.

You may have to set your profile, and they show you certain things. And they're like, oh, over here, this is where we fix the coffee. Are you a tea person? Well, right here, over there in the drawer, if you need an extra pad or a pen, you can get it out of that drawer.

Light. It's like the first day of school. They don't send you home with homework. Not for them. Not for God's priests who were set apart. There was a work to be done.

There was a service for which God set them apart. Moses calls Aaron and his sons and the elders of the Israelites, and he tells Aaron to bring, he tells Aaron what to bring and what to do with it.

And then he tells him what to tell the people to bring. Aaron's first day on the job, the people brought their sacrifices to the tabernacle.

[33 : 12] They got to work on their first day. They brought their sin offering. They brought the burnt offering. They brought the fellowship offering.

The grain offering. Aaron. But even though they brought everything to Aaron, Aaron's first duties as a priest was to offer sacrifice for his own sin.

This is important. Before you go out trying to save the world, you better work out your own soul's salvation. You better make sure that your life is right before the Lord.

Let me make it plain. Before you pray to the Lord to save, you better pray repenting that he forgives. Make sure that your life is right before the Lord.

After sacrificing for himself first, now Aaron is ready to offer for the congregation. Sin offering, burnt offering, fellowship offering, grain offering.

[34 : 23] The offerings the people had brought. These sacrifices atoned for their sins, symbolizing their complete dedication to God. This provided a way for sinful humans to have a fellowship with the holy God.

The sacrifices made it possible for God to dwell among his people without contaminating his holiness. This made it possible for God to dwell among his people without contaminating his holiness.

This made it where God can come down, fellowship with his people, and not have to judge his people for their sins. This type of forgiveness and fellowship is what the Israelites needed then.

And it's definitely something we still need today. So because we saw the priests consecrated, totally set apart as holy, and they obeyed the word of God doing all that he commanded, we will now see the acceptance and the glory and the blessing of God settle in.

This is the whole reason I've been preaching. To get to this point. I want you to put your eyes on verse 4, the end of verse 4.

[35 : 47] Very last sentence. For today the Lord will appear to you. Now go to verse 6. And Moses said, this is the thing the Lord commanded you to do, that the glory of the Lord may appear to you.

Everything Aaron did in the last week prepared him for this moment. This was the end goal for the week of separation and consecration of the Lord.

The display of God's glory. Go to verse 22. Then Aaron lifted his hands towards the people and he blessed them. Aaron's heart was turned towards the people.

All that Aaron had done, consecration, sacrifices, offerings, to represent the people of God. That's what it was for. As pastors, as ministry leads, as disciples, as volunteers.

You cannot shepherd someone. You cannot walk with someone. You cannot do life with someone, labor with someone, and not want to see them receive the blessings of the Lord.

[36 : 54] Verse 23. And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. And when they came out, they blessed the people.

And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. The people are getting blessed again. I'm wrapping up.

The people are getting blessed again. What did they say? What was the blessing that they gave? You don't have to turn to it. I'll read it for you.

Numbers 6, 22 through 27. The Lord spoke to Moses saying, Tell Aaron and his son saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel. You should say to them, The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you peace. So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel and I will bless them.

[37 : 56] That was the blessing. Verse 24. And fire came out before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of the fat on the altar.

And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell to their faces. Now let me read Luke 24, 50 through 53. Jesus here is about to be carried away up into heaven.

And he tells his disciples, Do not leave this city for I'm sending the promise of the Father. Stay in this city until you are clothed with power from on high. And what does he do?

He blesses the people. He lifts his hands and he blessed them. I will argue that this is the same blessing we just saw.

He tells them, May the Lord bless and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you peace.

[38 : 57] So shall they put my name upon you and I will bless you. And while he was being, while they were being blessed, he was being carried away into heaven.

And the text said in Luke that they worshiped him. And they were turned to Jerusalem with joy. And they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Here's the distinction. When the priest was sacrificed on behalf of themselves and the people. An aroma would go up and God would come down.

But when Jesus, the high priest, who didn't need to make atonement for his sin. When he became sin, who knew no sin, that we may become the righteousness of God.

And so he hung on a cross. He died and he was buried and he was resurrected. And he ascended into heaven like the aroma in the Old Testament sacrifices. But instead of God coming down, Jesus went up and the Holy Spirit came down.

[40 : 08] And he dwells in our hearts. God, the Holy Spirit dwells with our heart. We become the temple in which God dwells.

And if you, if you receive the high priest, Jesus Christ, as your sacrifice.

In whom God accepted. Then you can receive the blessings of God. Father, we thank you for your word.

Father, our desire is to hide your word in our hearts that we may not sin against you. Father, I pray that the unbeliever was reached today.

That you spoke to them. That you have made contact with them. That you are bringing them into the fold. And they are boarding the ark of safety. I pray for a refreshing for the believers in this building today.

[41 : 11] That we will refresh our relationship with you. That we will get back to the main thing. That we will give you our lives completely. We will give you our ears, our hands, and our feet.

Lord, have your way in our life. In Jesus' name. Amen.