

The Duties of the Priest Part 16

The Royal Priests Serving in the Church

From the Book of Malachi

We continue to review the Scriptures to find out the various aspects and the conditions of the services of the royal priests in God's church.

F) At the time of the prophet Malachi, God was not happy with His people; they did not honor God but presented to Him defective sacrifices and gifts. If they had presented them to men it would not have been acceptable. And this is what the Lord says: ***“6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 1:6-8 KJV)*** People used to bring gifts to the governors to please them and make them happy so they could ask favors from them. In the preceding Scripture, God was facing the people with this fact when they were bringing their sacrifices and offerings to the LORD they were not bringing their best but what they didn't need, the defective or what they wanted to throw away. **God was challenging them with the fact that when they wanted to ask favor from people they brought them the best gifts. How much more to God our Creator whose favor we need all the time to protect us, to provide for us and to answer our prayer. Do we not need to bring to Him our best present? Instead, we offer to God the least quality of our time, effort and money, and expect blessings and reward from Him. As a result, we do not receive God's favor because we are cheating Him!**

The people at the time of Malachi drew away from God, and for them serving God was a burden. They neglected their loyalty to God and they became loyal toward men and political leaders. They were willing to do their best to gain people's favor and approval, and for them to please God became a burden. Therefore God was so upset with them.

When God is no longer the center and focus of our life, we find it so difficult to offer something precious to God. Unaware, we give our best resources to please human figures and authorities who approve our own plans and projects. When we give to man what we ought to give to God, we engage in idol worship because those human figures have become our focus and gods.

No doubt God is upset, yet God's Name would still be glorified around the world even if his own people are not willing to honor Him and give what is due to Him: ***“11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. 13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the***

sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.” (Malachi 1:11-13 KJV)

When the people of God behave in such a way, God is so grieved. With such an attitude, words and actions of the people, the Lord God promises to those who withhold from Him what is due to Him the following: ***“14 But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.” (Malachi 1:14 KJV)***

And who is responsible for that bad behavior of the people toward God? The priests who lead the people are responsible because they were in error. **The church leaders should teach the people to honor God in everything, training them to give God the best and to live in holiness. God's people should be taught that serving God is the first priority of man while he is alive here on earth.**

It is an honor to be a Christian. It is also a shield to live in Holiness, and it is a privilege to serve God, to focus our life and attention unto Him by offering to Him all the best we have – the best of our time, money, effort, heart and life.

The unfaithfulness that God found in the life of His people at the time of the prophet Malachi was the reason that God sent His admonishing and rebuking message to the priests. Since they were people pleasers and did not train the people and discipline them to serve God wholeheartedly and to offer their best to God, therefore the LORD said:

1. “1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. 2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.” (Malachi 2:1-2 KJV) The LORD's warning is very clear to those priests, church leaders and pastors who are called to lead the people of God. They are appointed by God to do His will and if they will not do, then instead of receiving God's blessings they will receive the curse of God.

2. “3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.” (Malachi 2:3) * God extends His rebuke to the descendants and the disciples of those priests, pastors and church leaders who compromise and do not teach and discipline their children and disciples with the instruction of the Word of God. * For those church leaders who are refusing to discipline themselves and the people under their care with God's Word and proper instruction, the LORD will really put them to shame. He will smear on their faces the dung from their festival sacrifices and they will be afflicted and carried off by the same compromises that they do and teach their people to do. * The LORD has dealt with the priests at the time of the prophet Malachi and He will deal with those church leaders who are unwilling to stand firm for God; by sending them disciplinary events, cursing their compromising work, not prospering and approving their children and disciples, and making their wrong recoil to them. This is how God will deal with any leader who compromises and is unwilling to stand firm with the LORD against the people's wickedness and compromises.

3. *“4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 2:4 KJV)* The message carries a rebuke in the form of warning, and the purpose of the rebuke is to bring you near to God and not to move you away from Him. God is rebuking you today to your face because He loves you and wants you to be His real priest and representative to the people. The LORD with this rebuke is not rejecting you but wanting you back to Him to serve Him wholeheartedly. He wants you to be His true priest to lead His people. *“5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. 6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. 7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 2:5-7 KJV)*

a) *“My covenant was with him of life and peace”*: God was speaking that His covenant with the priest was a covenant of life and peace. The term *“covenant of peace”* is mentioned in Numbers 25: 10-13 *“10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: 13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.”* God was pleased with Phinehas son of Eleazar and confirmed His covenant of peace with him and his descendants because Phinehas stood firm for the LORD when he killed the Israelite man and the Midianite woman who defiled their camp. *“6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; 8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.” (Numbers 25:6-8 KJV)* God confirmed His covenant because Phinehas the priest stood firm and did not compromise with the people who did sin. * The same covenant for you today: If you stand firm with the LORD and side with Him and deal with those who do sin inside the church, and not side with the people and their sins, the LORD will confirm His covenant of peace with you and your disciples. And you will live a peaceful life because you proved your faithfulness to the LORD. * You who are the priest called to rebuke and discipline those in the body of Christ who live in sin doing immoralities, stealing, not giving tithes, telling lies, cheating, etc. You will do well and the LORD will be with you if you stand firm with Him; God's blessings will flow to you and to the people under your care.

b) *“for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name”*: The true priest fears God and teaches the people to fear God and respect Him by offering to Him the best of what they have with regard to their time, talents and material possessions.

c) *“The law of truth was in his mouth”*: The lips of the priest are the mouth-piece of God. The pastors and the church leaders should speak precisely and concisely the Word of God. They should say the full truth, without compromising and showing no partiality. The Word of

God is the truth and when the truth is spoken, the truth will set the people free from sin and its consequences. Jesus said, *“32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32 KJV)*

d) *“and iniquity was not found in his lips”*: Telling half of the truth is a lie. False teaching is not only telling wrong things, but even telling only a part of the truth of God's Word and instructions.

e) *“he walked with me in peace and equity”*: The Priest should be honest walking in integrity, living in obedience to God and His Word. Those who serve God they should be honest, having no wrong motive behind their service to God.

f) *“and did turn many away from iniquity”*: The true teaching of Jesus Christ is hard but it brings true conviction, repentance and salvation in many people's lives.

“7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.” (Malachi 2:7 KJV) It is your responsibility as a royal priest to speak the true instruction of the Word of God. You are called to stand firm with the Word of the LORD and not to compromise or condone the people's sins.

My dear and beloved: As you hear the message from the book of Malachi:

- Come now to God committing yourself once again to serve Him and worshipping Him in the Spirit and truth.
- Commit yourself to God to offer the parts of your body as living sacrifice pleasing and acceptable to God.
- Come now to God committing yourself to serve Him and to live your life for Him.
- Come now to God and be willing to give your best of your time, effort, material things and your life to God.
- Come now to God and renew your covenant of peace with God.
- Come now to God and be willing to stand firm on His Word and be willing not to compromise, nor to please people nor to condone their sins.
- Come now to God committing yourself to be the mouth piece of God to speak only the truth and to give clear instructions from God's Word.
- Come now to God committing yourself to Him not to fear man but to instruct sinners the way they need to repent in order to come back to God and get saved.

Let us pray ...

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from death to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that I received in this message and your invitation to come back to you and to renew my covenant of peace with you. Lord thank you for all what you had given me and all the resources and the blessings that I received from you. Lord thank you for all the corrections, the rebukes and the admonishments that I received in this message.

Come now to God and confess and renounce all your sins and commit yourself to serve Him. Confess and renounce all the works of the flesh in your life; telling lies, deceiving, cheating,

stealing, gossips, boasting, taking advantage, selfishness, lust of the flesh, immoralities, worldliness, greed and your love for money and material things. Repent and renounce your injustice, partiality, corruption, flattering people, fear of man, compromising with people. Confess and renounce that you are doing your own will and plans and not the will of God and His plan in your life. Confess and renounce your unfaithfulness, ungratefulness, your wrong motive and your lack of the fear of God. Confess and renounce your lack of reading God's Word and life of prayers. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers, with friends and in bondage with the Media, News and games. Confess and renounce your bad stewardship, wasting your resources, non willingness to give to God, and your non willingness to serve God and suffer for Him. Lord forgive me, I repent from the following sins

Lord I commit myself to give my life to you and to start to serve you from this day onward. I commit myself to give you the best of my time, money, and resources. Lord I commit myself to not fear people and not to compromise with, nor to flatter those who do wrong, but to rebuke them and to stand with the truth of your Word. Lord I commit myself to teach your people what is right according to your Word and to implement discipline and the sound teaching in my ministry and in the life of the church that you placed me in. Lord I commit myself to live according to your will and the good plan that you have for me. Lord, I commit myself to reach new people and preach the gospel and your Word to them.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who had repented and committed their lives to live for you and to serve you. Lord I pray for them to be the light in the places that you had placed them and that they will bring the differences. Lord use them to serve you and be the light to others to know the truth. Provide for them and give them good health and strength so they will continue to serve you.

Lord bless us as your church as we commit ourselves to stand firm on your Word and to teach and to implement discipline and what goes along the sound teaching. Lord we pray for revival in our midst that people will respond to your Word and come back to you and serve you. Lord I pray that you will raise more workers to serve you and do your work and your will. Lord we commit ourselves to continue to motivate and encourage your people to come back to you and to start to serve you. Lord refills us once again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts so that we continue to serve you. Lord we commit ourselves to evangelize and make new disciples, train new workers and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, 'Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God'. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let you hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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