***The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-447***

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Our subject is "The Error of Angelic Worship," number four, in Colossians 2:18-19.

In Colossians 2:18, the apostle Paul warns the Colossian Christians not to let some false-teacher legalist rob them of their treasures of grace in the age of the church, with the imposition of the Mosaic Law system. This threatens not only their well-being and time, but it also threatens their eternal rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Satan never lets up on trying to undermine the concept of living by the power of the Spirit of God, rather than doing the best you can.

God called upon the Jews, under Judaism, to live a life which reflected the character of God. So, the Jews were told to lead a holy life, reflecting that holiness. And that holiness was portrayed in the whole Mosaic Law – 613 commandments, all to show how separate and holy God was from sinners. But nobody could, in his own capacity, no matter how determined or how devoted he was, no one is able to live a holy life, because what they were asked to do was to be as perfect as God Himself.

We come to the New Testament, the era of the church age under Christianity, and, again, we Christians are called upon to live a holy life, reflecting the character of our Heavenly Father. But the difference is that we have a power system that enables us to do right – not perfectly, and never sinlessly. But the more you learn about the Word of God, and the more you apply it, and the more careful you are about coming back in line with confession of sin, and readjusting the life where you've stepped out of the will of God, the more and more you'll find that you're walking by means of the Holy Spirit, and that your life is under a magnificent enablement that the Jew could only have dreamed of.

**Positional Truth**

So, Paul says, "Let no one keep defrauding (or robbing) you of your prize." And what is the prize of Christianity? The prize of the Christian is that he can potentially lose, we have seen, first of all, is the joy of realizing his positional truth. He is in Christ from the point of salvation, by the act of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And this is what gives you eternal security. It is not dependent on anything you do. It is the fact that, in Christ, you have all the absolute righteousness of Christ imputed to you, and you have the power system of the Holy Spirit to be able to do right.

Back in the Mosaic Law era, human effort, governed by the sin nature, was all that they had. How nice it is to know that we have positional truth, and that we are as perfect in the eyes of God as His Son.

**The Union of all Believers in Christ**

Secondly, the other thing that you can you can lose, potentially, is the joy of realizing the union of all believers in one body, in Christ – spiritual unity, and that unity is based on the love of God, which the Holy Spirit creates in the Christian: to be in the family of God. Why would anybody want to give that up, to go back to the system of the Mosaic Law, where there was no sense that you were not just close to God, but that you are in His very family, and that you are actually a child of God? That was not known.

These are two prized that are easily lost when you impose legalism of the Mosaic Law, and it's not worth it. Yet that's everywhere in churches. If you walk into most churches, there's an altar. That's not Christianity. That's Mosaic / Aaronic priesthood. You walk into churches, and there's a priesthood which is separated from the laity. That's not in Christianity. That's right out of the Mosaic Law. You have churches that have holy days. That's not Christianity. That's the Mosaic Law. You have tithing. That's not Christianity. That's the Mosaic Law. You have candles; incense; all the ritual accouterments; and, a robed priesthood. That's not Christianity. That's the Mosaic Law. You have animal sacrifices representing Christ. That's not Christianity. That's the Mosaic Law. If you keep your eyes open, you'll see how much of Christendom (because they made this great mistake in the era of the Reformation) – they thought that the church had become the new Israel.

**Indwelt by Jesus Christ**

Tonight, we will look at a third thing that is your prize (your treasure), and what you could lose – that every believer is indwelt by the second person of the Trinity (by the Lord Jesus Christ).

In John 14:20, Jesus makes this dramatic statement to His disciples: "In that day." That refers to the day of Pentecost – the birthday of the church: "In that day, you should know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." This is the basis for the Christian's fellowship with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is within us. He lives in us. Do you understand what that means? It is a permanent relationship. Now, with Mosaic legalism, you'll never lose this relationship, but the fact of the fellowship (the companionship) – that you can lose. "But we are in Christ, and He is in us.

Now, this can only be realized in your experience (and it is realized in your experience) as you are filled with the Holy Spirit; that is, that the Holy Spirit is directing the life. When you stepped out of line, you confessed, and you made things right. That's important.

**Revelation 3:20**

In the book of the Revelation, chapters 2-3, actually deal with the church age. In Revelation 3:20, you have a verse that is terribly misinterpreted, and misapplied by so many people, and so many preachers who should know better. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." And what He's talking about is the door of your heart. And because these are letters to churches, he's talking to a Christian. So, here you have the Lord Jesus Christ, who indwells you, and you've slammed the door on Him, and you're going through life, and you're ignoring Him, as if He were not there: "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice." And there he is. He's calling: "Jim, are you there, Jim? Susie, are you there?" Knock, knock, knock, inside. But you're off in the world system. You're off someplace else.

If you decide to hear His voice, and you open the door, He says, "I will come into Him." And, in the highest expression of fellowship in Scripture: "I'll sit down and have a meal with him. I will dine with him, and he with Me." Now, this is what Christ indwelling the believer means. The carnal heart is not open to Jesus Christ. When you and I are out of the will of God, our heart is not open to fellowship with Jesus Christ. In fact, we're a little embarrassed to know that He's there. We're doing things, and when we think about (that He's there in us), it's a little embarrassing. We wish He weren't there, to be watching.

So, when he's knocking at the door, he's saying, "Please confess. Please use 1 John 1:9; confess the known sin; and, express your repentance by correcting the breach between us.

People are saved, as you well know, by believing the gospel. And at that point, Christ enters into the life. Before salvation, what is your heart? It's a garbage: sin; and, Old Testament control. And that's why it's wrong to say, "Invite Christ into your heart." That's not the way to be saved. You believe the gospel. The Bible never tells you to invite Christ into your heart. It's a disaster area. It's totally disoriented spiritually.

However, once faith in Christ has been established, He moves in. He removes all the garbage pile in the soul, and permanently entitles you to be in fellowship. He's just visiting in your life. He just there as a good companion. Therefore, He is there to give you wisdom; to give you guidance; and, for you to know that, whatever the situation: "Christ in me – the hope of glory:" for glory in performance now; and, for glory eternally in heaven.

**Indwelt by God the Holy Spirit**

Then the second prize that could come under threat, to look at tonight, is again in John 14:16-17. It is that: not only is every Christian indwelt by the Son of God, but every Christian is also indwelt by the third member of the Trinity God the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever." This Helper here is God the Holy Spirit. And in the Greek language, the word "another" indicates another person of the same kind.

So, Jesus is saying, "I am a member of the Divine Trinity. I am God, and I'm going back to heaven. I'm going to ask the Father to give you *another* person of Deity, so that He will indwell you when I'm gone." In verse 16, He said, I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever (that is, the Spirit of truth – the Holy Spirit), Whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him. But you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you." On the day of Pentecost, Christ had now been in heaven for ten days. The Holy Spirit, Who is omnipresent, came to make His local presence in every believer. So, what you have is something that no Jew, under the Mosaic Law would have ever dreamed of. Why would you want to go for the Mosaic Law, and jeopardize the impact of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit?

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit did come on some people in order to perform a certain mission, and then He would leave them. In the church age, every believer, at the point of salvation, is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

**The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

What does that mean: the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church age? Listen carefully. When Mrs. Danish was typing up these notes, and she finished this section on the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer, who said, "You know, people are going to want a copy of it. Well, listen carefully.

1. **A Believer's Body is the Holy Temple of the Holy Spirit**

The indwelling Holy Spirit makes the believers body His Holy Temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you. If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the Temple of God is holy, and that is what you are." Don't fool around with anything that is going to destroy your physical well-being. That's what he's saying. Your body is God's temple. We do not have buildings anymore, and it is very unscriptural, let alone "un-grace-age, to call a church "Temple," something or other. The temple belong to the Old Testament Jewish system. And there is no local temple anymore. But now, there's a different kind of temple. Every believer is a temple of God the Holy Spirit. That makes you a very sacred object. That makes you a very holy object in your position.

So, again, whatever you and I do in life, once we know this doctrine, we have to be aware of the fact: "Jesus Christ is always with me, and the Holy Spirit is always with me. Jesus Christ is there to be my companion in fellowship. And the Holy Spirit is there to enable me to do what is right; to empower me; and, to bring to my mind doctrinal principles of the church-age that I need to remember at a certain point, so that I'll know how to conduct my life.

This is also pointed out in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: Paul says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God. You're not your own, for you have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body." So, just think: how many Christians do not glorify God with what they do with their bodies." Sometimes this is in terms of immorality, and sometimes in trying to follow styles like putting a little ring through your lip. Every time I see that in someone, I just wish they'd put them through both lips. That might bring some peace in the life of people. Or, even worse, they stick it through their tongue. Every time I have to take my dog for a shot, down to the feed store, a very attractive little gal is there behind the desk, filling out the forms. And she has this earring right in her forehead, above her eyes. I thought, "Boy, that must hurt. How does she sleep with it?" And she has one in her lip. And when she talks, she has one on her tongue. I'm glad to say that she has one in her nose, too, because that's where rings really belong. That's where we put them on bulls.

What is this – treating your body in such an abusive manner? And here it is the very temple of God. And that's why you had the severe judgment. God says, "If you desecrate My temple (your body), and you invite physical death. You invite disaster.

So, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, indwelling every believer, makes that believer's the body the temple of God.

1. **The Holy Spirit will Resurrect the Believer's Dead Body**

Also, the indwelling Holy Spirit gives a believer his spiritual life through regeneration, and will, therefore, resurrect his dead body. Romans 8:10-11: "And if Christ is in you (and He is), though the body is dead because of sin (sin eventually causes the physical body to die), yet the spirit (the human spirit, regenerated by the Holy Spirit) is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him, who raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you (the Holy Spirit), He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead, will also give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit Who indwells."

So, the Holy Spirit causes us to become spiritually alive. When we trust in Christ as Savior, we are spiritually alive. As long as you are spiritually dead, you'll be suckered by the devil into false doctrine and false ideas all the time. You will never know what God thinks. And you'll go through your life playing the fool. But once you are a Christian, you're not spiritually alive. Now God can speak to you. And now you can understand what God thinks.

One of the things that will result from spiritual regeneration is that someday your physical body will be brought to life. There is no question about it. The physical body will be brought back to life. So, this is the second thing about the marvel of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit – spiritually regenerated, and a certainty of resurrection. You are going to live forever in heaven.

1. **The Holy Spirit Gives Victory over Temptation**

The indwelling Holy Spirit gives a Christian victory over temptation from the sin nature. That's a big problem. The sin nature is always appealing to us. It has a pattern of lust that it hits us with, that that is within every one of us.

Galatians 5:16-17: "But I say: walk by the Spirit (walk by means of the Holy Spirit), and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." "The flesh" here is a word for the sin nature. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." The Holy Spirit and the sin nature are constantly in conflict: "For they are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

You wonder: "How could I have gotten into that sin? How could I have been so foolish as to do this?" And it is because the Holy Spirit has been restrained from being able to protect you in your life. You're out of fellowship. So, when temptation comes along, you're a sitting duck, and you go down. You get hit. You'll follow it. And then you get back into fellowship, and you get the perspective of where you are, and what you have done for yourself, and you ask: "How could this have happened?" The Holy Spirit is there to keep you from scarring up your life with sin. But if you are out of fellowship, then you have silenced Him, and you have pushed him aside.

So, the Holy Spirit indwelling you is a very important Person to be operational every day.

1. **The Holy Spirit Enables us to live a Righteous Lifestyle**

The indwelling Holy Spirit enables a person to live the righteous lifestyle which was required in the Mosaic Law. That's what's interesting. The Jew couldn't keep His Law, but we Christians can.

Romans 8:2-4: "For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (This Law of the Holy Spirit controlling the life) has set you free from the Law of sin and death (the Mosaic Law). For whatever the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did it, (He does it for us), sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as an offering for sin. And He condemns sin in the flesh, in order that the requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

The Jew could only walk according to his human capacities; according to his human capabilities; and, according to his own self-determination. But we Christians do not walk according to the sin nature, because the Holy Spirit is there to enable us to live a righteous lifestyle.

Now, when you go back to the Mosaic legalistic system, do you want to rob yourself of this treasure: that you are able to do right, and be a blessing to those around you, and not injure them or yourself? That is madness.

1. **The Holy Spirit Empowers the Christian in Witnessing**

The indwelling Holy Spirit empowers the Christian in his witnessing ministry. Some people who walk with the Lord are great witnesses. And it is the Spirit of God Who is free to do that.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told the disciples, just before he returned to heaven, that: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." The Holy Spirit enables us to do the witnessing ministry. Some people grab those evangelism brochures; they grab the envelope; and, they resupply themselves in what is before them in the week ahead. They have them in their cars. They have them someplace readily available. And with that equipment, and that information, and that ammunition, the Holy Spirit steps in, and He opens the door for you to speak to somebody. He brings into the orbit of your life someone such that you say, "Boy, that person needs to know the gospel." No matter what you know about religion, if you don't know the gospel of the grace of God, and have accepted Jesus Christ, all you are thinking is what Satan wants you to think. Human viewpoint is useless. It will take you into the lake of fire.

1. **The Holy Spirit Helps us in Intercessory Prayer**

Because the Holy Spirit indwells a Christian, He helps the Christian in His praying by interceding for Him before the Father. Prayer is what changes everything. Acts 8:26-27: "And in the same way, the Spirit (God the Holy Spirit) also helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints, according to the will of God."

The Lord Jesus Christ knows what is in the mind of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows what we should be praying for. And sometimes we don't know how to pray for people. We know that they have a problem, but we don't know what to ask for. We don't know what it is they need. And we finally get to it, and we say, "Oh God, what does this person need? What should be done here? Please do something to resolve this problem."

Well, the Holy Spirit steps in, and He approaches the throne of God in heaven, and He enunciates the prayer that you cannot put into words. And He prays for you. Do you want to give that up, to go back to the Mosaic Law system that never had such power – to be able to go to God through the third person of the Trinity, and be able to speak to God directly? Now, that is a way to achieve the most magnificent things that you could ever dream of. He helps us in our prayer by interceding with the Father.

Hebrews 4:16 points this out: "Let us therefore draw near, with confidence, to the throne of grace (God's heavenly throne), that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." And we approach that throne of God's grace through the Holy Spirit, Who takes over when we don't know how to even pray.

1. **The Holy Spirit Creates the Character of the Lord Jesus Christ in us**

Next, the indwelling Holy Spirit creates the character of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Christian. We are to be holy as Christ is holy. We are to be Christlike. What is it to be Christlike?

In Galatians 5:22-23, it is called the fruit of the Spirit. It is a package deal. It has nine facets to it. It is not a plural word, is it? It's not the *fruits* of the Spirit. It is the *fruit*. And the Christian who is in fellowship has all of this potential working for him, because God the Holy Spirit is making all these things operational in his life.

Galatians 5:22: "The fruit of the spirit is love." This is "agape" love – mental-attitude love. And it sums up everything that comes underneath. With this (when you have mental-attitude love), you are in fellowship with the Spirit of God. And all these other things will then follow in the life: "Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no Law." Why would you want to go back to the Mosaic Law, as a way of life, that gave you no ability and no capacity to live a Christlike life? Just think of all the things we're hearing in the news: the ugly things that husbands and wives do to one another; the things that relatives do; and, the brutality that exists out there. In contrast to that, it could be love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. That's not in the Mosaic Law.

1. **The Holy Spirit Provides Access to God the Father**

The enduring Holy Spirit provides the Christian with access to God the Father. It is because the Spirit of God that you can go to God Almighty.

Ephesians 2:18: "For through Him (Jesus Christ), we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father." You go to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, by His death upon the cross, gave you the ground of authority to go to Him. He gave you the ground upon which you may enter into the presence of God. But the Holy Spirit is the one that now steps in to be your communicator with the Father. When you pray, the Holy Spirit gives you that kind of direct access.

1. **The Holy Spirit Moves us to Pray**

The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father to move the Christian to pray to God the Father, on the basis of family intimacy. This is not formalism, and not the rituals or the Mosaic Law.

**"Abba"**

Notice the family nature in Galatians 4:6: "And because you are sons (you are in the family of God), God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son (the Holy Spirit) into our hearts, crying, 'Abba Father." This word "Abba" is an Aramaic word. It is a diminutive word for "father." In English we would say, "Daddy." Can you conceive of that under the Old Testament Law – anybody approaching the Creator God, and saying, "Daddy?" But the Christian can. Because he is in the family of God, he is a genuine son of God. She is a genuine daughter of God. And he has all of that family blessing, and relationship, and riches at his disposal. You are the family of God. Paul calls it: "the royal family of God."

Please notice Romans 8:14-15: "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." And the word "sons" means children of God. "For you have not received the spirit of slavery, leading to fear again. But you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'"

Here again, the apostle Paul says, "You have been born into my family. And as My sons and daughters, I have adopted you to be part of the family with my son, Jesus Christ. And you are therefore co-heirs with Him, and with everything I have. And because this is a family situation, which God the Holy Spirit has made possible, you may look upon your Heavenly Father with the intimacy of a family – a child going to his Father, and saying, 'Daddy.'"

Now, obviously, such a thing was totally unheard of under the Mosaic Law.

1. **The Holy Spirit Testifies that We are Children of God, and Heirs with Jesus Christ**

Finally, the indwelling Holy Spirit testifies to the Christian that he is a child of God, and that he is an heir with Jesus Christ of eternal, glorious blessings in heaven.

Romans 8:16-18: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit." God the Holy Spirit speaks to our human spirit, that we are the children of God. That's what we mean by peace. God says, "You come into My Family by an act of regeneration that the Holy Spirit will perform in you. And that will happen when you say, "Yes, I am a sinner. I am lost. I do understand about sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit has made that clear to me. There is no solution for sin. It must be paid for. Righteousness – I have to be as good as Jesus Christ (absolute righteousness). And judgment has been passed against Satan, so that he cannot have victory over me. And now, the gospel is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And act 16:31 comes in, and we believe the gospel.

**God Never Sends Anybody to Heaven or to Hell**

Please remember that God never sends anybody to hell, and God never sends anybody to Heaven. He has made us in His image. That means that we're not machines. We're not robots so that you punch a button. We can make choices. And once we have been alerted to what the gospel is, and to the seriousness that we are confronted with, the Holy Spirit does His work of alerting us to conviction. And now you look at it, and you say, "Yes," or you say, "No." It's true that God the Father can look down. He is omniscient. And He can look down, just as he did in Adam and Eve. Of all the ways He could have put together the first parents (the first couple – the first human beings), He put them in that Garden of Eden. And all the circumstances under which He could have put them, He put them under that particular one: "Don't eat of that particular tree." And God do that, in that circumstance, the time was going to come when they would disobey Him, but not because He made them do it. He didn't predestine them to be sinners. The Bible says, "God does not cause anyone (does not tempt anyone) to sin.

However, yes, His foreknowledge knew how they would respond, as He does with all of us, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. He knew that when His Son came along, that final week of his life, that on the scene would be Pontius Pilate; the Sanhedrin; and, the Roman government, and that that combination was going to join to bring about the death of Christ on the cross, through which the Father would pay for the sins of mankind. He didn't make them do that. They chose to do that.

So, here you have the fact that we can enter, as a child of God, into all the glorious blessings of heaven, because we choose to accept what God has given us. Romans 8:16: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. If children, heirs also, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

It is the Holy Spirit, because we believed the gospel. Paul says, "How do I know I'm going to heaven? How do I know I'm a child of God? I know Whom I have believed." Paul said, "I trusted in Christ." And God does not lie. If I accept Christ as my substitute in penalty for my sin, I'm home free. That's exactly the way it is.

Notice 1 John 3:1-2: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. And such we are, for this reason: The world does not know us because it did not know Him." God the Holy Spirit makes this clear to us, but not to them. Then notice verse 2. It says, "Beloved, now, at this point in time, here on earth, we are the children of God. And it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears (the Lord Jesus Christ), we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is."

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit that enables us to realize that we are children of God, and that we are co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, of a glorious, eternal blessing in heaven. For those who are born-again, God has chosen this as our future.

This is just as you parents look your children over as they grow up, and you choose things for their future. And you direct them in the direction that you think is good for them, and will be a blessing for them.

So, the Father has chosen us, and He directs us toward this tremendous heritage which is ours in Christ Jesus. To be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, with all of these consequences, who would want to go back to the Mosaic Law? Not a single one of these things was true for the Jew in the Old Testament. That's your prize. That your treasure.

If you hang around legalistic Christians, they will rob you of all the peace that comes from knowing what the Holy Spirit has done for us, in just these ten points.

**Universal Priesthood**

Another prize for us is the universal priesthood of all believers. Let's get started on it. 1 Peter 2:9: "But you (you Christians) are a chosen race – a royal priesthood." It is on this little phrase, "royal priesthood" (in contrast to the Old Testament priesthood), that we get the concept of being part of the royal family of God. The church is the royal family of God because Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is our Bridegroom. We are His bride. And we are part of that royal family that shall rule over all this earth in the millennial kingdom.

In the Old Testament, as you know, the priesthood was restricted to the tribe of Levi. The Jews could only approach God through this specialized priesthood, which had the line of Aaron as the high priest. If you wanted to go to God to deal with some sin, or to deal with some expression of thanksgiving, you had to present your sacrifices at the temple through the priest. You didn't just walk into the presence of the throne of grace. That was not open to you as it is to us.

Now, in the millennial temple in Jerusalem, the Old Testament priesthood is going to be reactivated. But today there are no priests. So, we do not speak about those who are clergy, and those who are laity. This is why it always makes me cringe when people who are trying to be nice, especially people out in society, will address me as "reverend." And some of them who know the rules of etiquette will call me (like my Lutheran friends in Chicago) will call me "the Reverend Dr. John E. Danish." Now, that's pretty high class stuff. But I'm no more of a reverend than you are. I'm no more reverend than Ruthanne. This is not the Old Testament priesthood. So, the Jews were divided into what is priesthood; clergy; and, laity.

One thing you can tell is if you go down to the hospital and you park in some areas. Sometimes they have special areas for pastors. You can tell the guys who think a lot of themselves, and who are full of themselves – they have "Clergy" on their license plate. They have "Clergy" on the back of their car. The only time I bring up clergy at the hospital is to get the free tokens from the parking lot. And now, they've even taken that away from me, because they're not charging anymore. But I used to pick up these tokens, and usually the ladies would always give me two or three at a time. So, I always had the free parking lot.

Today, every Christian is in the priesthood of God, and that means that every Christian is his own priest. This was never true before the day of Pentecost. But God has made all Christians in the church age part of this priesthood.

1 Peter 2:5: "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Yes, we priests of the New Testament church era have sacrifices to perform. And we'll get to those. But we are priests, a holy priesthood – every man and woman among us who is born again. And our job is to offer up these spiritual sacrifices. It might be important for you to know what those are. Then verse 9, as we see, tells us that we are a royal priesthood.

Now, the Christian presents himself only before God as his own priest. That's why we speak of the privacy of the priesthood. You deal with God yourself on your sins. You have the principles of the church of the indwelling Lord Jesus Christ; the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, the empowerment of being in temporal fellowship. All of these things enable you to deal with God directly in your life, and to act accordingly in correcting, and finding your mission, and going about the logistical grace to fulfill that mission. You are your own priest before God. Therefore, it is nobody's business to be butting into your life to know things that are between you and God.

Don't fall for this guff of the Christian psychological basis of the world that is often incorporated in the Bible churches: "If you have a problem, ladies, go find some woman, and let your hair down." I don't know what that has to do with baring your soul, but that's what they mean: "Tell it all." No, you don't do that to people. You tell it to the Lord. You take it to God. Where do you get the right? You might have a serious problem. Where do you get the right to take some of the ugliness of sin that you may have been engaged in, and contaminate the mind and heart of believers who have to listen to your sinful recitals? You have no right to do that. You are your priest. Go talk to God. That's the reality. And that's the great way it is today.

Christians can approach God, therefore, directly as their own priests. In Hebrews 10:19-20, we read, "Since, therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood, by a new and living way, which He inaugurated for us through the veil that is His flesh." Jesus Christ separated the holy place from the holy of holies. And what he is saying is that we Christians should go into that holiest place, where the ark of the covenant was, and where the "Shekinah" glory of God illuminated that little square area. And we Christians have gone around the veil that only the high priest could do, once a year. And Christ is the veil. And through Jesus Christ, we come into the very throne room of God.

Now, this is a certain relationship to Jesus Christ as our High Priest. And it has a certain bearing upon how we should conduct ourselves in worshiping our Heavenly Father, through our High Priests. And it has bearing upon the sacrifices that we Christians are to make.

So, next time, we will pick it up there. We've walked into the very throne room of God. Now, how do we conduct ourselves as priests in this age of grace, with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto? Would you want to go back to the Aaronic system? That is such madness. And only those who do not understand how to rightly divide the Word of Truth: what belongs to Israel; and, what belongs to Christians, would ever suggest such a thing.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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