

The Priesthood of Every Believer: A Biblical Doctrine Every Christian Must Understand | Bible Study

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[0:00] Thanks for coming out. It's a bit of an interesting topic tonight, and for people online, we're going to put some notes linked to you.

The priesthood of every believer. And it's a Bible doctrine that every Christian must understand. So we'll talk through the notes and give you some scriptures to go along with it.

It's a wonderful truth that's from God's Word, the priesthood of the believer. And essentially it's the truth that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a priest.

A priest speaks to God on behalf of others, while a prophet speaks to men for God. The priesthood of the believer is a privilege that we have, and it's grounded in the redemptive work of our Lord. It's a doctrine not reserved for those wearing special robes or holding ecclesiastical titles. No, it's about you, every born-again Christian. And this privilege that we have, it's an extraordinary privilege and responsibility that you have.

[1:27] And it can shape how we live, pray and serve. So many today believe that only priests, pastors or religious leaders can approach God or perform spiritual duties.

They've got this idea of this clergy class, of this kind of special status kind of class of clergy. But the Bible declares otherwise. The priesthood of the believer means that every believer, every Christian has got that direct access to God through Christ, and we're all called to serve Him personally and spiritually.

So I'm going to unpack the doctrine through the Bible foundation of it and look at really the two things there, privileges and responsibilities, and how we put it into action.

So even in the beginning, God ordained the husband and the father as like the family priest. So you've got an example there, Genesis 8 verse 20.

It tells us where Noah built an altar and he offered sacrifices. So that was as they came out of the ark, really the first thing that they did was to make a sacrifice.

[2:38] And Noah was, in a sense, the priest. He undertook that act of worship in offering the sacrifice. And similarly, Isaac, in Genesis 26, 25, it says Isaac built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there.

And Jacob as well, in Genesis 31, he acted as a priest as well. So it says there, Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount and called his brethren to eat bread.

Neither of those were a priest, as in what the Bible calls a priest, but they did a priestly act. They both offered a sacrifice, so Noah, Isaac, Jacob.

And when God gave them law at Mount Sinai, he offered Israel the opportunity to be a kingdom of priests. So it reads there, Exodus 19 verse 6, And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

And the people replied, All that the Lord had spoken we will do. But Israel failed to keep the law. And God appointed Aaron and the tribe of Levi as priests instead.

[3:50] So it reads there, Exodus 28 verse 1, And take thou unto me 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.

So Israel set aside the tribe of Levi as priests. And the Levitical priesthood continued right up until the crucifixion of our Lord.

And of course, they've had this scripture just on Sunday, where it reads, At that moment, when the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom, it says that the Lord cried out, It is finished. And it tells us there in Matthew 27 from verse 50, Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. So God tore it from the top to the bottom. And so this was a real act of God. It signified that the way to God's presence was now wide open.

[4:52] It wasn't some veil of a temple that was restricted. Who could enter it? But now that veil was torn wide open so that all of us, all believers now, can enter in.

And through Christ as our high priest. At that moment, when the Lord yielded up the ghost, he gave up his spirit, the veil of the temple was torn wide open.

And it was from that moment, everyone, every believer is effectively a priest. And we've all got access to the very throne of God. So it's a wonderful, glorious truth that we have.

Let's look at what the scriptures tell us. And firstly, we'll go to the Old Testament background about the role of the priest. So there was a specific Old Testament priesthood. And we'll understand that a little.

And then that will help us understand what we have now as the New Testament truth. In the Old Testament, the priests were mediators between God and his people.

[5:57] In Exodus 28 through 29, they offered sacrifices for sins. They maintained worship in the tabernacle and later the temple. And they taught God's law, the priesthood.

However, it was limited. Only men from the tribe of Levi, specifically Aaron's family, could serve as priests. It's very restricted. Ordinarily, Israelites could not enter the holy place or the holy of holies. The high priest, only the high priest, could enter the holy of holies. And he could only enter it one time, once a year, on the Day of Atonement. It was a very restricted arrangement.

And it shows for us God's holiness and the seriousness of sin. That man must approach God on his terms. But it pointed towards what would be the ultimate reality that we'll all have access now.

And it tells us in Exodus 19, verse 6, God says to really the nation, and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[7:08] God kind of hinted that there would be a big wider priesthood to come. That was the Old Testament background. Next one, we see of Christ our Lord, our great high priest.

And it tells us of him in Hebrews 4, which we'll get to. It shows that the Old Testament priesthood was like this shadow, this picture of what was to come, of something far greater.

And of course, we know in the Bible, it talks about types, like shadows and pictures, signs of things to come, that were kind of a symbol of that which was to come.

And so the high priest was a symbol of the great high priest, the chief high priest, the Lord Jesus, our great high priest. And when he went to the cross, really, he replaced the old system of the priesthood, of the Old Testament, as we talked about opening the way for every believer.

And unlike the Levitical priest, the Lord Jesus, he offered not animal blood, but he offered his own blood. And that was once and for all.

[8:15] That's Hebrews 9, 14. But moving on to Hebrews 4, here's a quote from Hebrews 4, which really captures wonderfully the truth of the Lord as our high priest.

So it's talking of our Lord Jesus. It says, Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He's telling us there of our Lord, of course, he wasn't just like the average, the Old Testament high priest, which were still sinners, but he was one who was without sin.

He was the perfect one. And as God, he experienced life, temptation, and all the pain and troubles of human living.

[9:20] He can empathize with us. He can be touched with the feelings that we have. Of our infirmities and tempted yet without sin.

And now he's got that wide open doorway into the very throne of grace, like the throne of his mercy. We can come to him in prayer and find his help in time of need.

So the Lord Jesus being fully God and fully man, he can empathize. He can sympathize with our weaknesses, yet he remains sinless. And because of him, we can approach boldly.

This one again, Hebrews 10, 19, tells us of that approach that we can have unto God. There's no restriction now. Every one of us can come. We don't have to come through some priest or through some priestly system.

As we can touch on how, for example, the Roman Catholic system gets it all a bit skew-whiffed on all that. That there is no priest to go through now. There is no priestly system now.

[10:22] It tells us of our approach now can be direct through Christ. As it reads here, Hebrews 10, from 19, it says, Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

Selling us there, brethren, that's all of us. We're all on level pegging, brothers and sisters in Christ. We can have boldness, we can have assurance, we can have confidence, to go right into the very holiest place, right into that direct communion with God.

And it's because of the blood of Jesus shed for us. And of course now, there's one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. It tells us that, 1 Timothy 2, 5, Jesus is the one mediator that we need.

There's no human priest that stands between us and God, that we have to go through some priest. Sadly, Roman Catholics get this wrong. They think they've got to go to some confessional and tell the priest all their horrible sins or whatever they've done that's wrong.

And that somehow that's going to be the way to get rid of their sin. But the Bible talks nothing about that. That's a man-made idea and it's totally wrong. There's now one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

[11:51] We can go through Christ to the Father and Jesus alone is enough. We don't need to go to any man to have some remission of our sins from any man in any way.

Next section talks about the believer's priesthood today. Some of these things it's repeating a bit, but it's because of Christ's finished work. It is finished.

All of that Old Testament signs and symbols and what it signifies, it's now been fulfilled in Christ at the cross. And now every Christian, every believer is a priest unto God.

And this priesthood, it's not based on human merit or some ecclesiastical decree. It's not like some Pope or some Cardinal or some Bishop or Archbishop makes some kind of ceremony to make you a priest.

But it's because of faith on Christ. That's what makes you a priest. And it's not a future promise, but it's a present reality. The old priesthood, the old covenant, Old Testament priesthood, they're offered animal sacrifices and interceded on the Day of Atonement.

[12:59] In Christ, that's all been fulfilled now as he is that once and for all sacrifice. So now every believer has got this freedom, this liberty, this access now to offer God praise, to give him thanks, to intercede for others.

And as believers too, we've got a priestly responsibility to minister, to teach and witness to others. And that's all part and parcel of you being a priest before God.

So the next section, as far as the believer's priesthood, there's a very clear scripture here. You could put this as the scriptural proof. 1 Peter 2, 5, Peter says, He also, as lively stones, or as living stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

It's telling us there, you are a holy priesthood as every believer. And then it reads further, but you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, so specially set apart kind of people, that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness and into his marvellous light.

And John echoes the same kind of sentiment in Revelation. It tells us, unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.

[14:37] Amen. Peter says it, John says it, you're a chosen priesthood, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His major kings and priests unto God.

It's a wonderful truth that we can, you know, just grasp the reality of that and the consequences of that, the ramifications of that. So moving on, like the privileges of the believer priest, there's a whole list there.

First we got there, direct access to God. You can pray directly to God in Jesus' name. There's no human intermediary required. And I know when we've been knocking doors lately, we've experienced a few Roman Catholics and they've got this idea you go through Mary or you go through some saint, you pray through someone or you go to the confessional.

All of those things, it's not biblical at all. We can minister, we can go direct to God in prayer. We don't need some man to go in between us. It tells us in Hebrews 4.16, come boldly unto the throne of grace.

And so your prayers can be heard 24-7. You can go in boldly. There's no need to be lacking in confidence. You can have an assurance that they'll hear you. And you can go 24 by 7.

[15:56] There's no appointment needed. There's no putting you on hold. You're waiting to get through. You can go straight in and you've got no appointment necessary. And really, it's a wonderful privilege, isn't it, that we can go to God in prayer.

It's something that every believer has at any time you can enter in. It's not like you've got to wait till you're feeling worshipful or there's some meeting and you get spiritual when you go to church. As much as, it's a good thing to do that. But you don't have to wait to have a holy moment or a holy meeting or come into a holy place. You can go straight to God wherever you are, whenever you want to.

It's a great privilege to have that direct, intimate relationship with God. So you've got direct access to God. You can offer up spiritual sacrifices. So unlike Old Testament priests who offered up animals, we offer up spiritual sacrifices to God.

And for example, you've got here praise. You can offer up praise. Hebrews 13, 15, By him, Christ, therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually.

[17:07] That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. As priests, we offer up praise to God. In the Old Testament times, there was, I suppose, more of a select way that worship was done.

But now every believer has got that privilege, that responsibility of praise. Praise to God. And do it continually. The fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

And then it reads further there, To do good and to communicate, forget not. For with such sacrifices, God is well pleased. So we could think of good works, of sharing, of doing good things. That's a way of being a priest, showing your love to God. And the next one, we could think, what we offer, our body, our life.

It tells us, Romans 12, verse 1, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

[18:09] So there's a sense where our actual body, our person, who we are, is like a living sacrifice. We, as it were, laying ourselves on the altar, making ourselves at God's disposal, for God's service, for God to use us, our body, our life.

And in Philippians, it talks about their giving. The Philippians' gifts were like this odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing to God. You could think of our giving, of however we might give, that it's something that's like a sacrifice, a giving unto God.

You could think how really every act of worship, every kindness or obedience, is like this priestly offering. And another thing that priests do is that they represent God to others, and 1 Peter 2.9, that we should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

When you live for God, live with integrity, show kindness, share the gospel, you're a priest. It's something that we can maybe just have that thought to think about that.

I know sometimes you go on the train or something and there's some priest there with their dog collar on or some holy person with their vestments on. You don't have to wear anything, a dog collar

or anything, but there's that sense where really full time you are a priest.

[19:33] You actually represent the Lord Jesus to your world, don't you? It's that kind of thought that, yeah, I should actually, that should make me think how should I live and how I should act.

And so we looked at really the privileges of the believer and then next section, top of page three, the responsibilities that we have. With privilege comes responsibility.

As priests, you're called to live a holy life. The Old Testament priests, they had to wear certain garments, they had to wear these clean garments and that was a picture of their, of purity.

It was kind of reflective, a symbolic of their holiness and we're told be ye holy for I am holy, 1 Peter 1, 16.

There's that thought where really our life should reflect God's holiness in our choices, our words, our actions to live in a way that brings him honour and really we've all got that personal responsibility.

[20:36] We're all accountable to God. We don't rely on clergy for our holiness. It's not like you have to have some priest or some connection with a priest to make you holy.

There's that holiness that you have as God's people. Another thing that priests do is they intercede. They pray for other people and we're called to that. It tells us there in 1 Timothy 2, 1, Paul tells Timothy, I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, so asking God to supply, asking God for something, to receive something, supplications, prayers and then intercessions to intercession is to intercede.

It's for praying for someone else. Intercessions and then giving of thanks to be made for all men.

And we could think, how can we pray for other people?

It's one of our responsibilities as a believer, as a priest, as a holy nation, as kings and priests.

We're called to pray, lift up your family, your friends, your church, pray for the lost. In James 5, 16, it says pray one for another. Pray for one another.

[21:50] And another thing, another responsibility of the believer, the priest is, and you don't need a pulpit, but we're to teach and witness. We all can have an impartation to others.

And when you think about it, our life, our words, point others to the Lord. And it's been thought that you could even look at, for example, Paul and Silas when they were in prison and they were there really suffering in prison for their faith.

And it says that at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. So their worship ultimately led to the jailer's conversion because he said, what must I do to be saved?

There's this earthquake and they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Their worship, their prayers, it's a picture of how they were acting like priests.

There wasn't a priest there as such, like an Old Testament priest. And it's the same for you and me. We don't need some priest to pray or some priest for us to praise. It's something that they just did.

[22:56] And it was like this priestly act. And it's like that for you and me. We've got a ministry to other people, helping, teaching, comforting. Next section, common errors to avoid.

When we think about this truth of the priesthood, of the believer, there's some wrong ideas that kind of touch on this issue.

And so when we get this truth that there is the priesthood of every believer, there's these pitfalls that some people fall into. And the first one there is this clergy-laity divide.

So some people have got the idea of the clergy, you know, the clergy class, those who might be the upfront pastor or preacher. And then the others, like the laity, the word laity means really just people.

So there's this divide between the clergy and the laity, like the clergy have got some special status. The priesthood of the believer, it doesn't mean that everyone is a pastor, but it does mean that every Christian has got a spiritual dignity and responsibility.

[24:07] So really, as Bible-believing churches, we don't elevate the clergy above the laity as if they're somehow special or only professionals, only the ones who are called a pastor get to serve.

But the priesthood of the believer is the fact that really that we've all can serve and that this idea that clergy are somehow more spiritual or closer to God than lay people is really the wrong idea. We see that Matthew 23, the Lord rebukes the Pharisees and talks about how they're getting things wrong and they've got this idea of they wanted to walk around the marketplace and people call them Rabbi and kind of elevate them and put them on a pedestal.

It's really not how it's meant to be. We're all brethren. All of us are brethren. And another truth is this idea of confessing to men is really a false idea because the Bible tells us this.

In 1 John 1.9, it says if we confess our sins to God, in the context, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[25:18] We don't need to go to a human priest for forgiveness. Certainly, the Bible doesn't tell us to do that. There's no such thing as penance or going to confession.

There is one scripture that says confess your faults to one another. There's a truth to that and that's more in the sense of hey, can you pray for me? I need help.

I've got this situation, this trial, this temptation. Pray for me about this need that I have. It might be a fault but you're not confessing your sins as in telling them all the bad things you've done.

We don't need to know what another believer has done wrong but we can help them by praying for their need, their fault that they might have. But the truth is like this scripture makes it very clear that we can go directly to God for our forgiveness, not confessing to men.

It's really a false idea. And the next one there that touches on this doctrine too is misusing the doctrine. Oh, there's the priesthood of every believer so we don't really need the church.

[26:25] We don't need the church. We don't need church authority. But the Bible does have this truth that there is a certain accountability within the body. It says, obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls.

The sense where a pastoral authority that's more of a shepherding, a caring for role and some misinterpret the idea of the priesthood of every believer to reject church authority altogether.

But while we do have direct access to God, we're still part of the body of Christ. We need one another. That's why the church is called a body and we serve God within that body, not as a lone ranger.

Some people got the idea that, oh, I can do my own thing and people have that lone ranger kind of idea. It does not mean that you are your own authority.

While you have direct access to God, it doesn't mean you can make up your own rules and interpret the Bible however you like. There's the safeguards of being in a body, like a church body, that we're a family, a church family.

[27:33] And there's order and decency. There's understanding of doctrine and there's that kind of learning together. We're still under the authority of God's word and the Holy Spirit's leading.

And we benefit from the wisdom and understanding of mature believers and sound teaching. So we interact and we're interdependent, aren't we, that we can grow together. People have got different gifts and callings and you can learn from one another and impart and play your part as part of the body.

So it's just an error to kind of have the idea, well, if we're all priests, well, we don't really need church anymore. Obviously, the church is God's plan for how we ought to fellowship and as in the church, the assembling, the congregation, the getting together of God's people as a biblical reality. application, living as a priest. So it's got some thoughts there, again, probably summing up what we've already covered, the implications for every believer in our daily lives.

We see there, direct access to God. You've got that. It's a wonderful blessing that you have to go directly to God in prayer. So don't neglect prayer. Take the opportunity, avail yourself of prayer and you don't need a human mediator, you don't need to go to some confessional or some mediation through some priest or you don't have to get the pastor to pray for you, although you can ask that, but you can go straight to God for your need and he'll hear your prayer.

[29:10] And then there's that personal responsibility that we're all responsible for our own spiritual growth and walk with God. We're all part of learning of our own development and studying the Bible to show yourself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word there.

Then priestly service, we're to serve God and others in our daily lives. Again, as we touched on. And again, just underlining this truth here, that equality among believers, there's no special spiritual class.

There's a certain, there's certain roles and officers within the church, but it's not that there's one above another.

It's not like this hierarchy. We know like, for example, in the Roman Catholic Church, they've got bishop and archbishop and cardinal and pope. You know, really, this idea of some hierarchy, it's not in the Bible at all.

It says we're all brethren. Now, there is this truth of the elder, bishop, pastor is the one person. Then you've got deacons. There are certain roles and officers within the church, but it's not like some kind of hierarchy system.

[30:26] It's not like that. It's not like some management system of some organisation chart kind of thing. Pastors, teachers, leaders are important, but they serve as guides, as examples, not as some special clergy class.

And the other truth there is this, it's called the principle of soul liberty. So in other words, every believer has got the liberty, the freedom, as regards their beliefs and actions, they're personally accountable to God.

So we all come to our own conviction on different matters. It could be that one believer will see something differently from another believer.

It talks about whatsoever is not a faith is sin. You've got to come to your own conviction on different things. But ultimately, we're all personally accountable to God. We're all going to give account to Him.

We're all going to face that judgement for our works, that testing, that determination. Are our works right or wrong? And we ought to have that in our mind then to choose wisely, but there is this truth of soul liberty in the sense that one believer might be convicted about something that another believer doesn't have the same conviction.

[31:47] This freedom that we have to make our own choices, ultimately, like within certain, I guess, certain limitations, obviously. Some might have certain convictions about certain entertainments or certain occupations, certain areas that might be questionable.

And we've all got to come to our own personal stand on those things before God and ultimately we're accountable to God for that if we make unwise choices.

And then there's this other truth here of soul competency. So, again, along the same line, we've got to God-given ability and a right to know God and to follow his will and to interpret the Bible for ourselves, guided by the Holy Spirit.

It's not like we have to necessarily defer to a teacher in some overdone way.

There's that sense we've all got to come to our own scriptural understanding of things and to know and follow God's will, to find his leading, to interpret the Bible for ourselves. Like back in the dark ages, they had this system, like the priestly class, that they decided everything and, you know, it was very dominating and there wasn't really that sense where actually you even had a Bible.

[33:16] You didn't even have a Bible. in your own language back in the dark ages and it's like the clergy class of that time deliberately kept people in the dark, literally in the dark ages, so they couldn't really know and search the scriptures and find the truth and interpret the scriptures, whereas now we have got the Bible, so it's good for us to try to get conversant with it and use it.

Next page, so how do you live out this priesthood? here's a bit of a summary again, pray daily, you've got that access, use it, use that access that you have, pray with confidence for yourself and others.

Now sometimes people find it hard to pray out loud in a congregation setting, hey, you don't need to worry about that, you can pray out loud in your car when you're on your own, pray out loud in your room, talk to God one to one, you don't need to worry about others listening to your prayer, live holy, the priests have these clean garments, we should have that thought about purity of thought, of speech, of conduct, serve willingly, as a priest, you've got that responsibility to minister to others, teaching, encouraging, praying, helping, worship, take the opportunity to worship too, there's

opportunities when you might, I know some people like to play music, worship music, listen to some praise and sing along, join in, and have that heartfelt praise and then encourage others too, as priests we minister God's grace to others, and then just the next section, it's a high calling that we have, it's a high calling, it's a wonderful blessed responsibility that we have a great privilege and a joy, you're not a spectator in

God's kingdom, you're a participant, you're a priest, called to worship and serve, you don't need robes, you don't need to wear special vestments, but you need that heart that's washed in the blood of Christ, so to know that you're saved, that's when you enter the priesthood in a sense, isn't it, when you know that you're saved, you're born again, and here's a great verse here, you could make it a memory verse, a key verse, but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him, he's called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light, and think how one day we'll be around his throne, as these ones here in Revelation 1, it tells how they're praising God, they say, unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, amen.

So think of a priest here tonight, believers here tonight, that because of Jesus, you are a priest of God, you've got a special privilege that it's not exclusive to the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron, you are a priest of God, you are as a blood-bought believer, you can walk worthy of that high calling that you have, you've got a boldness, you've got a confidence, you've been invested with this ministry of serving, and you can live as the royal priesthood, kings and priests, both, a royal priesthood, showing forth his praises every day of your life.

[36:59] Now the next paragraph there, it says, common questions, does this mean we don't need pastors or teachers? No, pastors and teachers are also believer priests, they've got these gifts to help the church grow, but they do not stand above others, but serve alongside them.

So it's not like I'm above you, I'm serving with you, and using what abilities I have to shepherd, to care, to serve. We're working together, we're serving alongside each other, it's not like the sum, as we've been talking about, this hierarchy, for example, in the Roman Catholic Church, but it's in lots of churches, where there's this kind of bowing down to people at a higher, ultimately a pope, and they call the pope the head of the church.

We know who the head of the church is, it's Christ, it's not some man. So we don't need to have that hierarchy, but in the Bible-believing churches, there is the role of pastors, teachers, of elders, shepherds, and deacons too.

What about the confession of sin? Of course, we should confess our sin, but you go directly to God with that sin. It's good to keep your heart right, keep short accounts with God.

When you know you've done something wrong, go to the Lord, go to God direct, and confess it to Him. Keep that short account with Him, so you get things right, keep that right fellowship with God.

[38:30] Summary here, I know some of this is repeating somewhat, but every true believer is a priest of God. We've got direct access, we offer spiritual sacrifices, worship, service, we're to be intercessors, so don't neglect to pray for others.

Think of that role that you have. Are the people in your life, in your circle of influence, hey, maybe I should be praying for them more? That one that comes to your heart, the Lord presses His name, her name, on your heart to pray for them.

Don't forget to pray, and be that example, and really it guards against that false teaching of human mediators. We don't need that, that's a false idea.

And when we think about as priests that we are, it reminds us of our dignity, of our duty, of our daily dependence on the Lord. There's that truth that wherever you go, you're a priest, you're serving God, you're ministering, you're representing Him.

And you see in this table here, it really kind of pictures the two concepts there, comparing the Old Testament priesthood with the New Testament priesthood.

[39:44] So on the Old Testament priesthood side, as it was under the Old Covenant, it tells us that of the Old Testament priests, it was only Levites and Aaron's sons.

But now on the New Testament side, so now every believer in Christ is a priest. The Old Testament side, they offered up animal sacrifices, tons and tons of them.

Now it says, the New Testament side, we offer up spiritual sacrifices, our praise, our service. On the Old Testament side, it says that they mediated between people and God, and there was this special, the high priest, the day of atonement, the one day that they could have this special entering into the holy place.

But now we've got direct access, every believer has got access. So when you think about that, again to impress that on you, to think about that, you have direct access to God.

Are you using it? Sometimes we don't, do we? It's almost like prayer is like the last resort, whereas really it should be the first thing. It should be that we should seek God's will, God's mind on things, and go direct access to God, use that access.

[41:01] And then on the Old Testament priest side, it was a special class, it was just a very select group, and almost like the status of that, it was kind of a set apart, select kind of group.

But now all believers, all believers are equal in Christ. We've got that brotherliness between us, we've got that truth that all of us have, this wonderful privilege to be a priest.

And then you see, just in closing, here's a good verse again that kind of wraps it up, thinking of our Lord. I know we've read it before, but it says, by him, by Christ therefore, that is offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name, but to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

So think of it, brother, sister, tonight, I think you all have that wonderful privilege, the priesthood of the believer, all believers. And it really, it's quite a wonderful truth, a wonderful blessing, when you actually think about it, that it's not this select old covenant, the priestly family of Aaron, of the Levites, but now all of us have the same wonderful privilege of direct access and that wonderful truth of bringing our spiritual sacrifices and interceding, praying for one another.

So let's just wrap it up with prayer. Lord, we thank you here tonight for the truth of this doctrine, Lord, for this wonderful privilege that we have and responsibility, Lord, that we can think about how we can exercise this ministry that each one of us have, every believer.

[42:58] Lord, that we think about that and we make that something that impresses our mind about how we ought to live and walk and serve you and minister to others and intercede to pray for others.

Lord, we pray for everyone that's here and those that might be watching too. Lord, that you'd guide our hearts and help us to walk in these truths. Lord, bless our refreshments too now, we pray, and guide our steps, we pray in Jesus' precious name.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.