

## ***Our Priestly Identity***

### **I. INTRODUCTION – THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY OF JESUS**

- A. The first time the word “priest” is mentioned in the Bible is in Gen. 14:18-20. Melchizedek was a type of Christ in the O/T. in the N/T, God appointed Jesus to be The High Priest as the author of our salvation (Heb. 5:5-6). Jesus is the eternal intercessor since, *He always lives to make intercession for them*” (Heb. 7:25).

***“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. <sup>19</sup> And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup> And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” (Gen. 14:18-20).***

***“So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”<sup>6</sup> As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:5-6)***

- B. A priest is someone who presents God to the people, and someone who represents the people before God. The central theme of the scriptures is God searching for a man and a people with whom He can fully share His heart and emotions – so that they can identify with Him and represent Him. This revealing of His secrets (Amos 3:7) is more than just giving information to people about God’s plans; it is a sharing of His burden, His emotions, His thoughts, His will, on the deepest level.

***“For the Lord does nothing without revealing His secrets to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). “The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant” (Psalm 25:14)***

### **II. GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN SEARCHING FOR AN INTERCESSOR**

- A. The Lord is searching to close the gap between heaven and earth, between His heart and ours. That is why He has always been searching for an intercessor. It’s more than just finding a people who will get things done for the kingdom sake, but it’s about fellowship with a people with whom He can share His deepest feelings and desires for His creation.

***“Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter. So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.” (Isa. 59:14-16)***

- B. God sent His Son as the intercessor. Jesus is fully God, and fully man. As such He can sympathize completely with the plight of man and God’s burning desire. Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension from the dead on the third day, was and is the greatest act of intercession that has ever been seen.
- C. Because of Jesus’ priestly ministry, we now have perfect access and fellowship with the Father. Jesus opened the way through His blood for our priestly ministry so we can come with boldness.

***<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and having a High Priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb. 10:19-22).***

### **III. OUR PRIESTLY IDENTITY – INTIMACY AND SONSHIP<sup>1</sup>**

- A. Our identity as priests is rooted in the affections of the Father and the Bridegroom for us. The One seated on the throne is our “Abba, Father”. He is filled with tender love, which surpasses that which fallen father’s have for their children. In Christ, we are sons forever. Our priestly ministry is his life and His priestly ministry being expressed through us.
- B. Identity is that which we look to for value as a person. What gives us fulfillment? How do we define success? “We are loved and we are lovers, therefore we are successful!” [Mike Bickle]. God defines greatness by the movements of the heart in love. This is at the core of priestly ministry.
- C. Priesthood comes from lineage. It was the sons of Aaron, The sons of Zadok, the sons of Levi. Our identity as beloved sons is the foundation of our priestly calling. God specifically states that Jesus’ high priestly role flowed from His position before the Father as the Beloved Son. There is no priestly ministry apart from sonship. We have been “begotten of God” through the new birth. We are not trying to gain acceptance from the Father in our priestly ministry, but we are accepted in The Beloved! (Eph. 1:6)

***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph. 1:3-6)***

- D. As priests, we call on the Name of the Lord. It is the name (or nature) of God Himself that forms the foundation of our priestly calling and ministry. Our priestly ministry flows from the revelation of the name of the Lord (His attributes, His nature, His personality). The key in our life is to experiencing God’s personality.

***“And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” (Ex. 34:6-7).***

### **IV. THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD**

- A. Moses had an encounter with God where He describes what He is like. This helps us know what our identity is in our priestly ministry as intercessors.

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<sup>1</sup> The Priesthood – David Bradshaw

1. **The Lord “Yahweh” God is a sovereign king.** He is ruler of the kings of the earth. He is omniscient and omnipotent.
2. **Merciful** – The Lord delights in mercy. He stoops to care for the weak and the undeserving. Jesus gave up His rights and His equality with the Father to express mercy to his enemies and save whosoever will come to Him.
3. **Gracious** – The Father gives good gifts. He is extravagant beyond our wildest imaginations. He is kind in all His deeds. (Psa. 145:17).
4. **Longsuffering** – God is slow to anger. Some of us have a very short “fuse”.
5. **Abounding in goodness** – Goodness is God’s very nature. He overflows with all that is good and pleasing. All that we receive is from an overflowing One that is all-powerful and totally good and kind.
6. **Keeping mercy for thousands** – God has stored up mercy for the nations, for all that call upon Him.. He waits to show mercy. He literally dreams up ways to show mercy – the cross being the highest and most extravagant act or mercy that could possibly be conceived.
7. **Forgiving iniquity** – Jesus’ blood has removed our guilt before the Father and has given us a new righteous nature.
8. **By no means clearing the guilty** – He will punish openly all that will not repent. In His zeal for love and truth, He must destroy those who hinder love.
9. **Visiting iniquities of fathers on children** – He is righteous judge that will even punish children for the sins of their parents in order to keep the sin from perpetuating and destroying more lives. This is actually God’s mercy in preserving righteousness.