

“Called as Believer-Priests”

Introduction

- Throughout Scripture we see examples that illustrate for us that the call of God on the life of a man or woman is total. The God who created us in His image is the one who makes it possible for us to be reconciled to Him and who continues to work in and through us until He brings us into His very presence.

Rom. 8:28-30—²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Key Point: Having been called to salvation by the Lord Jesus, we are then set apart by Him as His _____ who are then sent into the world to _____ others.

The Totality of God's Calling

1. We are called by God to *salvation*.

- We must hear the Gospel and _____ in faith to the call of God.

Acts 2:38-39—³⁸ *And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”*

⇒ God declares us _____ on the basis of Christ's work alone.

Rom. 3:26-27—²⁶ *It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.*

Key Point: Having been justified through faith, we have _____ with God and we are set _____ from the burden of seeking a righteous standing before Him through our works.

2. We are set apart by God as His ministers and called to *serve*.

Old Testament Background: *The Levitical Priesthood*

The Levitical priesthood was ordained by God and established through the mediatory authority and work of Moses.

⇒ The priests were cleansed and purified for service (Exod. 29:4), clothed with special garments (Exod. 29:5-6) anointed with oil (Exod. 28:7), and had their sins atoned for (Exod. 29:15-18) while they themselves were sprinkled with the blood of a sacrifice (Exod. 29:19-21).

The priesthood was ordained in order that Israel might know God's presence among them and grow in their identity as His people (Exod. 29:44-46).

⇒ The priests were to administer the various rituals of sacrifice and purification, seek God's will on behalf of the people (Num. 27:21), and to instruct the people in accordance with the Word of the Lord (Deut. 33:10).

The Priesthood of the Believer

The NT uses priestly imagery to describe the work of Christ on behalf of believers as well as the work that He entrusts to us as His servants.

(1) We are set apart as priests by the *authority* of the Lord Jesus.

Heb. 3:1-2—¹ *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ² who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.*

(2) We are ordained for service through the *work* of the Lord Jesus.

⇒ We have been _____ and _____ for service.

1 Cor. 6:11—¹¹ *And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Titus 2:13b-14—*...our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

⇒ We have been _____ for service.

Col. 3:9-10—⁹ *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

Rom. 13:12b-14— *...So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrel-
ing and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

⇒ We have been _____ for service.

Titus 3:5-6—⁵ *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

1 John 2:27—*But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.*

⇒ Our sins are _____ for and we are _____ with His blood.

Eph. 2:13—*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

1 Pet. 2:2a—*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:*

(3) As believer-priests we are *called* by God to serve Him by serving others.

Rom. 12:1—*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship*

⇒ Serve others with your giftings (12:4-8), love one another (12:9-13), care for your enemies (12:14-21), submit to the governing authorities (13:1-7), honor God and one another in your conduct (13:8-14).

1 Pet. 2:4-5—⁴ *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

⇒ Conduct yourselves as God's people so that unbelievers may know His presence is among them (2:9-12), submit to the governing authorities (2:13-17), work faithfully and trust God when you are mistreated (2:18-25), honor the Lord in your marriage (3:1-7), love one another and maintain a good testimony among unbelievers (3:8-17).

Key Point: We have all we need in Christ to minister _____ in everything to which He has called us.

Concluding Thoughts

• God is at work _____ us to care for others.

• God is at work _____ us as He cares for others through us.

1 Thess. 5:23-24—²³ *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*