Exodus 28

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Preacher: Arthur Jackson

[0:00] The preacher has returned.

Holy Trinity Church, it's been a joy and measure of challenge at times to pastor and to love you and to share life with you.
It has been a journey of continued growth, and I think that there is a measure in which that is mutual. Shirley and I are better because we have been here for 10 years and we trust that the church, the individuals, my dear friend Dave, love him, love his family.
As he mentioned, our relationship will go on. Let me pray. Father, thank you for the morning. Thank you for this gathering of people and your grace with us along the way.
We will say with the songwriter, every day will I bless you. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.
[1:30] So be honored in us and through us. Let Christ's name be placarded among us and through us. In Christ's name we pray.

Amen. Dr. Ivy Beecham was an African-American podiatrist. She made our way into the Judson Baptist family in the late 90s.
Was with us for a few years, but then returned to the South where she was born and raised. But not long after that, the Lord took Ivy home.
She was soft-spoken, pleasant, generous, and rather traditional. Traditional in that she wanted her pastor to have a robe.
And she saw to it that he got one. I honor her today. And I wear this robe at least for a period of time.
[2:40] I've got somebody that's come and pick it up from me. Because you may be warm just looking at me. That is not my goal on this morning.

But it is to help visualize or perhaps to give you a bit of a picture of what we're saying today. For the last few weeks, Exodus chapters 25 through 27, we've heard the Lord's instructions as it regards the tabernacle.
Tabernacle, that's the place where the Lord would dwell in the midst of his wandering, his nomadic people. But as we get into Exodus chapter 28, there is a shift.
We're no longer looking specifically or directly at the place where our focus is turning to people.
To priests, if you will. And one of the things I believe that we see clearly from Exodus chapter 28 is that the pathway into the presence of God would be through a duly called and a properly clothed priest.
[4:06] Duly called, but also properly clothed. Take a look at verse 1. Then bring near to you Aaron, your brother, and his sons with you from among the people of Israel to serve me as priest.

Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eliezer, and Ithamah, duly called. Not self-appointed priests, but ones that the Lord had selected from amongst his people.
The Lord's same God who had commissioned the construction of the tabernacle appointed Aaron and his sons to serve, and listen to this, to serve in the presence of God on behalf of his people.
In the presence of God on behalf of his people. These would be the ones who had access, if you will, to God on behalf of God's people.
The writer of the Hebrews would later bring this to our attention with these words. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.
[5:42] That's chapter 5, verse 1, and then now verse 4. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God just as Aaron was.

There it is. Duly called priest. Duly called mediator, one who would go between God and men.

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Duly called. And because they were duly called, a particular set of garments were required. Another way of looking at this is special garments for a special work.
That became especially and extremely clear to me many decades ago when I was inducted into the United States Army. I went to the Army with a certain set of clothes.
I sort of remember. It's what I looked like, young, good head of hair, etc. But clothes, street clothes, if you will, in going to the Army.
[6:54] Guess what? Street clothes don't work in the Army. Huh? So, what did they give me? Well, first of all, I put my clothes in a box and they went back home.

29, 34 North, 26th Street in Kansas City, Kansas. I would not need those clothes for a while. Uncle Sam gave me new shoes.
Boots, if you will. Huh? He gave me work clothes, fatigues. He gave me a dress uniform for special occasions. All the way down to my Army-issue underwear, I was clothed from head to toe with what Uncle Sam provided for me.
And for two years, my calling called for me to wear United States Army clothes. Huh? Huh?
Listen, the pathway into the presence of God would be through duly called, but also properly clothed mediators.
[8:02] God-appointed persons taken from amongst the midst of the people of God in order to serve on God's behalf as priests, mediators.

Properly clothed, and TJ, come and you can come and grab this now. Thank you. Breathe with me. properly clothed.
That's what much of the chapter before us is about. Take a look. Who are the clothes for? Did you notice? And you shall make holy garments for Aaron, your brother.
Oh, listen to this. For glory and beauty. Huh? These were holy, sacred, unique, one-of-a-kind kind of clothes.
Huh? They distinguished Aaron particularly as the high priest and his sons as those who were God's hand-picked representatives to intercede, to worship, to serve in the things of the tabernacle in the midst of his people.
[9:07] Huh? There were no garments like these garments, folks. Garments of distinction. When I was in Kenya a few weeks ago, in several ways, I was put in touch with garments of distinction.

Huh? I got familiar with the color code in Kenya. If you were a preacher and you had on a black shirt, you were a licensed or under preacher.
Okay? If you were in Kenya and you were a preacher and you had on a gray shirt and collar, you were a reverent, if you will. What that meant is what you were duly ordained.
Huh? Ah, but if you had on a purple shirt, purple was for the bishop. Huh? That's what he had on.
Huh? But you should have seen Pastor Paul O'Gallo, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Mathare.
He had on a black clergy robe with Holy Trinity colors. Green on the sleeve.
[10:16] Green down here. And a gold cross here. And a gold cross there. Garments of distinction. But it wasn't limited to Paul and the other clergy.

I mean, they really like color coding in Kenya, if you will. I mean, you could see in the sanctuary there. Last year when we were there was sort of a gravel floor, solid concrete now.
But anyway, they were advertising the anniversary and there's the Holy Trinity green and the gold yellow. And there was this little girl. Guess what she had on? Garments of distinction.
She had on her green and had on her yellow gold. Lovely sight. garments of distinction.
What we see here in our text is that a much more grand level than anything that I've described. In a very unique way, the garments for both the high priest and Aaron's sons were for glory and for beauty.
[11:25] Another way of saying that is that they were gloriously beautiful. They were majestically beautiful. And what they did, it elevated the office itself as well as the one who was wearing the garments and filling the office.

When work assignments, check it out, for this work, look at verse 3, you shall speak to all the skill whom I have filled with a spirit of skill that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood.
Guess who didn't get the assignment that day? The new guy didn't get the assignment. The apprentice was not on this. This was for the skilled person, the skilled craftsman, those with proven skill, those who had been gifted by God for such work, prepared both in heart and in hand and in

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hand and they were given this assignment to make this particular garment, these garments of distinction.
Isn't it wonderful the way that God gifts people? And you're here today and God has given you a certain knack for certain things.
Are you using that in the body of Christ for his glory and for his honor that the kingdom of God may be advanced? Some of you, hospitality, mercy, all kinds of things.
[12:47] But as far as these garments, the skilled got the assignment. Purpose of the garments, garments of distinction. For God appointed persons to serve in the sanctuary.

The Lord was going to dwell in the midst of his people and he provided a way to do that, a way that was very much in keeping with his character.
Huh? Aaron and his sons got the assignment and their clothes would mark them, single them out as those who were called. Look at verse four. You see the list, six garments there.
Obviously, we don't have time, but I want to bring to your attention particular garments that really speak about God's care.
all of it did, but again, I think that by looking at a few, we will get a sense for the whole as far as what God, the statement that God was making in the garments of the priests.
[13:57] In the presence of God. For God's people. God's representatives filling the priestly, and particularly here the high priestly role.

when you would look at the priest, girded from head to toe, adorned from head to toe in these garments, you would know that you were in the presence of someone who was very special.
He was God's representative who would bring, and this is what the priest did, would bring God's people into God's presence.
That was his role. That was his calling. How did he do that? When he went into the holy spaces, the holy tabernacle, certain clothes indicated certain things about God and the role of the priest there.
The clothes that were the high priest's garments symbolized his responsibility. Notice the ephod and these are nicely sectioned off.
[15:16] You go from the ephod, you go to the breast piece and all throughout. But again, the main section, it goes from verse 6 all the way through verse 30.

And the ephod was the first piece that I want to make a few comments on. It was the first to be made. And it was like the central piece of this priestly ensemble.
You know, you ladies probably know what I'm talking about. You know, when you get dressed, you got something that is, you know, the center piece. All right? Well, the ephod was that for the priestly garment.
It was an apron-like kind of outer garment covered the priest's body from his shoulders all the way down to below his loins. And one of the things that we notice about the ephod is that its colors, et cetera.
Look at verse 6. They shall make the ephod of gold, a purple, a blue and purple, and scarlet yarns, and a fine twine linen skillfully work. These are the same colors that we saw in the tabernacle.
[16:25] There's sort of this color coordination, color coding that's going on. The ephod included two shoulder pieces you see in verse 7.

And there were stones on each of these on the shoulders. And the stones were made of this precious stone, an onyx stone, and they were skillfully engraved.
And guess what's on the engraving? It's the names of the sons of Israel. They were carefully and beautifully then set in gold, this fine, thin, wired kind of gold setting.
And look in verse 12 because it becomes really clear what these stones are for. You shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, here it is, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel.
And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his shoulders for remembrance, stones of remembrance. An indication, here it is, that those whose names were being born to the presence of God were precious, valued by God, and they are remembered by God.
[17:48] This was a part of the priest's administrations in going before the Lord. So when he entered into the service of God, he was not going alone. They were with him as symbolized by the stones that were engraved on his shoulder.

A priest from amongst the people, a priest for the people, like a spiritual leader, who brings God's people before him in prayer, in prayer, lifting them up, sometimes bearing them on his shoulders,

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their loads, their cares.
That's the role, and the priest was a spiritual leader. But notice also, but not only were the sons of Israel represented on the stones of the shoulder, from what we can see, the next piece, the breast piece, they were also carried on his heart.
Notice that. Matter of fact, look with me, particularly at verse 29 and 30. So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breast piece of judgment on his heart when he goes into the holy place to bring them to regular remembrance before the Lord.
in the breast piece of judgment you shall bring, but you shall put in the breast piece of judgment you shall put the ring and the thumen and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the Lord, thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the Lord regularly.
[19:37] Names of the sons of Israel. Aaron is in the holy place. But he's not there alone.

He's bringing God's people before him even as indicated on the you might even say the regalia the garments that he's wearing.
Oh, these very precious stones. I mean, stunning. A nine square inch kind of piece and there are different roles with the names of the children of Israel being born before him.
He's in the presence of God in a representative way. He came there with them on his heart. They're precious. They're valued. They're esteemed by God.
He bore them and the things that concern him on his heart in the presence of God as their representative. That's what he did. And then that included the critical decision making kinds of things as indicated by the Urim and Thumen two stones in the breast pouch believed to have been used in asking and inquiring the Lord as far as judgments different decisions regarding it.
[20:56] There's another piece of representative nature that we see. Look at verses 36 through 38. You shall make a plate of gold and engrave on it like the graving of a signet.

Holy to the Lord. Now, each of these things engraved shoulder stones, the stones of the precious stones on the heart and then on the head.
Like the engraving of a signet. And this is what's on there. Holy to the Lord. And you shall fasten it on the turban by a card of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban.
Huh? Think of how stunning a sight this would have been. Here you have God's priests in God's place for God's people.
Sparkling jewels on the shoulder. Bedazzling set of stones giving various shades of light on his chest. And then as one sets his or her eye on the upper extremity of the body right in the turban that of linen that's wrapped around there is this plate medallion if you will that's engraved with the words holy to the Lord.
[22:14] The statement served as a reminder that through the high priest work God's people were to be presented as holy to the Lord.

That was the nature of his work. That's what he did. His ministrations were the purpose of presenting God's people as holy before him.
That they may be accepted in a representative kind of nature through his ministry their sins were dealt with. God's people were accepted and certainly friends this is a foreshadowing of what would be perfected in the work and the person of Jesus Christ.
Through the ministry of a duly called and properly clothed high priest here's the idea the Lord remembered his people.
They were precious to him. He met with them at the point of their greatest need forgiveness.
Through the ministrations of the high priest a holy God would dwell in the midst of an unholy people.
[23:24] Think of it. Not a white garment but multicolored and there are other things that you could see that we didn't go through but I wanted you to get the picture of the representative nature of what the priests were doing.

A gloriously clothed representative chosen by God who would minister in the presence of God on behalf of God's people. And his clothing represented various things about the character of God and the care of God for his own.
Does not what we see here in Exodus 28 did it not foreshadow what has been perfected in the person and the work of Christ?

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Was not Christ duly called? The writer of the Hebrews says he was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be a high priest but was appointed by him who said to him you're my son today I begotten you.
And also in another place you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek Jesus fits the profile.
[24:51] He did not simply however have a priestly calling he was also properly clothed not with the grand priestly garments made of the most ornate earthly materials.

On the one hand his seamless world may have hinted by analogy of his priestly role but in an earthly sense ironically the God of glory impoverished himself that we through his poverty might become rich.
What is it about him that in some way may have mirrored the gloriously beautiful garments of the high priest? Is it not his glory as the son of God?
According to Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3 he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And then he prays in John chapter 17 and now father glorify me with your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.
The glory of the son of God was the clothing of the Christ. And while duly called he had no need for beautiful earthly garments because he by nature radiates the glory of God and the majesty of God that was seen in the garments of the high priest, Jesus by nature has all of those things in its inherent to who he is.
[26:33] So he presently serves in the throne room. The true sanctuary built without hands eternal in the heavens and guess what?

Those who are in union with him are represented there in the throne room like the sons of Israel. They are remembered in the presence of God. John 17 again hints that Jesus intercessory work. He said, I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those you have given me for they are yours. All mine are yours and yours are mine and I am glorified in them were the words of Jesus in John 17.
What a great text. This is before us a reminder of the excellencies of the one who serves in the very presence of God as our high priest.
He is there by reason of his offering himself on our behalf. His resurrection from death says that his offering was an acceptable one before the throne of God and all who believe in him are forgiven of their sins and reconciled before God.
[27:51] He's duly called. He's properly clothed. Huh? The presence of God friends is either the safest place there is or the most dangerous place there is in all of the universe.

Huh? You're not right with God. You don't want to be in his presence. Ah. Safest place is there. Christ the high priest forgiveness and here's the word of exhortation.
There's forgiveness for the worst of sinners with him. And for you if the presence of God is a dangerous place you want nothing to do with him you are separated from him by reason of your sins guess what?
Be forgiven because Jesus is in the presence of God now waiting for and has forgiveness you might even say with your name on it.
You have someone in the high court of heaven whose wounds in a sense speak of his redemptive work. One of the songs that we love to sing at Holy Trinity speak of that.
[29:13] Five bleeding wounds he bears received on Calvary. They pour effectual prayers. They strongly plead for me.

Forgive him. Oh forgive they cry. Forgive her. Oh forgive they cry. Don't let that ransom sinner die. The presence of Christ in heaven for some of you the exhortation is come to him. Come to God through him and be forgiven.
But for others here today the reality the fact that Christ is your high priest in heaven before God that means that you should be confident to know that you have a representative in heaven on your behalf in the presence of God your name graven your name written for God's people at the right hand of God also making intercession for us be confident on this morning but some of you here need Christ in the presence of God in a different kind of way some need forgiveness some need a bit more confidence but some of you need comforting be comforted you need to know that you are not forgotten in the presence of God our great high priest stands there in God's presence and can provide comfort before the throne of God and finally for all of us on today there's the call in view of

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who Christ is where he is his due call his proper clothing be courageous in this world be bold and strong agents for Christ in this world oh there's something for us in view of what we see from this text what's the pathway into the presence of God who duly called properly clothed mediator that's none other than the Lord
Jesus Christ I would bid you today come to him trust in him be blessed by him for the glory of his name let us pray on this morning Lord we love you and give thanks to you and thank you Lord that you have provided all that we need in the person and the work of Jesus so we bless his name this morning and we give him glory thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift in Christ stand with me we want to sing about what the passage is about today in the presence of God our high priest stands or sits on the one hand his work has been completed of redemption but his ongoing work of intercession continues for us before the throne of
[32:48] God above God

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