

Brothers, Let's Do Our Priestly Duties

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[0 : 0 0] you over this way, Austin, so you don't get tangled up. Austin Teal's going to come and preach to us and I'm excited about it soon, Lord willing. He'll be going to Taiwan. He can tell you about y'all to be praying about that, pray about all the guys that are trying to figure out how to get back into their countries through COVID. Brother Austin.

Thank you, Pastor. First off, I'd like to thank all of you for your prayers and concern for, well, for my family, but then also all the other families. We've created a support text messaging ring called the Stranded Ring because we're all stranded here in the States and so we're all texting each other and trying to be an encouragement to each other and strategize about things to do in this kind of weird limbo time. But thank you for praying for us that are stranded and trying to figure out when we're going to go and what to do in the interim. So anyway, you know, we are, missionaries to China. I want to be very clear on that. I know that there has been a mass merge over the Taiwan Straits over to Taiwan, but we are very much gung-ho about eventually landing in China. We do want to go to Taiwan for a time to do some further training there under the Tolsons and their ministry. But please be praying that Taiwan would open to us. It is open to others on our team at this point, those that are all American families, but with our family,

Annie Grace being a Chinese national. Taiwan is not allowing Chinese nationals in currently. And then, of course, China is not allowing Americans in currently. And so we're kind of stuck in between there. But please be praying that both China would open up to Americans and that Taiwan would open up to Chinese and that all these other countries that are closed up right now would open up soon so that we can get our missionaries back in there. All of this extra time, since, you know, we're supposed to leave back in May, has given me a lot of time to think and to pray through quite a few things.

And I've been really, really struck with the job that we have before us. And I say us, not just us missionaries, but us Christians. Because, you know, 2,000 years ago, King Jesus, and he proved he was king at that point. I mean, he died, he had been buried, placed in the ground for about three days, and he rose again. And he gave us our marching orders. And he said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Go ye therefore, in light of the authority that has been given unto me. We heard about that in the deacons in training meeting today from Brother Sam. You know, Jesus, he's under authority.

And when he says, go and do, people go and do, because they know he's under the authority of his Father. And he said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptize them, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you.

[3 : 1 3] And yet here we are a couple thousand years later. We've had a long time to work at this. A really long time to work at this. Here we are a couple thousand years later as churches all around the world as believers, as the people of God. And yet there are people in China who right now could look you square in the eye, cock their head, look at you kind of goofy, and say, hold on, what's a Jesus?

There are college girls in China. Greg could tell you about Sarah that he met a little over a year ago. And saw a Bible in his lap on the train. And after having an opportunity to kind of look through it and figure out what exactly Greg was doing with the Bible, she said, you know, Jesus is my favorite myth.

That's all she knows about Him. And as was mentioned this morning, Pastor mentioned what Kyle had to say recently at a missions conference. Even in places that we would love to say are Christian places, they say, yeah, I know Larry Bird.

I know Larry Bird. They're talking about the really short, 5'5", chubby Larry Bird that's not the Larry Bird that's the Larry Bird.

And whether it's in Latin America or in places in Africa, we went to Nigeria earlier this year. I mean, there are billboards after billboard after billboard saying, healing crusade, revival, come to this church, come to that church.

[4 : 48] Our Uber driver wanted to sow seeds into our ministry. But they don't know Jesus. They don't know Him. And I've been thinking about all this stuff.

A passage that I just cannot get away from, and some of you know that because you're going to think, I think I've heard Austin talk about this recently. But a passage that I just can't get away from is Exodus chapter 19.

Exodus chapter 19. We'll start reading in verse 3. Exodus 19 and verse 3.

The Bible says, And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountains, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

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.

[5 : 59] And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. So, let's pray.

Lord, thank you for this evening. Thank you for this opportunity to come into your house, to meet with your people, to hear from your word. Bless our time together now. Bless this message.

I pray that you use it in hearts. I ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen. Okay, so here we are. Exodus chapter 19.

A lot has happened so far in Exodus. In fact, I was thinking about it recently. This is, we're right on the cusp of where most people stop their daily Bible reading plan. We're like right there.

Because all the action of the first few books of the Bible is Genesis, and then through right about 19, 20 of Exodus. And then usually people get to the law.

[6 : 55] Exodus chapter 20. They'll get to the Ten Commandments. They might muscle their way through the next few chapters. And then after that, they're like, constructing this ark, the tabernacle, all these laws about priests, and where they're supposed to put the blood on their big toe, and on their earlobes, and all this.

I don't know about that. But a lot has happened leading up to this point. I mean, God spoke to Abram way back in Genesis chapter 12, and He said, I am going to make you a great nation.

He said, I am going to bless you. He's 75 years old. Doesn't have any kids. His wife is barren. And God's saying, I'm going to make you a great nation. He talks about how He's going to bless them.

He's going to do all of these things for them. And Abram, 75-year-old Abram, says, you know what? I believe God. He packed up house with his wife Sarah and their nephew Lot, and they just go. And they probably, at that point in time, could not imagine how the Lord would truly bless His very own promise there that day.

You know, He said, I'm going to make you a great nation. And we get to Exodus chapter 12 and verse 37. And the Bible says, And the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth, about 600,000 on foot.

[8 : 17] That were men beside children. So they've been in Egypt for generations at this point. And we got 600,000 men.

Just what? Four, five, at most six centuries before? Abram. Him and his barren wife. And here we are.

600,000 men coming out of Egypt. They probably couldn't fathom that way back there in Genesis chapter 12. Not only that, but God said He was going to make His name great.

And we get to Joshua, and the spies are sent in to spy out the land. They had just crossed Jordan, or they're getting ready to cross Jordan, and they go over Jordan to spy out the land. And they go into Rahab's house, and in Joshua chapter 2 and verse 10 and 11, it says, For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

You realize what happened there? It happened 40 years previous to them encountering Rahab. I mean, they had 40 years in the wilderness wandering around. So can you imagine being in Jericho, Rahab or any of them there in Jericho, and you get word pretty soon after the fact, Pharaoh's army has been drowned in the sea, and their slave's God did it.

[9 : 54] Their slave's God did it. Well, where are they headed? They're headed our way. And then a few days or weeks or maybe a couple months go by, and all of a sudden they get word, well, maybe they're not coming that fast.

They're out there just spinning circles in the wilderness. I don't really know what's going on. What are they doing? What are they doing? What's going on there? But over time, that generation dies off.

The next generation raises up. Joshua and Caleb are leading them in. And Rahab's like, oh, stink. The day is here. They're coming. Their name was great, and they were feared in the earth.

Why? Because their God was mighty to defeat the Egyptians. He was mighty to deliver them out of Egypt. And that's exactly what God says here in Exodus chapter 19. In verse 4, it says, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

You just saw what I did for you. You were in bondage for hundreds of years. And I, the Lord, your God, I have brought you out. I have delivered you.

[11 : 04] I have saved you. You have this testimony before the nations. Verse 5, Now therefore, because of what I've done for you, because of your testimony, if you 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.

I'm setting you guys apart. You guys are holy unto the Lord. I've got a special purpose for you. I've got a special way that I plan to use you in this world.

Above all other people. I didn't pick the Indians. I didn't pick the Chinese. I didn't pick any Europeans.

I picked you guys. Why is that? Verse 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. A kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Now back just about a month ago, we had missions conference here. And I really enjoyed missions conference.

[12 : 13] I always enjoyed missions conference. I really enjoyed missions conference. And the theme song really struck me. I can't get it out of my head. I hadn't heard it since missions conference, but I just keep playing it over and over again.

I mean, obviously the theme of the song is Jesus is worthy. He is worthy of it all. And a lot of that song is taken straight out of Revelation. And I mean, they are there in the throne room singing day in and day out the praises of Jesus because He is worthy of their praises and so much more.

He's worthy of the praises of the entire world. Is He not? I mean, He is highly exalted. We heard this morning, There is salvation in none else. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

I mean, Jesus is like king. He is top dog. He has a name above every other name. He is worthy. But in that song, we also sing about what He has done for us.

In the second verse there, it says, He has made us a kingdom and priests to God. He's made us a kingdom and priests to God.

[13 : 16] You realize in the book of Revelation chapter 1, it says we are kings and priests. We are kings and priests. We will reign with God.

We will reign with Him. Just recently in Pastor's Sunday school class, He's been taking us through the book of Revelation. Even today in Revelation 21 and 22, talking about ruling and reigning with Jesus.

Well, I was struck because I had my Chinese Bible with me and my English Bible, and I was looking at the Chinese. The Chinese word for reign is just to be king. So we will be king with Jesus. We will reign with Jesus.

We will be kings with Jesus. We will do the job of king with Jesus. But we're priests too. We're priests. And this is what's being said here. God's telling the nation of Israel, He's saying, You are priests.

Now, up until this point, there isn't a Levitical priesthood. That hadn't been established yet. We start getting into that at the very end of Exodus. They start outlining, Okay, what does the priest wear, and what do they do?

[14 : 23] And then we really get into it in Leviticus. But at this point in the Bible, priest is a relatively new term. The first time it's mentioned is in Genesis chapter 14, talking about Melchizedek, and how he was both a king and a priest.

Interesting that we are kings and priests as well. Hebrews talks about how Melchizedek is a picture of Jesus, because he is our king. He is our high priest.

Amen? Well, then, priest is mentioned a few more times in Genesis, talking about Egyptian priests. You know, Joseph, he married an Egyptian, and Joseph's father-in-law was a priest in Egypt.

But he was not a priest of the Most High God like Melchizedek was. He was a priest of On. And I'm not entirely sure if On is some Egyptian deity, or if On is some place in Egypt. But regardless of say, it's pretty clear, based on what I've seen there, that he's not a priest of the Most High God, neither are any of these other Egyptian priests.

Then we get to Exodus. And in Exodus chapter 2, Exodus chapter 3, and Exodus chapter 18, this other priest shows up. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. And it's a bit unclear in chapters 2 and 3, but we get to chapter 18, and we realize that he too is a priest of the Most High God.

[15 : 34] He hears how God has brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt, and he starts making sacrifices to the Most High God. He starts praising his name for all that's been done.

And you know, even though the term priest isn't used, there are other glimmers of people doing priestly things before the Levitical priesthood is established. We have, I think, a Job. Job is offering sacrifices for his kids, isn't he?

Maybe they've sinned against you, God. So look, I'm going to offer this sacrifice and make atonement. I think all the way back to Abel. I mean, he's offering sacrifices. Noah, in Genesis chapter 8, he's offering sacrifices.

They had this priestly duty that they did, and it's not until the Levitical priesthood's established that that was kind of taken away from the common people and given to this kind of higher class. You are the Levites.

You do the priestly duties. But here, before the Levitical priesthood is established, God, through Moses, is telling all of the nation of Israel, you all are priests. That's who you are.

[16 : 36] You are priests, he says. Verse 6, And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests. You're all going to be priests.

You're all priests, in a sense. In another sense, the Levites are priests. But in a sense, you all are priests. Well, it kind of gets you thinking, well, okay, what exactly do priests do?

And we read through the end of Exodus, we read through Leviticus, and we start thinking about those things. You know, they make atonement. They offer sacrifices. They go through these cleansing rituals and all of those things.

But what they're doing is they are representing people before God. They represent people before God. So we have a prophet, which Moses is actually doing that right here in Exodus 19.

He is going to God and saying, okay, God, what do you want me to tell them? And then he goes out to the people and he says, all right, guys, listen up. Thus saith the Lord. But a priest does the opposite. He takes the people, their needs, their desires, and maybe some things that they don't desire.

[17 : 44] Maybe they don't even know that they need atonement. But then the priest runs to God and says, God, will you save them? Will you apply the blood to them?

Will you accept this offering? Will you do that? And they talk to God. They pray to God on behalf of the people. Israel, they're priests.

They're priests. Well, in what way? Well, in Isaiah, it says that they're supposed to be light unto the Gentiles. Right? They're supposed to represent the world before God. That's their job.

God gives it to them right here. He's saying, you are to be a kingdom of priests. Your job is to represent the nations before me. You're to be a light to the Gentiles.

And all through the Old Testament, we see glimpses of this. I was thinking just a bit ago about Jonah. I mean, he was told, go to Nineveh and tell them to repent. Cry against them. Tell them that if you guys don't repent, you're going to perish.

[18 : 44] But it's not just Jonah. David said, he said, I'm going to kill Goliath so that they will know that there is a God in Israel. You know, you read, we were just in Daniel. You think about Daniel twice.

Nebuchadnezzar, Darius. They make decrees and they write letters and they send them all over the world. Ahasuerus did it too, and Esther, by the way. And they say, you know this God of the Jews?

You know this God that's in Israel? You know this God of Daniel? He alone is worthy. He is worthy of your... Can you imagine? Can you imagine someone in America doing something so impressive and so amazing so as to impress our president that he sits down and writes a letter to the United Nations and says, let me tell you about Jesus.

Let me tell you about him. Can you imagine that? That's what happened. I mean, Ahasuerus, it says there in Esther, his kingdom was from India to Ethiopia. Like 127 provinces.

They all had their different languages and cultures. And he actually sat a bunch of scribes and translators down and said, you translate what I'm writing into Hindi and into Amharic.

[19 : 58] Yes, I was going to pronounce it wrong. Amharic. Translate it into those and everything in between because they need to know what I'm about to tell them. The God of the Jews is to be worshipped. He is to be worshipped.

Darius did it. Nebuchadnezzar did it. Worship Him. He is worthy. Today in Sunday school, the pastor mentioned the Queen of Sheba coming up from the south.

Ethiopia. To hear the wisdom of Solomon. Can you imagine? Being a queen, being a ruler, and enough people are talking about this other ruler really far away, and, I mean, can you imagine being someone that was like an advisor to the Queen of Sheba?

And she's there in her palace or whatever she has and you're there and you're advising her and helping her throughout the day and people keep coming in and saying, Queen, you will not believe what I encountered.

I just went up the Nile until I got to the Delta. I hung a right. I went up there along the Mediterranean. There's this guy there. You will not believe his wisdom. You will not believe what he's doing. And enough of these people are funneling down there.

[21 : 11] She's like, okay, I've had enough. I just got to go see this. And she goes and she's like, I can't... Not even the half was told me. She's giving them gifts. She's doing all this stuff.

Just in the next chapter, 1 Kings 10, what happens? It says the whole earth was sending people. The whole earth. Let's turn there real quick. 1 Kings 10.

1 Kings 10 and verse 24. And all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.

That's being a light to the Gentiles. Even I was struck in the deacons in training meeting. Brother Sam was sharing from Luke chapter 7. A Gentile wants to talk to Jesus, but you know what he does?

He gets Jews to go and talk to him for him. Think about that. The Gentiles like, you know what? I don't know the centurion. I don't know that I'm worthy to go talk to Jesus.

[22 : 20] I'm going to get the Jewish elders to go and talk to him for me. Those elders, they're being priestly when they do that. They're going to Jesus and they're saying, Jesus, we've got this guy.

Let me talk to you about him. Let me tell you what he's got to say. And there's this interplay, at least as far as we got in the meeting this afternoon, never once did Jesus and this man ever meet face to face.

It might happen later on in the passage. I have to go back and look. But all of the conversation is happening through these mediators, through these elders. And then a little bit further down, it says he sent some friends out to talk to him.

I don't know if they were Jewish friends or not, but he's going through these mediators to talk to Jesus. These, I mean, they're serving a priestly function. They're going to God and saying, I've got this guy who wants to talk to you.

This is what he says. This is what he says. And this is what God here in Exodus 19 is laying out for the nation of Israel through Moses. He's saying, you guys are priests. You're priests.

[23 : 18] Tell the world about me. Tell them what I've done for you. You know what I've done for you. I brought you out of Egypt. You know what I've done for you. I've delivered you on eagle's wings. You know what I've done for you. I drowned an army in the Red Sea.

I had a professor back in Bible college who would say that, you know, a lot of people cast doubt on how deep the water was in the Red Sea because, well, you know, I mean, how would the waters of the Red Sea really part after all?

Surely they just kind of went through some shallows or something. It wasn't a big deal. And my professor, he said, well, you know, in that case, the real miracle is that God drowned the entire Egyptian army in about that much water.

I mean, no matter how you slice that story, God did something amazing there. And friends, God has done something amazing in your life. He has saved you.

He has delivered you from darkness to light. He has brought you from slavery to freedom. You serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords. If you know Him, He has given you His righteousness.

[24 : 25] We read in, I believe, I was looking at this morning, Exodus 39, talking about everything that a priest is supposed to wear. It seemed like some pretty nice stuff. I mean, gold and all of these, like, gemstones.

And, I mean, it was... It seemed pretty impressive just reading about it. And yet Isaiah says that we're wrapped in garments of salvation.

We're clothed in His righteousness. We have the righteousness of Christ. And we have put off sin. And we are to put on the new man.

And we are to live in a new way because we're new creatures. And we serve Him. We do His bidding. We obey His command. Yes, we are called to be holy.

But remember, to be holy is to be set apart for a special purpose. So many times I fear. I know this happens so much in my life. I assume that holiness is only not doing what I've been told not to do.

[25 : 28] So, well, you know, growing up, the kind of joke phrase was, don't drink, don't smoke, don't chew, don't go with girls that do. So if I just don't do that, don't do that, don't do that, don't do that, you know what? I'm good.

I am doing everything God requires of me. But, you know, if I only don't do the things that He tells me not to do, but I never do the things He told me to do, that's not really obedience.

That's not really holiness. I mean, He has told us to do some things. He has told us to put off sin, to put on the new man. He has told us to live holy lives.

He has told us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves. He has told us to take the gospel to the world. He has told us to do these things. And so if we're only focused on, well, He told me not to do this and not to do this, I'm going to avoid those and then I'll just do whatever I want.

That's not going to cut it. 1 Corinthians 15, He said, Awake to righteousness and sin not. Awake to righteousness and sin not.

[26 : 34] Now, yes, He is writing to the Corinthian church. They had a slew of problems going on. And they did need to awake to even the, don't do this, don't do this, don't do this part of righteousness. But they also needed to awake to the fact that Jesus said, Go!

Take the gospel to the world. Do something about it. Go! And lest there be any confusion, in the New Testament, multiple times, we are called priests.

We are priests. Believer, you are a priest. And, you know, we as Baptists, we certainly affirm that.

Daniel was mentioning Baptist distinctives. Priesthood of the believer. We are able to go to God on our own.

As believers, we don't need a priest. We don't need some sort of office priest that's going to be like an intermediary between us and God.

[27 : 36] We don't need that. Why? Because we're saved. We are priests. We can go to God directly, boldly, with confidence and make our requests and our petitions known to Him. And that is certainly a big part of us being priests.

Our priesthood isn't less than that, but friends, it's certainly more than that. Turn with me to 1 Peter. 1 Peter 2 and verse 9.

1 Peter 2 and verse 9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The nation of Israel was to show forth the praises of Him who brought them out of bondage and into freedom. We are to show forth the praises of Him who has brought us out of darkness into this marvelous light. Show forth to who?

Show forth to a lost world. Show forth to Roswell. You guys realize that the heart that the Lord has given Evans to go out to Roswell and to do something there in Roswell, that He has given others in this room to do that, that is a priestly thing to do.

[28 : 48] That is a royal and a priestly thing to do. Why? Because He is burdened for Roswell. And He is thinking, I've got to do something. What is it? Is it 94,000? Is that the number?

94,000 people in Roswell. And Evans is like, I want to talk to God about them. I want to talk to the church about them. I want to tell God, you know what?

I'll pray for them. I'll go down there. I'll tell them about Him. If I don't do it, who's going to do it? That's what He's thinking, I'm sure. And God's put that on His heart. And that's just being a priest.

That's what we do. And missionaries and students, the country that you're going to, you are a priest for that country. You are a priest for that country. Are you praying for it?

What are you doing to see new areas reached? I've been really convicted lately about China. China is like 1.4 billion people. And yes, we do have this 10-city initiative.

[29 : 50] And I'm thankful for that because it shows that there are so many cities that need to have missionaries. And yet those 10 cities are just 88 million people out of 1.4 billion.

And when you start looking at it, you realize there are provinces in China that are the sizes of whole countries. The largest province in China, Guangdong, 113 million people.

The 13th largest country in the world, the Philippines, only has 109 million people. If Guangdong was its own country, it would be the 13th largest in the world. Shandong, the province that Cannon's stuff is in.

I've been there. I was there last year. If it was its own country, it would be the 15th largest. It would inch out Vietnam to be number 15. And there are so many people, but it's not just China.

I mean, we were praying for the Canavans, New York City. I mean, we as a church, and as we send them out, we should be praying for the boroughs there in New York City.

[30 : 57] And as I think about it, I'm ashamed to say, I'm not sure how many boroughs there are. I could probably name off three or four, but I'm not going to embarrass myself. But, real quick and I'm done.

But, praying for the world, and I know that at this point, this has been done oftentimes here, and so it might seem a little redundant, but I do want to point out something that struck me as I started to pray for countries and pray for the world.

Everyone knows where Russia is, the big red one there at the top. Brother Sam cheering over there. Where's Bangladesh? Bangladesh. Yeah, it's this little purple guy, kind of India's armpit there.

Bangladesh. I found out recently that Bangladesh, the little purple dot under India, has more people than all of Russia. Russia's number nine in the world, Bangladesh is number eight.

Never would have thought of it. Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is the most densely populated megacity. I've seen pictures of Delhi all the time, and the people on top of people on top of people.

[32 : 03] Bangladesh, apparently, even more dense than that. And yet, I just recently thought, man, I ought to be praying for Bangladesh, and praying that the Lord send a missionary there.

Friends, what can we do to fulfill our priestly duties? To pray for our families? To pray for those in our family that are lost? To pray for those in our community that are lost? And to pray for those around the world? They need someone praying for them.

They can't go to God like we can go to God. Half of them don't even know that God exists. But we know Him, and we can go and tell them all about His mercies. Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank You for today.

Thank You for this opportunity to open up Your book with Your people. I pray that You'd bless the message, Lord. I pray that You'd work in hearts. I love You. I thank You. I ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen. I love you. Amen. Take, Take,.

Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.

[33 : 11] Bye. Bye. Bye.