

Text: Exod. 29:10-28

Title: "Calvary's sacrifice qualifies God's priests"

Time: 10/8/2023 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Frances Havergal was born into the home of the pastor of St. Nicholas Church in Worcestershire. She began writing verses at seven years of age but did not come to know the Lord as her personal Savior until the age of thirteen. She never married, but rather gave her life to serving the Lord.

She had a beautiful voice and was a gifted pianist. She was an astute student of languages and knew Hebrew, Greek, French, German, and Italian. She suffered from peritonitis, inflammation of the abdomen wall that can cause considerable pain, and she died of the condition at the early age of 42.

In 1874 at the age of 38, Frances went for a five-day visit with some friends. She knew the visit would be somewhat challenging for her spiritually, because out of the ten household members she was to visit, she knew of some whom she described as "unconverted and long-prayed-for," and others she believed were "converted but not rejoicing Christians." Deeply caring for her hosts, she prayed that first night, "Lord, give me all in this house!"

The Lord heard her prayer and did as she asked. She recounts: "Before I left the house, everyone had got a blessing. The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in renewal of my consecration." With that sleepless joy and thankfulness, Frances penned the words to our hymn, "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee."

Miss Havergal was experiencing the joy of being one of God's consecrated priests that evening, the joy of being an instrument of the good news that brings God to man and man to God. God's priests know what it is to visit those who are

“long-prayed-for.” Their hearts cry out, “Lord, give me all in this house!” And because of that burden of the heart, they remember their need for consecration, often praying, “Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee.”

Exodus 29 is about the consecration of the priests of Israel. Aaron and his sons have come to ask the Lord to take their lives and to let them be consecrated to the Lord. In this passage, God’s priests are brought near, qualified by sacrifice, given ministry direction, and promised the continuing presence of their Lord.

As New Testament readers of this chapter, we do well to remember that as born-again believers, we too are God’s priests in need of consecration. 1 Pet. 2:5, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

This morning we are focused on verses 10-28 of this consecration ceremony, which mention the sacrifices that qualify God’s priests for their priestly ministry, and in them we see the power of our Savior’s sacrifice to make sinners like you and me God’s servants, qualified to bring Him to others and others to Him. God designed three kinds of sacrifices for this purpose: the sin offering of the calf (vv. 10-14), the soothing offering of the first ram (vv. 15-18), and the peace offering of the other second ram (vv. 19-28).

We need not fear our lack of qualifications. Our Lord’s sacrifice on Calvary’s cross fully qualifies us to be His priests.

I. Calvary paid the penalty for our sin – the calf of the sin offering (vv. 10-14).

Illustration: Growing violence plagues our culture. Last month an 11-year-old boy was shot and killed while riding in his car after an Albuquerque Isotopes minor-league baseball game. After apprehending the perpetrators, the police explained that the murder was a case of mistaken identity. The gunmen were after someone else with a similar vehicle and so shot into the wrong vehicle when they killed the young boy.

Application: The first sacrifice that qualified Aaron and his sons to become God's priests involved the killing of an innocent young bull or calf. This was not a case of mistaken identity because God makes no mistakes, though from the calf's perspective it might be interpreted that way.

This first sacrifice is a case of the intentional transference of identity. When Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the calf, they are transferring their identity as sinners before a holy God on to the calf (v. 10). The calf is now the sin-bearer. That is what makes this first offering a sin offering (v. 14). What the text literally says there is that the calf being offered is sin – the sin of Aaron and his sons, God's priests.

Jesus did this for us, His priests. 2 Cor. 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." That he knew no sin may be the meaning of the symbolism of v. 13, where certain fat portions are burned on the altar, acceptable to the Lord. And that he became sin for us may be the meaning of the symbolism of v. 14, where parts are treated as unclean and burned outside the camp, under God's penalty for sin.

On the cross of Calvary, Jesus became the sinner so that the sinner could have Jesus's righteousness. Isa. 53:5-6, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone

astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

This sacrifice of the sin-bearer is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation because only through the merits of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins can we gain accepted entrance into the presence of our holy God (v. 11).

His blood is put on the horns of the altar, representing the victory of His cross-work (v. 12a). 1 Cor. 15:55-57, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And the blood is poured out at the foundation of the altar (v. 12b). William Cowper’s hymn interprets the picture for us: “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.”

Undoubtedly, as Christ hung on the cross as our bleeding sacrifice the ground of Calvary’s mount became soaked with crimson red like the ground around the altar with the calf’s blood poured out around it. Cowper’s second verse remembers that the thief dying next to Christ would have seen that blood as Jesus promised him that they would be in Paradise together that day:

“The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day,
And there may I though vile as he wash all my sins away.”

The sins of the dying thief were washed away because he believed the sign over Jesus’s head – “The King of the Jews.” He believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing he found life in His name, the King who sacrificed for his sins. Have you believed? Have you found life and forgiveness through the blood? Calvary paid the penalty for our sin.

II. Calvary put to rest the wrath of our God – the first ram of the soothing offering (vv. 15-18).

Illustration: Firefightergarage.com lists the proper procedures for putting out a camp fire: (1) start early, (2) let the fire burn to white ash, (3) spread coals out evenly, (4) pour water or soil over the fire, (5) stir the fire, (6) repeat steps 4 and 5 until ash is cool, (7) survey the surrounding area for stray embers.

Application: In our passage we have instructions from the Lord about how to put out a fire – it is the fire of God’s holy wrath against our sin. The offering of the first ram is called *a sweet savor* (v. 18b). Other translations call it *a pleasing aroma*, but I believe that the New American Standard comes closest to the Hebrew idea when it says that this offering is *a soothing aroma* to the Lord. The root of the word translated *sweet* in the KJV is the verb that means *to rest*. The idea is that this offering causes the Lord to rest again. It puts out the fire of His wrath.

The first such offering with this soothing effect on God was the one offered by Noah in Gen. 8:21, after God’s wrath destroyed with a global flood every land creature except Noah’s family and the animals with him on the ark: “And the Lord smelled a sweet savor (soothing aroma); and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter; and day and night shall not cease.”

That is the Noahic Covenant, and in addition to calming any fears we might have about a pending global climate crisis, it informs us that God’s holy wrath can be turned into His promised protection through sacrifice.

This is called the doctrine of *propitiation* Scripture, and it is the effect of the sacrifice of Christ on His holy Father. 1 John 2:1b, “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our

sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Jesus put to rest the wrath of God on Calvary, and it cost Him everything He had to do so. Moses was to put the whole ram on the altar (v. 18), and Jesus held nothing back in order to put the wrath of God against us to rest. He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8).

That wrath was poured out on Him instead of us (v. 15). The ram took the place of Isaac in Genesis 22, and Jesus took our place on the cross to bear the wrath of God that we incurred. Calvary put to rest the wrath of God, making us God’s priests.

III. Calvary filled our hands with responsibility – the second ram of the peace offering (vv. 19-28).

Application: You may remember from verse 9 that the Hebrew idea of *consecration* means *to fill the hand*. In this passage, the second ram is called *the ram of consecration*, or *the ram of the filling* of the hands with responsibility for the priesthood of God (v. 22). The first ram told us what the sacrifice of Christ did to God; this second one tells us what it does to believers to make them God’s priests. And so this time the ram’s blood is applied to Aaron and his sons.

The blood is dabbed on the right ear, hand, and foot of each priest (v. 20). Moses celebrated the power of the Lord’s right hand in the Song of Moses: “Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy” (Exod. 15:6). Now the right ear, hand, and foot of God’s priests were to become instruments of God’s power to defeat His enemy for His glory.

Oehler explains the symbolism of these three body parts: “the ear, because the priest must at all times hearken to the holy voice of God; the hand, because he must execute God’s

commands, and especially the priestly functions; the foot, because he must walk rightly and holily." So, the ceremony of this verse tells us that as God's priests we must live like blood-bought people in obedience, service, and godliness, and that when we do God's power and glory will do battle royal against His enemy through them.

And then the blood is mixed with oil and sprinkled all over the priests and their garments (v. 21). What empowers us to live like blood-bought people is the blood itself, its power to cleanse us when we sin, and the way the Holy Spirit administers its power in our lives, represented by the anointing oil.

And this is followed by the heave offering of the second ram, so named because the waving back and forth of the items sacrificed symbolizes the communion believers enjoy with their God in their Savior. This was David's experience of fellowship with the Lord, when he wrote in Psalm 23: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over."

And it is the blessing received by every member of God's priesthood who is willing to open the door to fellowship with Christ. He promises: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). As God's priests our hands have been filled with an awesome responsibility - bringing God to men and men to God, to the glory of our Savior and to the defeat of His enemy. Jesus promises us the nourishment, the cleansing, and the anointing power of His Spirit to fulfill these responsibilities of listening, serving, and living in obedience to His will.

Conclusion: So, these are the sacrifices that consecrated God's priesthood, and they find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In English, *consecration* is a word that comes from the prefix *con-* meaning *together*, and the Latin *sacer*, which means *sacred* or

set apart as holy. Our passage mentions this holiness of God's consecrated priests (v. 21). God's priests are set apart together with Christ and one another.

With her amazing talent as a singer, pianist, and composer, Frances Havergal could have done many things with her talent. But as her song says, she wanted her life to count "ever, only, all for" the Lord. About a year before she wrote those words, Frances had made the decision that every song she sang, played, or composed, would from that day forward be only sacred music. She said "Singing for Jesus" was her mission. That is consecration, being set apart for a sacred purpose.

Aaron and his sons had their hands filled with a task that set them apart for a sacred purpose, and this has happened to us when we became God's priests as well. Have we have remembered what Calvary has done for us? Will we respond to our wonderful Savior with the prayer, "ever, only, all for Thee"?

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching