

Series: Truth for All Time

## Ministering to the Lord

August 13, 2023

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If we see anything in the OT, it is that people turned from God to the forms He used, as when the people of Israel worshiped the brazen serpent for 900 years and burned incense to it until Hezekiah broke it in pieces. (Numbers 21.9; 2 Kings 18.4) The tendency is to turn from the life to the form that has contained the life. Today we can cling to lifeless forms and find that the presence of God has moved on. The glory of the presence of the Holy Spirit may have been in the sanctuary, but now it is filled only with lingering haze. We may look to the church to save and not to Jesus, to a preacher to save and not to Jesus, for a method or a program to accomplish the things of God and not God. Only Jesus saves. We need to focus more on God and His life than on the forms through which that life flows. We need to see Jesus and find out what pleases the Lord.

Jesus Christ is our great high priest. According to Hebrews 5, a priest must be qualified—selected by God from men, sympathetic with men, and sacrificing for men. Jesus is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. The mysterious Melchizedek appears in Genesis 14:18, without genealogy. He is both king and priest. He brings to Abraham bread and wine, and Abraham gives him a tenth of the spoils of war. A thousand years go by. In Psalm 110, David writes, “**You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**” Another thousand years go by. And then we learn of Jesus as this King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek in Hebrews chapters 5, 6, and 7.

In a one-time act of sacrifice Jesus sacrificed Himself so that He is priest and sacrifice at the same time. He established access to God’s presence, as witnessed by the rending of the veil of the temple from top to bottom, that veil being the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies in the temple. Jesus opened up a new and living way. With a change in the priesthood, there must be a change in the law. (Hebrews 7:12) Today’s priesthood is a spiritual priesthood made up of believers in Jesus Christ.

[Hebrews 7: 11,12:](#) **<sup>1</sup>Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? <sup>2</sup>For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ESV**

OT priests had to meet specific qualifications and stay within bounds. They wore distinctive clothing and ministered daily in the holy place. They were forbidden to drink wine or any strong drink, as were kings. They were to keep the charge of the sanctuary, come near to God to minister unto Him and to stand before Him to offer unto Him the fat and the blood (the best part and the life). (See Leviticus, Ezekiel 44, e.g.) Likewise, to be a true believer, we must be born again, born out of God ones, in Christ ones. (John 3) We are not to transgress the boundaries of scripture in our worship and

as we offer the gospel to hungry and thirsty souls. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ and understand that no flesh will glory in God's presence. Our prayers are the incense we offer to God. The Bread we offer is the Word of God, Jesus the True Bread. We are made clean by the words which Jesus speaks (John 15). We are washed with the water of the Word. (Ephesians 5:26) We are not to be intoxicated, but rather, invigorated by the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18 cf Leviticus 10:8, 9, Proverbs 31:4)

[Ephesians 5:18-21, 25-26](#):

**<sup>18</sup>And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup>submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ESV**

Priests who went astray in the OT bore their iniquity with the consequence that they would minister only to the house; they would not come near unto the Lord. (Ezekiel 44:13) Like OT priests, we are responsible for offering sacrifices that are acceptable to God. (1 Peter 2:5, Romans 12:1, 2) Inasmuch as Christ is the sole mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:15), we offer our sacrifices in His name, i.e., consistent with His will, His plan, and His Kingdom, for God to be pleased.

[Romans 12:1, 2](#): **<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship [or reasonable service]. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ESV**

**Every true believer can offer spiritual sacrifices holy, acceptable, and pleasing to God.** With the commandment, the Holy Spirit empowers, providing the ability.

We are to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:5, 9) We talk about God's excellence and greatness. We speak well of God, boast about Him, be His cheerleader, commend Him. We give to God the glory due His name and bring an offering and come before Him, worshiping Him in the beauty of holiness (1 Chronicles 16:29). We give the first and the best to God because as our Creator/Redeemer He is worthy. The Holy Spirit will lead us in the specifics. As each of us does this, the Holy Spirit will bring us into one accord.

1. Spiritual sacrifice honors God when in conformity to His Word. It involves the whole person presenting himself as a living and holy sacrifice as a spiritual service of worship. All of our faculties are to be used for God's glory. (Romans 6-8, Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:5)
2. Spiritual sacrifice involves constant praise, the reciting of God's glorious attributes, exalting Him for His wondrous acts as Creator/Redeemer. (Hebrews 13:15; Psalms like 103, 104 and many others)

3. Spiritual sacrifice involves good works, doing good in the name of Christ for the purpose of glorifying God through our conduct; giving gifts and using resources to meet the needs of others, especially to those others in Christ; being generous givers. (Hebrews 13:16; Phil. 4:10-19; John 4, Mathew 25)  
And remember, a “good work” is one that is wrought in God—the thought and intent of His holy heart and mind, with Him providing the seed, root, and fruit of a work of righteousness—from Him, by means of Him, for Him.
4. Spiritual sacrifice involves reaching the lost, being ready to give an answer to anyone for the hope that is within us. (Romans 15:16)
5. Spiritual sacrifice involves love and prayer, having compassion, sympathy, offering others the comfort with which we have been comforted, striving in prayer for the lost and for those burdened. (Ephesians 5:2; Revelation 8:3; Numbers 15:22, 28; 2 Corinthians 1:4; Galatians 6)
6. Spiritual sacrifice involves worship. Worship involves faith, obedience, preparation, separation, and sacrifice unto God. Come apart. Come away, to a place where it is possible to center on the One, True, and Living God without distraction. Come alone. Give to God. Sing, making melody in our hearts to God. (Acts 16:25; Eph. 5)
7. Spiritual sacrifice involves bearing the presence of God [Ark of the Covenant in the OT], being separated, sanctified, ministering unto Him, communing with Him, waiting on the Lord, sitting quietly before Him, still, resting in Him, abiding in Him, beholding Him.

As a royal priesthood it is our privilege to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are holy, acceptable, and perfect. But we must remember that ministry to the Lord has priority over ministry to others if we are to be most effective. We minister to God as we bless Him and bless His Name (Deut. 10:8; 1 Samuel 3:1; 2 Chronicles 5:11, 13-14; 1 Samuel 1:1-10; Luke 1:46-55; Luke 2:37, 38; Acts 13:1-3; Revelation 5:11-14) We bless God through our worship, through praising and thanking Him, by acknowledging His greatness and glory, His worth and honor, by coming to Him for Himself, by knowing and caring about what He cares about. (See Hosea 11:1-5.)

God is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth and who will receive Him for who He is. He wants His people to be the demonstration people of God, to obey His voice, and to keep His covenant, namely the New Covenant in Christ's Blood.

Before ministering to the saints, before ministering to the world, let's minister to the Lord. As we minister to the Lord a flow of life is established. We are renewed and strengthened. Our expectation is from God. (Ps 62:5; Ps 130:5, 6) As we sit before the Lord, God's presence moves into us. He moves upon us, pouring out the blessing of Himself into our spirits.

Worship should precede witness. Praise should precede preaching. The Spirit moves and the Word comes forth. The Lord Himself is our reward. As we minister to the Lord, He unfolds His plan, revelation, and His mysteries to us. As we look to behold Jesus Christ, we will reflect what we see, like a quiet pool reflecting the beauty of His holiness. He will give His wisdom, and His power, and His strategies to meet and to conquer in His name.

Then let us serve the Lord of Glory by His grace.

# Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. Min.

*Unto Him that loved us,  
and washed us from our sins in His own blood,  
and has made us kings and priests [or a kingdom of priests] unto God and His Father;  
to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever, amen.*

*Revelation 1:5, 6*

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Federal ID 65-0429517