

God's People Move Up

I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10

PW Emerson – 01/26/2020 – Ten:27 Ministries

A couple weeks ago, we talked about each of us not just having a job, rather having a mission.

Today, we're going to build on that.

I Peter 2:4-10

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Illustration from John Maxwell

At one point they were running very low on silver for coins, and so they began to look to where they could find more silver. The place where they found the most silver in England was in the cathedrals, in the statues of saints. Oliver Cromwell said, "Let's melt down the saints and put them into circulation."

That's what serving God is about: taking people like you and me, finding out what gifts each person has, and putting them into ministry, into circulation, in the body of Jesus Christ.

Ministry is a special word within the church. It comes from the Greek word “diakonos” which means “one who serves.” Some churches have people with the title “deacons” that word “deacon” comes from the Greek word “diakonos.”

The idea is that deacons serve.

It is NOT a special office. It is not used in the Bible to refer to a special minister or missionary or priest or anything like that.

It was never used to mean a person in a professional sense.

It is a special function. A function that everybody is called to act on.

Ministry is an act of service, given in Jesus’ name.

Let me pause and clear up an often misconception.

Ministry is often thought as something mystical, almost other worldly. Some think it is something special that is only meant for certain people.

The truth is very different.

Ministry is using your gifts for the glory of God in the name of Jesus.

- It has nothing to do with titles
- It has nothing to do with positions
- It has nothing to do with educational background

Everyone of us has gifts, and everyone is challenged to use them.

Peter describes us, followers of Jesus Christ, in a number of ways:

I LIVING STONES verse 4

Stones just sit there.

They provide support or decoration. But they're not active.

LIVING stones are active

The bible sometimes refers to LIVING water – that's water that is in motion. It's active.

Peter describes us as LIVING stones, people who are active.

Peter also describes us as

II HOLY PRIESTS verse 5

What is a priest? In the biblical sense?

It's someone who offers something to God.

In the Old Testament the priests offered sacrifices of animals.

Since the New Testament, **WE offer ourselves** as a sacrifice

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God

When Peter says that we are "holy priests," it's saying that we give ourselves completely to God:

- Our gifts
- Our future
- Our life

Everything for God.

Peter also says that we are

III A CHOSEN RACE or CHOSEN PEOPLE verse 9

God has chosen us!! We, who are

- Messy
- Make mistakes
- Make mistakes over and over and over

Romans 5:8

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God chose us!

And God continues to choose us!

Remember as a kid ... during recess, choosing sides for kickball or dodge ball ...

Wasn't it a thrill when you were chosen?

It is a thrill to be chosen by God!

Peter also describes us as

IV A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD verse 9

In the Old Testament, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the temple, and have that direct access to God.

Everyone else stood outside and waited to see what would happen.

But you and I are a royal priest.

We have DIRECT access to God!

You don't need the pastor or Sunday school teacher or someone else to talk to God for you.

You can go directly to God and be heard!

Peter goes on to say that we are

V A HOLY NATION verse 9

Our spiritual citizenship transcends political and geographical boundaries.

Ephesians 2:19

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,

You can go to a different country, where people speak different language, and have different customs and traditions.

But if you meet a Christian, you have a bond through the blood of Christ.

We are united in the same body of believers!

During the reformation, the 1500s, Martin Luther tried to make these distinctions.

- He was a former catholic, where it is all about the priests
- He wanted to knock out the distinction between the priests and the people

There's a reason I wear robes & stoles infrequently

Yes, I have them and use them for special occasions.

But I want people to know I no different or special. I'm a person, part of God's creation, like everyone else!

The New Testament lifts up ALL PEOPLE to a new status, a higher level of living.

Hebrews 4:16

¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We can boldly approach God ON OUR OWN!

In the Old Testament, the presence of God was in the temple.

In the New Testament, it says that WE are temples, where the Spirit of God resides!

I Corinthians 6:19

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

You are a temple and God's spirit is in you!

You don't have to go anywhere to find God.

You can be with God and be right where you are!

So Peter makes it clear that we are ALL Ministers.

The Apostle Paul emphasizes the same.

Romans 12:6a

⁶Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, ***let us use them***

We should be using the gifts God has given us!

We are not meant to be ornaments, on display, only to be seen.

We are to be in action for God!

I Peter 4:10

¹⁰As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

We are to minister to one another.

Imagine a church where everyone calls everyone in the church ... asking what to pray about for them

Remember what Jesus said

Matthew 9:37

³⁷Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few.

The problem isn't for a lack of a harvest or lack of fields.

The problem is the lack of laborers!

To grow God's kingdom, all are required to be in his service!

Acts 6:1-4

Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ²Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

It was true in the early Christian church and it is true today.

The only way for the church to grow is if everyone has a ministry!

China realized years ago that they had more people than they could ever take care of, so they instituted what they called barefoot doctors. They were trained to take care of the basic physical needs of the people, and they found that they could take care of about 90% of the needs this way. The other 10% would go to hospitals for professional care. This allowed them to meet the needs of the people.

That not only works for China, it works for the church too.

And a great thing to remember is that when we use our gift, it glorifies God

I Peter 4:11

¹¹If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory

Serving God ... using your God given gift, brings glory to God!

In her book *A Gift from God*, Mother Theresa said:

We all long for heaven where God is, but we have it in our power to be in heaven with Him right now. To be happy with Him at this very moment. For being happy in his presence means loving as He loves, helping as He helps, giving as He gives, serving as He serves, rescuing as He rescues, and being with Him for all the 24 hours, because we touch Him when we touch others.

CONCLUSION

The message next week is about commissioning people to go out and do ministry. The main text will be from Luke 10 where Jesus sent out 70 people.

As part of the service, I invite EVERYONE who has a ministry to

- Come forward
- Share about that ministry
- All of us to lay on hands and pray for that person and that ministry!

Jesus commissioned his disciples and sent them out.

It's time for us to commission people!

I hope the place is packed.

And I hope we pray for and lay hands on each person!

I Corinthians 12:14-20

¹⁴For in fact the body is not one member but many.

¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? ¹⁸But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*?

²⁰But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body.

The church will not be whole unless everyone does their part.

During World War II, there was a small French community.

In the center of town, in the town square, was a statue of Jesus with his out stretched arms.

Due to the war, the status was damaged and broken apart.

After the war, the people of the town worked desperately to put it back together.

But they could not find the pieces that made up his hands.

They scratched their heads, wondering what to do.

They considered taking it down all together.

Then one night, someone put a plaque at the base of the statue. It reads,

“He has no hands but ours.”

All of a sudden, the community understood what I wish Christians everywhere understood. We are an extension of God's ministry