

# Problem with Earthly Priesthood

The Gospel According to Paul: Sanctuary was symbolic and Temporary. The ministry of Jesus is real, and now. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Thursday, July 5, 2018

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This is devotional thought number 80 in our devotional series titled, "The Gospel According to Paul."

"Now many have become Levitical priests, since they are prevented by death from remaining in office. But because He remains forever, He holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore, He is always able to save those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:23–25, HCSB).

## Limitation of the Symbolism

The Old Testament is full of lessons that help us understand the truth for our time. They comprise the foundation of our faith. One of the most comprehensive teachings in the Old Testament was about the system of sacrifices and the sanctuary. They provided a blueprint of the plan of salvation and God's infinite love for us.

Today's topic comes directly in this context. It highlights a fundamental limitation of the Levitical priesthood – death. No Old Testament priest could continue in his office longer than he lived. We are finite human beings, who, due to our human frailties are appointed a time to live and a time to die. For the priests, when death came knocking on their doors, their roles were transferred to the next qualified priest who would continue the ministry in the sanctuary.

Sounds simple enough. But, when you consider how vital the priestly role was, it could be discouraging to think those men were sinful and needed forgiveness. These very men were to go into the presence of God for the people and come out from the presence of God to the people to, among other things, atone for our sins. This was a heavy burden given to men especially called and chosen for that purpose.

## Limitless Reality

I am so glad the Lord made a perfect transition from the Old to the New Testament times. Instead of using endless offerings on limitless special days throughout the Jewish year to save us from our sins, and using faulty priests to minister and intercede, our God transitioned us to the ministry of the One to whom these all pointed – Jesus Christ!

What neither the Old Testament ceremonies, sacrifices, nor priests could do to effect our salvation, Jesus did with great power and authority. Having conquered eternal death, on the cross, for those who would keep faith in Him, Jesus arose from the tomb with the victory over hell, the grave, and death. He is now ministering in the heavenly ministry of cleansing so all who surrender our lives to Him can have our sins, not just forgiven, but our sin records also expunged. In this way, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us if we entrust ourselves to Him.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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# Jesus Will Stand Up. The Unjust and Injustice Will Stand Down.

The Gospel According to Paul: Justice Will Soon Stand Down. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Sunday, July 1, 2018  
[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 07.01.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"Regarding the angels, he says, "He sends his angels like the winds, his servants like flames of fire." But to the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. You rule with a scepter of justice" (Hebrews 1:7-8, NLT).

## Something's Bound to Happen Soon

I don't know about you, but I am tired of the injustice in this world. I am tired of murderers who should be incarcerated walking boldly like they are on vacation. Certain people groups receive preferential treatment while others suffer, and I am tired of that. I am tired of the have and have nots disparity. Some public officials have a sense of autonomy that disregards checks and balances, and I am tired of that. I am tired of laws that do not apply to all people regardless of any qualifying factor, across the board. If something in our society does not change for the better soon, we will self-destruct. Sin, degradation, and injustice cannot continue to be embraced without natural and eternal consequences.

## Will the King of Glory Please Stand Up?



*As Daniel saw, kings and kingdoms would stand up, and take a seat. One day, Jesus will stand up, halting injustice and hatred once and for all.*

I find courage in our theme text, because it agrees with one of my favorite visions in the book of Daniel. Daniel saw successive world empires from

Babylon, to Medo-Persia, Grecia, Western Rome, the division of Western Rome, the Papacy, and the joint religio-political venture between the Papacy and the United States of America that is finally supplanted by the kingdom of God. Among the empires mentioned here, and the powers referenced in Daniel chapter 11, many stand up and then sit down. They stand up, oppress the nations, and must take a seat. They stand up, oppress the consciences of the nations, and must take a seat. They stand up, and in the arrogance of their power, they abuse privilege, and must take a seat.

But, soon Jesus Christ will stand up, as in Daniel chapter 12. And, the only seat He will take in that day is upon His throne of glory.

Who is the King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, mighty in battle; He is the King of Glory.

Jesus' justice, authority, and kingdom will soon unseat every earthly power forever, like a massive stone grinds all inferior materials to powder. I am so glad that when He returns, it will be the beginning of everlasting justice and peace in the entire universe.

## **Sit Tight**

Until then, give thanks for God's love and the ministry of holy angels who will help guide us along the right path, along with the blessed Holy Spirit. Give thanks for the great news that soon every knee will bow, and every mouth will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, our Father. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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# **Victory Coaching**

The Gospel According to Paul: Victorious and Glorious! Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Thursday, June 28, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 06.28.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

## **Timely Teachings**

It takes just under two minutes to read Titus, chapter 2. What is impressive about this is how much practical wisdom is written there from which to draw. The Bible writer communicated jewels of wisdom. Paul encouraged prudence, love, faithfulness, soberness, goodness, and self-control. He advocated integrity, submission, faithful work, fidelity, and general righteousness. He spoke to the necessity of the elder men and women to be holy. They are to teach the younger ones how to live pleasing lives in the sight of God. He spoke to the blessing of women being of model characters in their households. Paul encouraged employees to give complete and perfect fidelity in their work. With a commitment to their employers, they would be worthy representatives of God.

Paul gave the comprehensive advice communicated in this short chapter for two principal purposes. First, our Father wants us to know that even in this present evil age, we can live godly in Christ. Unfortunately, so many people feel like the outward influences are too enormous to overcome, and that we cannot lead victorious lives. The focus in this is always skewed. However,

the matter is not whether we can accomplish holiness, as much as it is whether our God is able to keep us from falling. Thus, it is our privilege to focus our attention on Him and receive His strength to overcome any difficulty. He is able.



## **Victorious Hope**

The second purpose of the chapter is to show how victorious people, who live godly in this present evil age, have what is called the Blessed Hope. This hope is the realization that God places in His people in every generation that He could quite possibly return in their lifetime. This is encouraging, because we who love Him, want nothing more than to see Him. So, He places that sense of expectation in our hearts. And, one day, friends, He will burst the clouds and with jubilant trumpet sounds, He will keep His promise to take us to that place where there is no sorrow, crying, poverty, sin, or pain. We look forward to that day.

“For the grace of God (His unmerited favor and blessing) has come forward

(appeared) for the deliverance from sin and the eternal salvation for all mankind. It has trained us to reject and renounce all ungodliness (irreligion) and worldly (passionate) desires, to live discreet (temperate, self-controlled), upright, devout (spiritually whole) lives in this present world, Awaiting and looking for the [fulfillment, the realization of our] blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One), Who gave Himself on our behalf that He might redeem us (purchase our freedom) from all iniquity and purify for Himself a people [to be peculiarly His own, people who are] eager and enthusiastic about [living a life that is good and filled with] beneficial deeds" (Titus 2:11–14, AMP).

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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## **Tall Order: Know Where to Get Power**

The Gospel According to Paul: You Can't Do It By Yourself. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Wednesday, June 27, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 06.27.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:5–9).

### **Simple Requirements for Christian Leadership-Right?**

I am tempted to share a one-liner as our thought for the day, but do not wish to risk trivializing today's counsel. Frankly, if I simply said, all spiritual leaders in the faith must be real Christians, that would just about cover it. Ironically, I sat on a panel one time, where even some church leaders said that if we held to the standard in Paul's counsel, we would not have enough leaders to serve.

What? Since when has God needed numbers to accomplish His will on the earth? One Man, Jesus Christ the Righteous made our salvation possible. David killed the Giant, Goliath, which the entire army of Israel was fearful to attempt. God spread the gospel into all the world beginning with 12 disciples; one of whom had a devil – make that 11. Go figure. Need I say more? Paul gave almost identical counsel to Timothy, and it bears repeating.

### **Merit-Based Appointments**

Notice what Paul did not say as the Spirit guided him through the job description for spiritual leaders. Paul never said that anyone considered for service should generate their own holiness. He never said they needed to be innately holy. He never said they were to trust themselves into perfection. Truth: if any of us, whether man or woman, aspires to the standards written here, we will fall miserably short of the mark, generate our own rules of

righteousness, and then oppress others who do not meet our contrivances. That is to say, we would become modern day Pharisees, and that's not good. Our thought today is intended to elevate our feeble expectations of our Great God and Father in heaven. It is meant to laud the power and victory of Jesus Christ, the King. It is intended to engender thanks for the blessed Holy Spirit, who seals power within those who are continually submitted to His control. In our own strength, this list might as well have said we needed to make ourselves 70-foot tall and leap buildings in a single bound. In our own strength, it would be impossible to live according to God's standards of righteousness, let alone becoming humble and submitted enough to lead God's people.

## **He Keeps on Giving**

What then? What was the point of this exercise? Consider all that God requires of you. Now consider the blessing of the power of God, unto salvation given to all who believe. Do you believe in God, to the salvation of your soul? If you do, Christ will live His life within you, and fulfill all the righteousness of the law in your life until He returns. Take courage in His willingness to give you grace, mercy, and power. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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# **Imitation and the Salt Life**

The Gospel According to Paul: Follow Me As I Imitate Christ. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, June 4, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 06.04.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don't participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret" (Ephesians 5:1–12, NLT).

## **Explanation of Benefits**

Yesterday, we discussed a special benefit of the gospel that had not been revealed in the fulness before the days of the apostles. We are now among those who accept the gospel, which was revealed in a special way never before seen in this world or by the heavenly intelligences. God's character of love,

mercy, and justice is finally being vindicated for the entire universe to see.

Today, we are having a brief look at another unique blessing the gospel brings. A friend of mine once said that to those who are lost, Jesus is their Savior. To those who are saved, Jesus is both Savior and Example. The truth is that nobody who has not yet been reborn through the power of the Holy Spirit can fully follow Jesus' example of holiness, which is necessary to have eternal life.

## **The Salt Life**

I count it an honor to be among those who are called and chosen to emulate the character of Jesus. Jesus said it this way: "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:13–16, NLT).

Give thanks for the blessing of being called to be children of God and to become ambassadors of His love.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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## **Bound Up In Unity**

The Gospel According to Paul: Pray for Unity. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Sunday, June 3, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 06.03.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:1–4).

### **We Are His Children**

With all this talk of the gospel of Christ, I want to underscore benefits we have barely touched. It is a privilege to experience the gospel of Christ. This gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to all who believe. And this gospel message transforms us into saved children of the heavenly King! Having become His children, we also become His ambassadors, spreading hope to all who are willing to listen. We have said this multiple times throughout the series. However, Paul says something special in Ephesians 3 that we have not seen before. He said that a secret of God's grace was unfolding to the apostles and prophets during his time.

The way of salvation through Christ, which also made it possible to make non-Jews heirs according to the promise God made to the father of the faithful, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Ephesians 3:10–12).

## Foundation for Unity

What a privilege to be among those who accept the gospel, which was revealed in a special way never before seen in this world or by the heavenly intelligences. God's character of love, mercy, and justice is finally being vindicated for the entire universe to see.

Now, today's theme text makes sense! There is nothing more detrimental to sharing this special news than disunity among so-called believers.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all God's people who tarried in the upper room. They were on one accord, and shared all they had with one another so nobody who needed, lacked. All who gathered for Peter's special message that day, regardless of their primary languages, heard him speak in their own languages.

## Bonds of Peace

Miraculously, God provided a special unction and power to accomplish His will. If we ever hope to accomplish His will in our day, we need to allow God to bind us together in peace, love, hope, patience, and our high calling so we can participate in the greatest work this generation has ever seen—the spreading of the everlasting gospel into all the world.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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## Exiting Excess

The Gospel According to Paul: Limit Excess in Your Life. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, May 29, 2018

[\[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 05.29.2018" on Spreaker.\]](#)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"

(Galatians 5:22-23).

## Left to Ourselves

We are inundated with opportunities to practice excess. It is becoming more and more difficult for those of us that are not fully connected to Christ to resist the temptation. We are pushed to eat too much, overspend, stay up late every night, and other things that are contrary to the principle of temperance. Our children are suffering with poor health, bad tempers, and poor grades, largely because of unrestrained appetites.

Our appetites are not fed by just food. We can have appetites for extreme excitement, the praise of others, and illicit relationships, to name a few. All of these things can take us down a winding road to destruction. So that we can be more like Him, we need the Lord to control every aspect of our lives.

## Best Example

Jesus was the most temperate man to ever live. He gave us a glimpse of this when He was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. He was hungry and weak, and possessed the power to relieve Himself of that hunger, yet He chose not to. He could have turned stones into bread with a thought, but maintained

control in order to be our example. The self-restraint He exercised can be ours. He did it all for us. Today is a good day to ask the Lord to reproduce the victory of Christ in our own lives. It is a blessing to be temperate in all things.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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## Prevailing Meekness

The Gospel According to Paul: Meekness Prevails Under Provocation. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, May 28, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 05.28.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

### All Power

Someone once said that meekness is power under control. Who had more power to control than Jesus Christ did? Can you imagine being the all-powerful King of the universe, and clothing yourself in dependent human flesh? Although Jesus created all things, He did not consider Himself so holy that He could not assume flesh in order to save us from eternal death. It was because of the meekness of Christ that we are able to live with God eternally.

When the violent, bloodthirsty mob shouted for Jesus' death at Calvary, He demonstrated the ultimate lesson in meekness. As He said earlier, He could have called twelve legions of angels to destroy His enemies if He wanted to. Within the corridors of His mind existed the power to obliterate this entire planet. With one thought, He could have destroyed His adversaries, and would have been justified. Our Lord decided that the salvation of souls was far more important than relieving Himself from the burden of ridicule, and death. He truly fettered His power and exhibited self-control.

### How to Prevail When Provoked

Jesus is our example. We must look to Him for guidance, and trust Him to keep us under control, especially when we are provoked, and could easily prevail over our enemies. Jesus loves to teach meekness. Do we love to learn?

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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## Where to Find the Good

The Gospel According to Paul: Goodness Comes From God. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Sunday, May 27, 2018

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

## How Much We Need Him

In many popular systems of thought, it is being taught that everyone is basically good, and all that each person needs to learn is how to tap into the goodness that is deep within. This is one of the reasons why people do not understand or sense their need for God. I do not mean a general need that brings only awareness, and the belief that this awareness will awaken inherent goodness. I am referring to the need for the superior power of God to redeem our souls from sin, and eternal ruin.

Goodness is an attribute that only God possesses within Himself. All human beings must borrow the goodness that God bestows through a rebirth experience; the experience that all must have with Christ if we hope to receive eternal life. Through faith in Christ, we are transformed into powerful agents for good. We become witnesses of the power of God to transform us from doomed sinners into saved saints.

### God is Good; God is Great

Goodness is godly; therefore it must originate in Him. Goodness is not deep within each person. Goodness, rather, comes from the Lord who lovingly shares it with each believer from outside of us, and then we are changed within. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?

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## Dead to the World

The Gospel According to Paul: Live in Christ. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, May 21, 2018

[Listen to "Thoughts in Worship 05.21.2018" on Spreaker.](#)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

### Spiritual Cool

I can remember my friend Keith preaching a passionate sermon one Sabbath. He described how dead people act (stay with me here). Now, I know this is an oxymoron, but the idea he communicated was spiritual. He told us that dead men do not respond to unkind acts by others. He said that even if you kicked a dead man, nothing in him would respond. Why not? The man is dead!

I chuckled at many of his examples. They inspired me. The enemy of souls is constantly sending a barrage of attacks that he wants us to respond to negatively. He is quite pleased when he is able to catch us off guard and cause us to lose our spiritual cool.

The apostle Paul understood well what it meant to be dead to self and alive to Christ. He attained to the highest human standard of righteousness, and religiosity. He understood what it was to have human beings revere him because of his piety, yet there came a point when all of that was of no consequence.

## **No Righteousness of My Own**

He met Jesus one day, while on the road to Damascus. He intended to persecute Christians, but the Lord intended that he become converted. God's plan was realized. Paul learned not to esteem himself, but the Lord.

The Bible says: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:7-9).

## **Swallowed Up In Godly Righteousness**

When the Lord is number one in our lives, we are no longer in control. He takes the controls, and we follow wherever He leads. Our earthly lives of sinfulness are swallowed up by His beautiful godly life of righteousness. It is when this transformation commences that we please Him, and the fiery darts of Satan are quenched. Let us learn, as did Paul, that our lives only have value when they are hid with God in Christ.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, are you?