

A priestly nation (1)

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Date: 10 September 2023

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[0 : 00] There are a lot of opinions, isn't there, about what a church is. If you went out and asked what is a church, you'd get different answers. Is it a building? Is it an institution?

Is it an old building that has now been converted into flats? Is it a tradition? Is it something that you're born into, a part of your family heritage?

Especially in the West where we have a history of Christianity in years gone by. There would be lots of answers that we'd get from people about what a church is.

The simplest description, I don't think you can go far wrong with, is that the church is God's redeemed people. God's redeemed people. That is what the church is. God's redeemed people or God's rescued people.

Now on one level you could stick with that explanation. But actually, whilst that is true and it's accurate, the Bible has a lot more to say about God's redeemed people, about the church.

[1 : 04] Throughout the Bible there are two ways that God teaches us truth. But particularly when it comes to strange, different concepts and ideas.

There's two ways he uses. One is he uses picture language, metaphors. When you scan the Bible it is littered with picture language to describe lots of things, especially to describe God's redeemed people.

The church. Every picture. It adds layers of understanding of what it means to be God's redeemed people. The church. John 15. Churches of a vine.

In Corinthians 12 you get the body where Jesus is the head. In Ephesians it's the church is a temple. In Revelation the church is a bride. And for many of us, most of us, that language will be very familiar to us.

So that's one way he uses picture language. A second way that God teaches us is looking how the Old Testament is full of shadows of what was to come.

[2 : 09] You know, when the sun shines and you get a shadow on the ground, you can make out from the shadow what the image is in the sun.

You can tell whether it's a person or a tree or whatever. But if you were only to look at the shadow, there are things that you can't make out of the real thing. You have to look up what the shadow is. It's the shadow often to see what the person looks like. What the type of tree is or what colour the tree is. Because shadows don't tell you the full truth. If you only have the Old Testament, you can see the shadow.

You can see part of the truth. It's all there. The gospel is contained in the Old Testament. It's all there. It only... It only...

The here... The arrival of Jesus... All the shadows... This is what it's all about.

[3 : 16] Jesus is here. All the shadows are pointing forward to Jesus. It's a really helpful place for us to start. Because what we're going to do is... Is today and next week is look at something in the Old Testament.

See how it's a shadow of Jesus. And the final piece of the jigsaw is see how the ministry of Jesus continues in the church. It's Old Testament, Jesus, and the church.

It's a shadow. How it points to Jesus. What that means for the church. It's going to come from the chapter that we read earlier. If you just look with me in your Bibles.

1 Peter 2. If you look at verses 9 and 10. In these two verses alone... I think it was page... What was page? 1152. If you're skipping back there.

If you want to get it on your phones. In these two verses alone... There are a lot of descriptions... That are depth to what it means to be God's redeemed people.

[4 : 18] He says... It says we are chosen. It says we're a race. It says we're royal. It says we're a priesthood.

It says we're holy. A nation. And his own possession. That's a lot. That's seven things you could do and talk on. Each one. Or several. There's books being written about every single one of these descriptions.

And over the course of the week... The one that we're going to consider the first... Over the first two weeks... Is that one... That number... It's number four... And then... Work it out. It's priesthood. Priesthood.

But... I want to play... I'm just going to play a little game... Before we get going. I'm going to play... Priest or not a priest. Okay? I'm just... There's going to be some... Pictures come on the screen. Okay. What is the church? Okay. Priest. Guess the priest. Jenny... You can shout out... Or not. Guess the priest. Is Jenny a priest? So keep it in your head.

[5 : 17] Okay. That's number one. Next one. Is Firmino a priest? Footballer for Liverpool. Liverpool a priest. Okay. Next one. The Queen. The Queen. Was she a priest?

Okay. Next one. Bear Grylls. No Bear Grylls. You might have watched this on telly. He's leader of the scouts. Okay. Next one. The Rock. Is The Rock a priest?

Okay. I think that's... I think I've just got five. Okay. So... You'd have played against a priest. I don't know what you'd think about those very different people. You know? The Queen.

The Rock. The answer. We're there. Our priests. All five. That might actually throw you a little bit. Because it throws your understanding of what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?

To be a member of the church of God's redeemed peaceful. It means that... It's not a special role for people who lead churches. It's not a special title. It's not somebody who wears special robes and does mass.

[6 : 15] Everyone who follows Jesus is a priest. He says... He says... You're a priesthood. If that's true... Which it is... Anyway... Is...

What does it mean to be a priest? What does it mean to become a priest? What does it mean if... The priest do? It's a little bit... I think it's a little bit like... It's like...

Being told that you've got a new job. Without any instructions of what to do. That would be impossible, wouldn't it? If someone came to you and told you... You've been given a job...

A karmachanic. You need to know a little bit... To be able to do the job. You have to read a little bit of things... And put it into practice...

In order to be a karmachanic. So... We're going to think... What does a priest do? Before... We get that... I want to convince you a few things...

[7 : 08] That you are actually a priest... And how you became one. How does someone become a priest? Well... The answer comes in these... Few verses... Verse 9 to 10... It says...

He's talking... He's writing... To the church... And he says... To the... It's not to an individual... This is to the church... But you... That's plural... You are a chosen people...

A royal priesthood... A holy nation... A special possession... That you may declare... The praises of him... Who called you out of darkness... Into his wonderful life... Once 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... Two things... I want us to notice... From these two verses... About how someone becomes a priest...

First thing... We see it... It's... The second half of... Verse 9... It's... Him who called you out of darkness... You were called... You were called...

[8 : 03] To be a priest... You were called to be a member of the church... I don't know if you have it in your house... We try to... Try it in our house... To have a rule where...

You go and find a person... To find where they are... You don't shout... From the other end of the house... To try and get them to you... Now it doesn't work...

Because I fall short of that... All the time... From one end of the house... Annabelle or Heidi... And then get called... What are you shouting for? So... We do that don't we?

But the expectation... Is that as you call someone's name... They will come to you... It's not... Well sometimes it works... Sometimes it doesn't... They do hate...

People... You call their name... They come to you... Move towards your... Move towards where... You're calling... If you're a follower of Jesus Christ... Then he has called you...

[8 : 59] I don't... It happens differently... For each of us... But normally... The reason it happens... Is because there was... Something... There's something attractive... Something about the good news...

About the gospel... Maybe even about the way... A follower of Jesus lived... And you wanted to find out more... When that happened... As it was happening... Jesus himself...

By the power of his... Calling... You... He was calling you to... Move yourself... To a place... Where you could hear him clearly...

And comprehend... Understand the good news... So that you would be moved... And transferred... Out of the kingdom of darkness... He called you... The second thing...

Is when you... When you were called out of darkness... Is that verse 10... You received mercy... Whenever...

[9 : 53] You... You... See something... Outside of... What we're talking about here... Sometimes we... Maybe you've... True offer...

You... Too good to be true... It probably is... That's what people say... There's always a catch... You don't get anything for nothing... Check the slow print...

And we're hired... And we are hard... Hard wired... To think like that... Aren't we... If someone... We didn't know... Said to us... I want to give you an amazing gift... Here's a free TV... Worth... Three grand... My first...

Response... Would not be... Oh thank you... It would be... What's wrong with it... What's in it for you... Why are you giving me... Three thousand pounds... The gospel of Jesus Christ... Is not like that...

There's no catch... Those who... Had not... Mercy... Those who have not received... Receive it... Those who were not... His people... Now his people...

[10 : 51] Mercy... When God withholds... What you deserve... That's what mercy is... When God withholds... What you deserve... Punishment you deserve... And the mercy is infinite...

It is everlasting... The punishment you deserve... Is withheld... Forever... It's withheld... Forever from you... Because... The punishment... Lands on the shoulders...

We are his people... We are his people... The church... God's... Redeemed people... That is... A big long list...

And one of those... Is that you are... A royal priesthood... Because you are included... In the people of God... If you follow... Jesus Christ... You...

We are... That are mentioned... So that's the first thing... We are convinced... We are all priests... The question is...

[11 : 46] How is our priesthood... Jesus... What priesthood that we are... How is it shadowed... In the Old Testament... Now...

How we became a priest... Is the easy part... The easy part is... Is seeing this... It's right there in the text... Is convincing us... That we are all priests... And how we got there... The more complex...

Aspects of thinking this through is...

What does it mean... And how did... What the Old Testament priest... Shadow what Jesus did...

How did it point forward to him... So my definition... Definition of a priest...

Two things that a priest does... A priest represents... The people before God... A priest represents God... The people... The simplest way to think of that...

Is a middle man... There's lots of examples... Life... Think of the estate agent... I've never bought a house... I don't know if I ever will...

[12 : 45] But... We all understand how they operate... They're a middle man... They represent the person... Selling the house... To the buyer... But they also represent... The buyer...

To the person selling... The same... If you've not bought a house... You can think of the... In agency... The owner and the tenant... Or the... Either way... The owner and the prospective buyer... You don't ever speak... Directly to one another... They go... You go... The middle man... The estate agent... When you speak... To the middle man... The estate agent...

You've got to... But what you say... Is repeated... In the same way... To the other part... The priest... Is the middle man... Between God...

And the people... He represents... The guy... To the other... The priest... The priest was the middle man...

[13:42] It is... In respect... To God's word... It's in respect... To God's word... They were teachers... Of God's word... That... You think... Two things...

They were teachers... And they're the ones... Who offered sacrifice... But this... The first one... That we'll consider today... Is that they... Were teachers... Of God's word... Which is really significant... Isn't it? It's really significant... Because it meant... That... How God's people... Worshipped... It meant... How God's people... Worked... And how God's people... Witnessed...

It was the responsibility... Of the priests... Every part of life... Of God's people... Centres... Worshipping the almighty God... That can only be done...

With the word of God... Personally... And collectively... You can't... Worship God... You cannot... Work... You cannot work for God... Or witness of his goodness... Without...

[14:36] Hearing from him... In his word... Only the priests... Who had the responsibility... Of doing that... It should come on your screen... There's a verse from... Malachi chapter 2...

Verse 7... For the lips of a priest... Ought to preserve knowledge... Because he is the messenger... Of the Lord almighty...

And people seek instruction... From his mouth... The priests... It was the priests... Who were responsible... For showing the people... Teaching them what God...

Required and desired of them... It was they who... Incorporated the Bible... The ordinary... Israelites... Didn't have access... To the word of God... And it was the priests... Who read it... Who were...

And applied it... To the people's lives... Another verse... Should come on the screen... Leviticus 10... This is a lasting ordinance... For the generations to come...

[15:28] So that you can distinguish... Between the holy... And the common... Between the unclean... And the clean... And so... You can teach the Israelites... All the decrees... The Lord has given them...

Through Moses... Here we see it again... What did this mean... For the Israelites... It meant that God's people... The Israelites... Relied on the priests... The middle men...

To hear from God... They relied on the instruction... From the priests... To understand how to... Worship rightly... How to work for the glory of God... And how to witness... Of his goodness...

They were not... Just to make it clear... They were not able to receive... God's direction... Without the priests' instruction... This was a shadow...

Of what was to come... It's a shadow... Because when Jesus Christ... God himself... The word made flesh... Would come... God himself... God himself... He's the people...

[16:26] From his own mouth... When Jesus walked the earth... There was no one hearing... From Jesus... And then interpreting it... To the people...

He spoke to them directly... He didn't go... To the middle man... He spoke to the people... Directly... And the disciples... That he was... Did a vast majority...

Of his teaching with... They were not the religious elite... They were... They were... He didn't spend his time... Walking around with the high priests... Neither were...

The people he taught... On a hillside... Or from the boat... The everyday people... Hearing from God's own mouth... And what did the people say...

When they heard him speak... He taught as one who had authority... An authority... That he had... That was coming from within himself... Who he was...

[17:18] Because he had the authority... Of the living God... Not only could they hear... What he had to say... But they could see what he did... His works were of the Father...

What did he... He said to them... If you've seen me... You've seen the Father... His works testify... That he was from God... And the first...

There's three things... That I want us to... Help... Think through... What does that mean for us... As a church... What does it mean for the church... If the church... If the church... If the church... What does that mean for us...

As non-believers... When I think it... In worship... Work... And witness... Worship... Work... And witness... The first... Is that it impacts... How the church worships...

In John 4... When Jesus is talking to the woman... At the well... He says something... That is profound... And what it means... For God's people... To worship him... John 4... Last one...

[18:16] A time is coming... And has now come... When the true worshippers... Will worship the Father... In the spirit... And in truth... For they are the kind of worshippers... The Father seeks... God

is spirit...

And his worshippers... Must worship in the spirit... And in truth... As New Testament believers... Followers... Of Jesus... That time has come... Because... We've received mercy... We were called... We've been given... New spiritual life... Born again... God dwells... In followers of Jesus... By... His spirit... And we have the truth...

So we worship him... In spirit... And in truth... There's no need for us... To go up a mountain... Or to go... To a building... Where the presence of God is... He doesn't live... In a building... Made with human hands... But he dwells... With his people... If King Charles... Came to live with you... In your house...

[19:10] You'd be able to speak to him... Every day... To hear from him... God dwells with you... By his Holy Spirit... And gives his people... Spiritual understanding... Of his word...

Which means... When we behold... The word of God... When we encounter... Jesus Christ... The truth... Whom... All the... Scriptures is about... It is applied to... Our hearts... Directly... By him... We don't need a middle man... We don't need a priest... To give instruction... How to live... Because Jesus Christ... Teaches by his Spirit... Collectively... And personally... There is one mediator... God in life... Jesus Christ... So what does it mean... For the church... Well that's the first...

That's the first... The first thing... Is worship... What that means... For us in worship... Is that God's word... God's word... For church... That God's... Church... Is all about the word...

[20:05] God's word is... At the heart of everything we do... It has always... And will always be... At the heart of everything we do... That the life of the church... As a people together...

And as individuals... In order to worship... Worship rightly... Must be governed... Exclusively... By the word of God... Each of us... Has a responsibility...

To sit under it... And allow the Spirit to work... We can only worship... By hearing from him... So that we are taught... Rebuked... Corrected... Trained... Equipped...

Edified... And we can comprehend God... And see him in the face of Christ... We cannot worship without it... It's a worship... Second thing... Is the...

The work... If you like... Of ministry... We can't do the work of ministry... Pastoring... Caring for one another... Without the word of God...

[21:00] The word of God... Had to perpetuate... The life of the priest... And it should... Our life... To such an extent... That it floods out of us... Into one another's lives...

The ups and downs of life... We speak... The truth... In love... So that we can grow up... In every respect... To be the mature body of him...

And with the head... We worship... We work... Finally we witness... We are the priests...

That means that in one sense... We are the middlemen... The church... God's redeemed people... Are the people that hear directly from God...

When we open the pages of the Bible... And read it... People... People who don't follow Jesus... Don't have the spirit of God... Therefore when they read it...

[21:53] Or hear it read... The spiritual significance... Of what God is saying... Cannot be understood... We are the middlemen... To the rest of the world... We are the middlemen...

To the wintermen... As priests... Redeemed people... It is... Our responsibility... To mediate... The truth... Of who Jesus is...

To people... Who don't have hope... Or understanding... The word of God... As priests... To worship...

To work... And to witness... We have the truth from the King... As we hear the truth... He calls us to worship... As we hear the truth... We speak the truth... In love... And as we hear the truth...

We witness of it... In what we see... To a dying world... And if... You are here... And you are not a follower of Jesus... Then... Do you realise...

[22:49] That the... Jesus that you know... Are in this room... That you are sat next to a priest... You are sat next to... Someone... Who has been given a responsibility...

By God... To be a middleman... To... To worship... With the word of God... To work with the word of God... And to witness... By the word of God...

He wants to call each of us... To receive mercy himself... To transfer us from darkness... To walk in the light of Jesus... To give purpose and hope...

So that all of us... Can walk... Can say... With the followers of Jesus... Once we were not a people... But now we are God's people... To redeem... To redeem people... Let's pray... Almighty God... We do... Thank you for the church... We thank you... That you have redeemed us... That you have set us free...

[23 : 46] That you have called us... And that we have received mercy... That once we were not a people... But now we are your people... And this was by the power of your Holy Spirit...

When we heard the word of truth... We thank you... That you have made us as priests... And we thank you... For this responsibility...

That we have... And we pray that... That we would be priestly... In the way that we live... That the word of God... Would be so central to our lives... That we would...

Worship you daily... By hearing from you... And living according to it... That we would be... Have that attitude... Amongst one another... That we would pastor...

And care... And love one another... With the word of God... In the ups and downs of life... And that we would witness... Of what you say... Of the truth of the gospel... That we would be that...

[24 : 40] And be able to mediate the truth... From you... To people who don't know you... We pray that you'd help us... In all these things... Knowing that the responsibility... Doesn't land on our shoulders...

But that you are the one... Who's continuing your ministry... Through the church... We ask for this... In the name of Christ... Amen...