

**TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 2)**

**PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:4-5a**

**THEME: The Believer's Priesthood**

**NUMBER: 1PET39-0406**

**DATE: April 30, 2006**

---

## Read Passage

### We're looking at t/CH as a royal priesthood

Concept of a P.H. no doubt brings many images to mind; mostly centered on monkish looking men wearing backward collars.

For c. that was t/only priesthood t/CH knew. The idea that ea. & every believer in JC, man or woman, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, had equal access to God thru JC had been lost.

We noted last week how t/truth of t/priesthood of every believer began to erode early on in t/life of t/CH w/the politicizing of t/CH & t/perversion of leadership offices (subsequent perversion of doctrine). No longer was a local under t/authority of it's own pastor-elders; Bishops, Cardinals, and eventually Popes became t/ultimate authority – even over t/Word of God.

### Middle ages became a time of great spiritual darkness

Think about it ==>

Psalm 119:105 **Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.**

God's Word brings light to darkness; it dispels t/shadows of sin & t/lies of bad doctrine. Problem was that Word was suffocated under t/weight of man-made dogma & political ambition. No longer was t/CH made up of believer-priests, each w/access to God & His Word. The believer priest was defrocked; he was locked in a chamber of darkness.

### God wasn't through with His CH

As you know, God brought revival & reform. As a result we refer to t/16th c. reform. w/the Latin phrase "*Post Tenebras Lux*" (after darkness, light). God in His grace delivered t/CH from t/damning darkness of men & restored unto us t/illuminating truth of t/God.

We often speak of those evangelical doctrines that were recovered during those times: Authority of the Bible; Salvation by grace alone thru faith alone; Sufficiency of JC in His person and work. But t/one thing we don't often speak of in connection w/these things is a silver thread that binds them together: Priesthood of t/believer

### **What is the Priesthood of the believer?**

The privilege won for every Xn by X giving the believer access to God in prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word.

### **We are talking about priesthood**

What is a "priest?" Word used here is ἱεράτευμα (P.H.) which comes from t/Gk. noun ἱερεὺς (priest).

In t/ancient Gk. world, the ἱερεὺς (priest) was equivalent to t/μαντις (seer, prophet, mystic). To be a priest was to be a prophet. Not t/case in t/Bible. Priest generally had a distinctive role from that of t/prophet & served as a specific class of men who offered up sacrifices & mediated between t/ppl. & God.

Basic term for "priest" in OT is t/Heb. word כֹּהֵן. The root mean = "to stand;" ind. that t/priest is 1 who stands before God & serves, or stands before God & men to mediate between t/two. Esp. true in t/case of t/H.P. of Israel who alone could enter t/Holy of Holies & only after he confessed his sin & made sacrifice for himself lest he be killed (wore bells on t/bottom of his robe to make sure he was alive).

Concept of t/priesthood has been carried over into false religious systems (we call it Sacerdotalism comes from t/Latin word "sacerdōs" meaning "priest" - Sacerdotalism is a system of religion built upon a class of priests that stand apart from t/rest of men).

## **We're maintaining that every believer is a priest**

What does that mean? What does it mean that t/CH is composed of believers who stand as individual priests before God?

Means that we don't require a man or men to mediate or come between God and us. We may **"Come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find mercy & grace to help in time of need"** (Heb. 4:16).

Go back to our definition ==>

## ***What is the Priesthood of the believer?***

The privilege won for every Xn by X giving the believer access to God in prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word.

## **It is a privilege**

By grace; not some sort of right that we are born into. We're not born into it at birth; we're born again at salvation to receive as a gift of God's grace.

## **Won by Christ**

He is our great H.P. who has entered t/holy of holies giving us access to the most holy place through Him (Heb. 10)

## **For every Christian**

Every believer is equal in this regard. I don't have any special access code to God. Sometimes people will act that way, *"You're a preacher, God will listen to you"* - *"If I can only get Pat Robertson or Benny Hinn to pray for me"* (spare me!). Point is, God doesn't hear any 1 of his children more than any others. Each one is an individual priest before God.

16<sup>th</sup> c. Reformer, Martin Luther declared that by virtue of God's grace, our salvation "consecrates us all without exception and makes us all priests. . . . We all have the same authority in regard to the Word and the sacraments, although no one has the right to administer them without the consent of the members of his church. . . . Every shoemaker can be a priest of God . . . " [cited in the New Dictionary of Theology, s.v. Priesthood of the Believer]

## Gives us Access to God

Ever try to reach someone who is well-known or in demand? Extremely difficult. Can't just call the Whitehouse & talk to t/President. *"President, Sir, Tony Bartolucci is holding on line three."* (Right, I'd be holding from now until the next election!).

Even in Xn circles there are t/knowns & t/unknowns. I am quite content to be a member of t/latter crowd (unknowns). However, I find t/discrimination that comes w/this quite irritating at times. I try to contact someone who's well-known & t/attitude is *"Who is this guy?! I don't know him; he's nobody; he's never made a name for himself. Tell him to go away"*

I just have to share this at this point ==>

For t/past few years I have attended a large pastor's conf. on t/West coast. Hosted by GCC (where MacArthur preaches) & attended by some 3000 men (most of them no bodies like me). With that many attending, good seats are at a premium. One thing t/leadership of t/conference always emphasizes is "no saving of seats." First year I went I went alone & found myself usually sitting in t/back of t/auditorium or outside. I decided it would be nice to sit up front & I made a special effort to be toward t/front of t/crowd before one evening session. Doors opened & everyone rushed in. I found a row toward t/front which one entire CH from AZ had reserved for themselves. I asked t/man at t/head of t/row, "Is there room for one more?" W/O even looking at me, he gruffly replied, "No, these are all saved." I felt like telling him, "Well, we're not on a school bus & this isn't Junior High – too bad I'm sitting here anyway! (after all, weren't supposed to save seats anyway!). But I left w/o tweaking his nose & found my usual seat outside.

But t/thought occurred to me, "What if I was R.C. Sproul? Or, John MacArthur? And I asked that same man, *"Do you have room here for*

me?" What kind of response? *"Absolutely Sir. Sit here. Let me take off your shoes & give you a foot massage."* Reminds me of James 2 . . .

The fact that each believer is a priest before God means that there are no favorites. Not only can we access God through JC, God also views us t/same in that regard. There are no "Xn celebrities" who get preferential treatment. It's not like you raise your eyes to heaven & you pray, *"Lord, do you have room for me?"* & He's going to say, *"No, all t/room here is taken for my favorites & I might make an exception if you're really a somebody."*

You may feel like a nobody before men; rejoice, you're a somebody to God

Priesthood of t/believer gives us = access to God. For what? Namely ==>

**prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word**

We can go to him in prayer. He hears us ==>

1 John 5:14-15 *And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*

We can go to him in confession. He hears us ==>

You don't have to enter t/dark cabinet & talk to a man on t/other side of t/veil, confess your sins to him & have him give you a list of prayers to say so that you be forgiven. What an affront to X!

*For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [1 Timothy 2:5]*

We can present our spiritual sacrifices and offerings to him ==>

That's a wonderful picture we will explore more fully in v. 5.

We can know God's will for us individually by reading and studying His

Word==>

Each believer is to be filled w/God's Word (Col. 3:16) // Study (2 Tim. 2:15) // treasure t/Word in his heart that he may not sin against God (Psa. 119:11). During t/time of darkness t/dogma was *"Do not read t/Bible for yourself. You cannot understand it. You will misinterpret it. It's a very hard book to understand and it's teachings must be left for t/CH to interpret. Interpretation belongs to t/priests & you are no priests!"*

*Post Tenebras Lux*" – You are priests! If you are among t/elect of God you His chosen priests who may approach t/throne of grace through t/mercies of X!

The privilege won for every Xn by X giving the believer access to God in prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word.

### **How does the believer's priesthood relate these things?**

I said earlier that it is a silver thread that binds them together. If your status as an individual priest before God be taken away, so be your unabridged right to prayer, confession, sacrifice, and Word. If t/door be closed to his presence & you be shut out on t/other side, what good be it to pray? // confess your sin? present your sacrifice? hear His Word? If t/door be closed to his presence He's not listening to your prayer // confession. He's not interested in your unmediated sacrifice // He's not speaking to you through His Word.

What's what I mean when I say that t/PHOTB is t/silver thread that binds together all t/evangelical doctrines.

This passage in 1 Peter chapt. 2 was used to bring light to the darkness. This is the central Passage of the Believer's Priesthood.

**Bring you back to our text . . .**

During my study I try to pinpoint a central idea, a main point that encompasses t/entire passage & I put that into a sentence or short para. It's a concise way to say, "*This is what the passage is saying.*" I didn't do that for this section. I didn't do that because I can't improve upon what's already there. Verse 5 serves as t/Central Idea of the entire passage==>  
**You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

With that main idea in mind ==>

## **I. The Church As A Royal Priesthood (vv. 4-10)**

Three main points in this section

*A. Established in the Living Stone (4)*

*B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5)*

*C. Elected as the People of God (6-10)*

Last week ==>

**A. Established in the Living Stone (4) *This is the Source of our Priesthood***

IOW - t/source of our priesthood as believers is t/Living Stone of t/CH.  
**And coming to Him as the Living Stone, having been rejected by men—but chosen by God and precious [to Him].**

### **1. This phrase ==>**

**... coming to Him as the Living Stone ...**

is a truism for every gen. believer in JC. It encompasses all that is our salvation. From the verb ==>

**a. προσερχόμαι (pres. ptcp)**

Intensified or emphatic form of t/regular word "to come" in Gk. (ερχομαι). This is drawing near to Christ in intimate fellowship,

passionate worship.

## (1) This is another reference to all that is our salvation

We come to Christ who is the living stone because He alone can give life. Drawing near to Christ for intimacy, growth, fellowship.

## (2) Word that's used in Hebrews for "drawing near in salvation or in worship

For example, Listen to ==>

4:16 Let us therefore draw near (προσερχομαι) with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

7:25 Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who (προσερχομαι) draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

10:22 let us draw near (προσερχομαι) with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who (προσερχομαι) draws near to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Now back to 1 Peter 2:4 ==>

**And coming to Him (προσερχομαι) as the Living Stone,**

We came to X as t/living stone when we believed in Him for t/first time; when He became "Lord & Savior" (salv.). We continue to come to Him as we grow in His grace & knowledge (sanctification). We will continue to cling to him in faith & faithfulness as long as we live (perseverance). He is t/source of our priesthood // our very lives now & for all eternity.

## 2. Note how the "Living Stone" is described here (two-fold)

... **having been rejected by men—but chosen by God and precious [to Him].**

Rejected by Men; Chosen by God (Father). Men rejected Him. The



Jewish leaders rejected Him. Masses of men & women t/o hist. have rejected Him. Non-religious ppl. reject Him; Religious ppl. reject Him.

**a. It is a rejection that continues throughout history**

When Peter says as he does in v. 4 that Christ is ==>

... **the Living Stone, ... rejected by men ...**

He includes the fact that men continue to reject Him. Look at vv. 7 & 8.

He is, for those who don't believe in Him {read vv. 7-8}

**b. But - He is chosen by God (4b)**

... **having been rejected by men (yes!) – but (other hand) chosen by God and precious [to Him].**

Contrast: Christ was rejected by men, but chosen by God. Men said "no" God, the Father, said "yes!" Saying the same thing we saw in 1:20 {read}. He was the chosen instrument of our salvation. Part of God's eternal plan.

Prophet Isaiah calls Him God's "chosen one"

ISA 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one {in whom} My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

That which was planned in all eternity came to pass in time ==>

GAL 4:4 **But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,**

**b. He's not only chosen but He's precious (ΕΥΤΙΜΟΣ)**

"Of great value"

This sets t/foundation for ==>

**I. The Church As A Royal Priesthood (vv. 4-10)**

**A. Established in the Living Stone (4) This is the Source of our Priesthood**

**I. Christ is Our Life (4a)**

Men may and will reject us & reject what we stand for. But we are chosen in God's sight & precious to Him. Better to be chosen by God and rejected by men than chosen by men and rejected by God.

Not only are we, the CH, ==>

### *A. Established in the Living Stone (4)*

We are also (v. 5) ==>

### *B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5): This is the Structure of our Priesthood*

Three key ideas in this verse: 1) The Nature of the Temple; 2) The Paradox of the Temple; 3) The Service of the Temple.

What is ==>

#### **1. The Nature of the Temple: We are Living Stones**

This isn't any temple; this isn't a literal building.

**You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood . . .**

#### **a. This is Rich Imagery**

During their history, Israel has had three temples.

#### **(1) First - Solomon's Temple**

Construction for S.T. began about 960 BC & it took 7 yrs. to build. It was built on Mt. Moriah - same place where Abraham offered Isaac to God. It was ornate, filled w/gold, silver, precious stones. Framed w/Lebanese cedar and stone. Solomon sent 30k laborers to Lebanon for the cedar & commissioned 80k stonecutters. All of t/stonecutting & woodworking was done off site in order to keep t/temple site proper quiet and worshipful.

That Temple didn't last; as punishment for the sin of Israel God ordained

t/Babylonians to capture Jerusalem & destroy t/Temple (586 BC).

## (2) 50 years later Zerubbabel's Temple was built

This was during t/time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Zerubbabel's Temple was not near as lavish as Solomon's & according to Ezra 3:12 those who were alive for both wept at t/comparison. This second temple didn't last; it was desecrated by Antiochus Euphianes 167 BC. Under t/Maccabees it was cleansed & rededicated 3 years later (Hanukkah celebrates this reded.).

## (3) From 20 BC to 64 AD the Temple was rebuilt & expanded

This Temple came to be known as Herod's Temple & was t/Temple that Jesus knew during his earthly ministry. It was a spectacular structure that covered 15% of Jerusalem.

In response to t/one of t/disciples' comments about how beautiful & ornate t/Temple was, Jesus said ==>

**“Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.”**

That prophetic statement was fulfilled in 70 AD when t/Rom. Gen. Titus entered Jerusalem and destroyed t/Temple. All that's left of it today is t/western or wailing wall where faithful Jews gather to mourn t/loss.

We no longer need a physical Temple. A physical temple is made w/stone and wood. Temple building; Temple P.H.; Temple Sacrifices; all prefigured that which was to come in JC. He is both t/Lamb that was slain as a perfect sacrifice & t/great H.P. offering t/sacrifice. He is t/cornerstone of t/building & we are t/stones. We are also ministering priests offering spiritual sacrifices as a spiritual temple.

That's ==>

### *1. The Nature of this new Temple: We are Living Stones*

**[You are] living stones, are being built up as a spiritual [temple] for a holy priesthood . . .**

**b. Note that "living stones" in verse 5 parallels Christ as "the Living Stone" in verse 4**

He is THE Living Stone (v. 4) // the chosen stone & precious cornerstone (v. 6) // The stone that the builders rejected and the chief corner (v. 7) // a stone of stumbling & a rock of offense (v. 8).

**(1) Foundationally He is Alive**

He is risen // t/living stone & therefore he has t/power of take dead stones & implant life into them. That's what each one of us was; a dead stone; a lifeless rock. We weren't only dead Lazarus in t/tomb, we were t/dead rock that covered t/tomb. Was t/good pleasure of God to bring us to life, to give life to our souls turning a spiritual corpse into a living priest & a dead rock into a living stone that makes up a spiritual temple.

**c. Know What - He is building us**

**[we are] living stones, being built up as a spiritual [temple] . . .**

It's a construction project that isn't fully completed. It's "being built up."

**(1) Present Passive of οἰκοδομῶ -**

"To build" (as on a house)," "to build up," "to edify." Same word is used in Mat. 16:18 (J. "I will build my church").

Present tense indicates it's ongoing; Passive that it's God's work not ours. It is X who builds his church.

**(a) It is being built two ways: quantitatively & qualitatively**

Quantitatively in that the Sovereign God adds to the membership of the church as He wills.

Acts 2:47 . . . the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

He builds t/Temple which is t/universal CH one living stone at a time.

Acts 13:48 . . . as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

He also builds His CH qualitatively in that He works to build you up individually. You are being built up. God is working on you, building you.

Philippians 1:6 . . . He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

I may not be all that I should be, but I'm thankful I'm not what I was! It's a life-long process. God is graciously at work in your life weaving every experience, every victory, every failure into the fabric of your character. Problem is, we want it quick n' easy.

"When God wants to make a squash, he takes 2 months; when He wants to make an Oak He takes 100 years." Be patient; it's not easy working w/you!

**(2) This is the only place in the Bible where believers are directly referred to as "stones"**

When you came to faith in JC it was God who took you from the quarry of sin, the rock-pile of despair. He formed you and polished you and made you alive. He placed you in the body of Christ, his holy Temple right where he wanted you. Your shape fit the spot he had for you! Unique.

Very similar analogy in Ephesians chapter 2 where TAP speaks of t/CH

as God's "household" ==>

20-22 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner {stone}, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

**d. Two further implications of "being built up as a spiritual house"** Would like to further mine some of the treasure that's here There's at least a two-fold significance.

### **(1) First: The Church is a Community**

Nature of God's design for t/CH demands that we be plural not singular. If you look at verse ==>

**You also, as living stones, [you] are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood . . . 2PP**

Contrary to the contemporary western mind set, emphasis here is on t/CH as a community ==>

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

### **(a) This is the importance of the church**

Can't take away a stone from t/building & service of t/CH. No such thing as a stone that is quarried & cut by God that's supposed to remove itself from t/greater building. Or to view it's place as optional. That's what Xns do. There are millions of professed Xns right here in USA who have removed themselves from t/CH. They don't participate in corp. worship on t/Lord's Day // don't ID w/any local CH // don't minister in any local CH // Not accountable to any local CH.

Christianity is community. No such thing as a free-lance Xn or a lone-ranger, rugged individualist Xns. Cf. 1:22. Love is part of t/mortar that

holds the stones together!

What's almost as bad (maybe worse) are those who move from CH to CH to CH like a bee pollinating flowers in a field. They're here for a year or two; then they become disillusioned & it's time to pollinate another local fellowship. That's t/pattern they establish.

Over t/past 3 plus years here about 30% of those who have gone through our introductory class about CCC have either left to attend elsewhere or are not going anywhere. 30% Almost 1/3! And I believe we're much better than avg. But avg. in this case isn't good enough!

## **(2) Second: Community requires unity**

This is the need for unity within the community. We must be unified. There's strength & health in unity.

There are places in Europe (I forget where) with walls of stone—giant walls that go on for yard after yard if not mile after mile—that were quarried and built by hand. The walls have no mortar; the stones are so perfectly cut and placed that you can't get a credit card between them. Their strength is in their unity. As a result they have lasted through the centuries and yet stand as firm and strong as the day they were set in place. God cuts and quarries us by His hand. He places us in the body so that we can stand together in strength. We do this apart from any earthly mortar, only the mortar of His love and grace, a love and grace we minister to one another. [Tony Bartolucci]

## **(a) Turn to Ephesians chapter 4 {read vv. 11-16}**

There is a famous story that comes from Sparta. The king of Sparta was bragging about the great walls of Sparta to another king who was visiting there. The visiting king looked around and said, "What walls? I don't see any great walls." The Spartan king then pointed to his vast army: "These are the walls of Sparta. Every man is a brick." [cited in Barclay, 195-96]

The point is there is strength and purpose in unity. What good is a single brick? It guess it makes a good door stop & that's what individualistic, self-centered Xns are doing w/their lives; they're door stops in t/K.D. You

see, so long as a brick lies by itself it is useless. It is only useful when it is taken, shaped, and placed in a structure with other bricks. As one writer puts it: "[Individualistic Xnty is an absurdity](#)" [Barclay, 196]

## *I. The Church As A Royal Priesthood (vv. 4-10)*

*A. Established in the Living Stone (4) This is the Source of our Priesthood*

*B. Erected as a Spiritual Temple (5): This is the Structure of our Priesthood*

### *1. The Nature of the Temple: We are Living Stones*

We didn't get as far as I would have hoped. We're going to keep plugging away.

Still need to look at ==>

*2. The Paradox of the Temple: We are both a Spiritual House and a Holy Priesthood*

*3. The Service of the Temple: We are to offer Spiritual Sacrifices*

I recently read about t/17c Puritan preacher William Gauge. Gauge Preached over 1000 messages to his church over a 30 year period. You say, "Okay, what's so unusual about that?" They were all from the book of Hebrews! His expositional series in Hebrews covered 1000 messages over 30 years. He died before he finished & his son had to complete the series for him. Cf. to that we're moving at light speed through 1 Peter.