

TITLE: A Royal Priesthood (Part 8)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:9c

THEME: The Believer's Priesthood

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Read Passage

What a joy to be back in this section of 1 Peter. This happens to be part 8 of "A Royal Priesthood" (covering vv. 4-10).

I. The Church as a Royal Priesthood (2:4-10)

The doctrine that comes to the fore in this particular passage is t/P.H. of each & every believer in JC.

By way of definition ==>

"The priesthood of the believer is the privilege won for every Christian by Christ giving the believer access to God in prayer, confession, sacrifice and Word."

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*

C. Elected as the People of God (vv. 6-10) *This is the Security of our Priesthood*

1. The Cornerstone of Our Belief (6a)

2. The Confidence of Our Belief (6b)

3. The Contrast of Unbelief (7-8a)

4. The Cause of Unbelief (8b)

We've sort of stalled in verse 9 t/past few weeks ==>

5. The Character of God's People (9a)

But you are . . .

a. #1 - An Elect Race

b. #2 - A Royal Priesthood

c. #3 - A Holy Nation

d. #4 - A People for God's own Possession

5. The Character of God's People (9a)

But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's own] possession . . .

Go to the end of the verse ==>

6. The Calling of God's People (9c)

. . . who called you out of darkness . . .

a. Note the connection . . .

But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's own] possession . . . who called you out of darkness . . .

(1) To be an elect race is to be a chosen race

If you are a Xn you are a member of that chosen race. Direct implication is that God chose you to be an heir of salvation before you were ever born (Eph. 1:4).

He chose you. He sent his Son to pay for your sin. Secures your salvation. Listen, your salvation was secured before you ever knew it.

You may have lived years in rebellion, but God had His eye on you. You were His.

In fact, your salvation was already secured and payed for B4 you were born. You were purchased by God when Jesus hung dying on that cross almost 2k years ago.

Obv. that doesn't mean you were saved before you were born or that you were saved before you came to faith in Him who died for you. Your salvation was secured, but didn't become a living reality until God called you. "Effectual Calling" (it works, every time).

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

ἐλκύω - Strong word, "To draw, haul-in, to drag." Used in Acts 21:30 of t/masses "dragging" Paul out of t/Temple.

I suppose we could put it this way, at a point in time, God "hailed you in."

That's what we see here ==>

... **who called you out of darkness** ...

(1) Saw the same thing back in chapter 1

Opening two vv. of Peter's letter.

... **chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood** ...

(2) Also 1:15

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;

(a) Word "called" in 1:15 is same word used here in 2:9

καλέω * Almost always of God sov. calling a person to faith in X.

When God called you, he called you out of darkness (symbolic of death). You were D.E.A.D. dead. No such thing as a little bit dead. (like being a little big pregnant).

(3) This point has always been an issue in Christian Theol.

T/R.C. CH, following T. Aquinas & t/schoolmen, taught that we are not totally dead, spiritually, but just a little bit dead. Later became a point of contention between Luther and Erasmus.

Luther called it t/Pelagian heresy (after t/3rd c. heretic Pelagius who taught that t/fall of man into sin was of no real consequence - man still had a free will.). Condemned by Augustine & t/rest of t/CH.

Luther actually published 99 theses against this free-will theism of t/Pelagian schoolmen. The CH at that time (much of t/CH today) held that unsaved, unregenerate men have the liberty to love God and do good. Luther & rest of t/reformers said, "No!"

For them, the issue centered not as much on whether man may have liberty, but if he could have liberty apart from God. In Luther's words, "True liberty is what thou needest, and God offers it thee in his gospel."

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Luther wrote 99 statements against this idea that man can do and will good apart from X.

I'm going to read all 99 to you in a slow monotone voice . . . (99. . .). JK.

How about 7? ==>

- * It is false that the will, left to itself, can do good as well as evil; for it is not free, but in bondage.
- * It is not in the power of Man's will to choose or reject whatever is offered to it.
- * Man cannot of his own nature will God to be God. He would prefer to be God himself, and that God were not God.
- * The excellent, infallible, and sole preparation for grace, is the eternal election and predestination of God.
- * We do not become righteous by doing what is righteous; but having become righteous, we do what is righteous.
- * He who is without God's grace sins continually, even should he neither rob, murder, nor commit adultery.
- * He sins, in that he does not fulfill the law spiritually.

Theologically, that was true of every one of us. Our will was not free, but fettered in chains of bondage; We were powerless; We were selfish; All of the seemingly good things we did were as filthy rags in God's sight because they were not done out of gratitude and worship of Him.

We were in darkness like blind cave-dwellers groping around in t/dark, trying to make sense out of life.

6. The Calling of God's People (9c)

... who called you out of darkness . . .

b. He didn't call us out of the twilight // grey // dim light

DARKNESS. We're talking about the absence of light as far as our souls were concerned.

Back when I was about 12 years old my family took a trip to Tucson, AZ where we visited what are called "Colossal Cave" - a series of underground caves that has been turned into a national park. Quite a unique place.

Do you know how much of the cave is underground? All of it! Goes about 600 feet back into a mountain and down about 40 feet. We took a tour which I quite vividly remember. Two things stand out: 1) On one occasion t/tour guide turned off the lights. As soon as she did I jumped and grabbed for something. I had never experienced zero light B4. Was almost suffocating. 2) She also told stories about bandits hiding from t/law in t/cave and getting lost. How at least one of them went insane groping around in t/suffocating & silent blackness. Also how an extended time in zero light would result in blindness. Your eyes lit. shut off as your body tells them they are no longer needed. Believe me, I was quite thankful when t/lights were turned on and t/guide led us out of that dark place into t/light of day.

ISW - People are born in t/darkness of their sin. They are cave dwellers who live in a spiritual blackness. They don't have eyes that can see and understand truth. One difference. I didn't like t/darkness of that cave. People love their condition of spiritual darkness.

John 3:19-20 . . . men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Those of us who were old enough to remember our life apart from X loved t/darkness. As a rebellious teenager, I loved t/darkness. I loved being selfish; I loved serving myself; indulging myself in whatever way I saw fit.

My passions were for anything but knowing and serving JC. God

changed my appetites. He called me out of that life of darkness.

As John Calvin once said, God drew us "out of the labyrinth of ignorance and the abyss of darkness." [Calvin, 76]

Each one of us lived in a {restate}

c. Note the prepositions:

"Out (ἐκ) of darkness into (εἰς) the light." We were called while yet in the dark. How did we see? Was there any light in our souls, a dim sliver? No, it was darkness, complete blackness. That's the state in which we were called ("**While we were yet sinners Christ died for us**").

He died for us that He might one day call us ==>

... out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Paul wrote about this in 2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

d. Conversion as a transfer

Conversion to X is a spiritual transfer from one place to another. It is as if God picked you up out of t/slime of death and ruin & He set you down in an island paradise. You have been spiritually transported out of darkness into t/light.

COL 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

(1) Acts 26

TAP is B4 t/Jewish King Herod Agrippa II.

Paul had been arrested by Rome & was being held in Caesarea. So Paul,

under arrest & B4 t/King, makes his defense. He shares his background, his biography as a Pharisee & how he came to believe in JC as t/Messiah.

Toward t/end of that he tells t/King what t/Risen X had said to him on that day on t/Damascus Rd.

16 'But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 delivering you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

To be turned from D to L. is to be turned from t/Dom. of S. to that of G.

(2) This takes a sovereign act from an omnipotent God

Do you think you had t/ability w/i yourself to turn your life from darkness into light? Do you think you're deity?! Don't claim t/ability to do something only God can do!

Only God has the power to separate the light from the darkness. True of creation. (Gen. 1:4 - G. saw t/light was good & he sep. t/L. from t/D.). Only God can do that. What's true of creation is true of salvation.

"As there are chains of eternal darkness on damned spirits that will never be taken off and that are said to be reserved for the day of judgment, so there are chains of spiritual darkness on the unconverted soul that can only be taken off by God's powerful hand. When God calls the sinner to come out, the chains fall off and enable the soul to come into the light." [Robert Leighton, 106, 17th c. Scottish Presbyterian]

"My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed thee."

Only God can take a spiritually dead sinner & make him alive.

Only God can call you == >

... out of darkness into His marvelous light. (No less of a creative act)

e. Again, don't miss the adjective - "marvelous"

(1) θαυμαστός - Superlative

Comes from an interesting word group, ea. of which shares t/root θαυμα. Words w/this root indicate something that brings about wonder, astonishment, amazement, marvel. In a neg. sense, even fear or dread.

When was t/last time that you thought about t/life & light that God has given you as being astonishing? When is t/last time that you thought to yourself, "To have a knowledge of God is marvelous." "I am amazed at t/life He's given me."

Are we even amazed at God any more? For some, grace ain't so amazing anymore. *"God - forgive our hard and apathetic hearts! Restore to us a passion for you and an ever-fresh appreciation for your marvelous light!"*

John Piper tells t/story about his family, sitting together watching a fireworks show on the 4th. "For fifteen minutes we were impressed and delighted by the bigness, beauty, and power of man-made light. . . . It gave us a sense of wonder. About ten minutes into the display, . . . I suddenly noticed a white light behind the trees to the southwest. What's that? I thought. A second later I could tell it was the moon. It was very large and looked full. It was politely waiting its turn. The moon was in no hurry to be noticed. It had been there before (Adam, Abraham, and Jesus looked on this same moon); and it would be there again when all the glitz was gone. It was quietly rising at its own pace, irresistibly and without human help. Yet hardly anyone was noticing.

So it is with the glory of God and the glitz of sin. We are more amazed at sin, and we ignore the glory of God. This is truly amazing. The moon rises about 240,000 miles above the earth, which means it soars about 500,000 times higher than the highest fireworks. . . . The moon is 2160 miles in diameter (from San Francisco to Cleveland). . . . It has mountain ranges with peaks as high as Mount Everest. . . . The power of the moon is unimaginable. Nothing on earth

that man has ever made can compare. Every day the moon takes the oceans of the earth and lifts them quietly - millions upon millions upon millions of tons of water quietly and irresistibly lifted into the air. . . . But who sees the moon? Who stands in awe of the moon? Who looks at the moon on Independence Night when there are man-made fireworks to watch? Who notices the really great things in life? No wonder we are oblivious to the glory of God when there are such clear parables of our blindness built into everyday experience. . . .

Read your emotional barometer. Do the amazements and delights of your life correspond to God's reality? Or do they rise and fall on the passing waves of human glitz?" [John Piper, *A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life*, Multnomah, 1997, p. 235-36.]

Human glitz is like a set of cheap rhinestones; looks good for a while, but the luster always fades; eventually t/glitz tarnishes like a cheap Xmas tree ornament.

f. Can't trade the fading glitz of the world for the eternal treasure of the fulness of God

Who would be so foolish? Like Peter in John 6 - "Lord, where would we go? We could never leave you! You have the words of eternal life. In fact, you are eternal life!"

(1) Die has been cast; the decision has been made

We can no longer walk in the darkness. It would be like a man born blind. He lives his life as a blind man for 30 years. He's got the seeing-eye dog, cane, wears dark glasses. Miraculously, God grants him sight. Now he sees. Ever wonder about that? What does a man born blind see in his mind when he thinks of a tree? Or a beautiful sunset? Can he tell you the difference between blue and red? What does a cute little child look like?

Now he can see. He can drink in t/wonder of t/Grand Canyon. His heart resonates w/the sentiment of Psalm 19:1 ==>

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the

work of His hands.

Why in t/world would that man, having seen & tasted t/glory of God in creation shrug his shoulders, saying "I liked it better when I was in t/dark. I think I will close my eyes, but my dark glasses back on, harness up the dog, grab my cane & live, once again as a blind man.

You say, "for someone to do that would be the height of foolishness! How can a man delivered from blindness walk in blindness again?"

How can you, being called out of darkness into the light walk again in darkness?

John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Is there any darkness in your life? Are there areas in your life that are hidden caves of darkness?

(2) We are constantly exhorted, if not warned, in Scripture to live in keeping with who we are in Christ

No genuine Xn can willfully and finally live in darkness. To do that is to demonstrate that your heart was never regenerated in t/first place.

See this t/o John's Epistle where John uses darkness and light as metaphors for good and evil ==>

1 John 1:6-7 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

To claim to be a Xn while living contrary to that calling is to deny that

you've ever experienced t/call at all.

1 John 2:9-10 9 The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

So ==>

(2) We are constantly warned in Scripture to live in keeping with who we are in Christ

(a) This darkness / light theme isn't unique to John

Paul uses it several times, such as in Eph. 5:8-11 ==>

for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord;

This is what you once were: darkness; this is what you are: Light in t.Lord.

So do what?

walk as children of light (be who you are)

What's that look like Paul? "I'll tell you, v. 9-10" ==>

(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

(In 2 Cor. 5:9 he said that this should be our ambition as Xns - to be pleasing to Him).

Verse 11 ==>

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

All of this brings us to our commission ==>

7. The Commission of God's People (9b)

Here's your commission // charge // mission // purpose

Having been told in vv. 4-10 that you are living stones, being built up as a spiritual house that you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's own] possession that God called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Having been graced with all of these things, here's your purpose statement in life, as individuals and as a CH (in t/middle of v. 9)

... SO THAT YOU MIGHT PROCLAIM [HIS] EXCELLENCIES ...

God didn't grace you with all of these things so that you could be a pew potato! Drag yourself into CH on Sunday so that you can sit there looking at me like you would look at a test pattern on t/TV.

God's calling is a calling to action; specifically here

... SO THAT YOU MIGHT PROCLAIM [HIS] EXCELLENCIES ...

a. You are heralds of the excellencies of God

(1) "Excellencies" (ἀρετὰς)

Refers to "Moral excellence, virtue." Everywhere you go, whatever you do, you are to proclaim t/excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into light.

(a) Part and parcel with this is declaring God's attributes

You are to declare to a lost and dying world that God is HOLY, GOOD, RIGHTEOUS, JUST, MERCIFUL, LOVING, ALL-POWERFUL, ALL-KNOWING, EVERYWHERE PRESENT.

(b) I think of Paul in Acts 17 {turn there}

He's standing in t/midst of the Greek politico-religious leaders in Athens and he proclaims God's excellencies to them.

22 And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.

True of everyone, whether they admit it or not. Everyone is religious, everyone has a focus of worship even if it's themselves. No one is born an atheist; Men become atheists by suppressing t/truth that God has placed w/i them that He indeed exists (Rom. 1:18)

23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.'

Of course, you know the story

What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

Here's the proclamation of God's excellencies according to Paul.

Goes on to say that God is t/Creator of the world ==>

24 "The God who made the world and all things in it,

He's sovereign over his creation ==>

since He is Lord of heaven and earth,

He's transcendent; you can't confine him to a box ==>

[He] does not dwell in temples made with hands;

He's self-sufficient; He doesn't need anyone ==>

25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything,

In fact, you owe your very life and breath to Him! ==>

since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;

He's t/sovereign Creator of men and nations ==>

26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,

He has created you in His image and likeness ==>

27 that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him,

And He is the God who is near ==>

though He is not far from each one of us;

He gives common grace to all men ==>

28 for in Him we live and move and exist . . .

But, He is also a God of wrath and judgement ==>

30 . . . [He is now] declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

i. That's proclaiming his excellencies

What was true of Paul in t/1st c. was true of all Xns in t/1st c. What was true of them is true of you. God has called you out of darkness into the light for t/same reason He blinded Saul of Tarsus so that He could really see // that He has called men and women and children t/o t/ages.

... SO THAT YOU MIGHT PROCLAIM [HIS] EXCELLENCIES ...

(c) You can do that two ways (both start with letter "L")

i. With your Life

Does your life reflect t/Excellencies of God?

ii. With your Lips

"The purpose of redemption is too often thwarted by our silence . . ." [Grudem, 112]

And it's so imp. that your lips match your life // your conduct match your confession.

Don't be like t/Xn of whom it was said, "*Your life speaks so loudly I can't hear what your saying.*"

This is ==>

7. The Commission of God's People (9b)

What a privilege it is to declare God's Excellence! It's a Royal privilege that is given to a Royal Priesthood.

b. By way of a footnote

Peter is alluding to another OT passage: Isaiah chapter 43.

Isaiah 43:21 **the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise** (ἀρετὰς, LXX - same word used in 1 Peter).

Context of Isaiah is redemption from captivity in Babylon unto restoration in Jerusalem. ISW - we have been called out of spiritual Babylon, KD or darkness, so that we could inherit spiritual Jerusalem, t/light of God's K.D.

Wayne Grudem ==>

"When Christ returns and there are new heavens and a new earth, the temple of God will be the whole earth, for, shining forth from the throne of God in the new Jerusalem, the glory of God will fill the whole earth, and all the nations shall walk by the light of God's glory (Rev. 21:11, 23-25; 22:5; Psa. 72:19). Then God will be King over all the earth (Zec. 14:9) and the whole earth shall come to worship before God (Isa. 66:23). In anticipation of that great culmination of all history, the church even now is given the task of declaring God's glory among all the nations." [Grudem, 103-04]

But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's own] possession so that you might proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

8. The Chronology of God's People (10)

Once you were not a people, but now [you are the] people of God; [once you were] those who had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Next time, folks! I hate to do this