

Burning Hearts Discipleship Courses – Rob Giesey

“An Apostolic People Part 2 – Living out Heaven’s Priesthood on the Earth by obeying the Sermon on the Mount.”

I. HEAVENLY CITIZENS WITH A HEAVENLY CALLING

a. Heavenly citizenship:

²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven...(Phil. 3:20)

Paul’s apostolic perspective (heavenly perspective) for the church was that they had been given citizenship to the eternal city through Christ.

- Citizenship is a significant revelation of: (1) **Privilege** (2) **Access** (3) **Guidelines**
- Citizenship also speaks of us being **one of many**. Citizens are a part of a collective calling (Rev. 1:5-6).

b. Jesus is our Apostle and High Priest:

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus...(Heb. 3:1)

If we are to partake of (share in) the heavenly calling we must view the coming of Jesus from heaven as extremely significant. It is this coming that we find the significance of **His invitations and His words**. Most view the coming of God as our deliverance from the earth. Jesus came to deliver us from the powers of the earth so that we may partner with Him to bring what is in heaven to the earth.

⁵To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— ⁶and He has MADE US TO BE a kingdom, priests to His God and Father...(Rev. 1:5-6)

c. The significance of Exodus 19:5-8 and Hebrews 12:18-24:

Exodus 19 is the first time that God chose a nation to approach Him (priesthood) and it was this place that the Lord chose to establish covenant with a collective people. Over a million people had the encounter at the same time. God responded to Israel’s national “I do” to His invitation to be a nation of priests before Him. At *this* “I do” God came down.

⁵Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice [obedience to His voice] and keep My covenant [love God on His terms], then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.” ⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. (Ex. 19:5-8)

- The prophet Jeremiah shares the insight that Israel's Exodus 19 national encounter was only a first fruits encounter that would be an example to the world of what God wanted to do for the nations.

² “I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, the love of your betrothals, Your following after Me in the wilderness, through a land not sown. ³ “Israel was holy to the LORD, the first of His harvest [pointing to many more people coming into covenant as priests before the Lord]. (Jer. 2:2-3)

⁵To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— ⁶and He has MADE US TO BE a kingdom, priests to His God and Father...(Rev. 1:5-6)

The writer of Hebrews, who is addressing the church, recounts the moment of marriage between God and a nation. The church being addressed were Jewish believers who *understood the magnitude of the national calling of Israel to know God and represent Him in the earth as a kingdom of priests*. The writer Of Hebrews is drawing from the foundational knowledge of the calling to point to an “even greater” calling as a priestly people before God.

¹⁸ For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire [earthly mountain], and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore...²² But you have come to Mount Zion [a greater and more significant mountain] and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Heb. 12:18-19, 22-24)

Understanding the significance of our calling as a treasured people who are called to live a certain way as priests before an eternal throne is stunning. *The writer of Hebrews is calling the church to lift its eyes beyond what is seen and into an invisible priesthood that is lived out beginning in the heart that effects our actions and our lifestyles.*

As we view Jesus as our Apostle we understand that we are to follow His lifestyle in order to usher in the kingdom of heaven into the earth. This is our priestly calling. As we are faithful as priests before the Lord we grow in authority to bring the kingdom of heaven into the earth. This is exemplified through the prophetic picture given to the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 3:8, 6:11-13).

II. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – Matthew 5, 6, 7

a. The calling to greatness by living out and teaching the sermon on the mount:

¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments [Matthew 5, 6, 7], and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness [interior life] exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees [the current priesthood], you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:19-20)

The law was given by God to bring order and protection to His people. The law gave a set of guidelines for life and set a standard for behavior (outward actions). *Jesus came to fulfill the law by transforming the interior life of God's people* so that they would be empowered to live in affection-based obedience. The law proved that we could not obey God. It revealed our sin before God. Jesus came to empower us through His grace to live out what Israel could not under the law. *This is what it means to "exceed" the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.*

b. The warning for hearing but not living out the sermon on the mount:

Jesus gives the listener a profound picture of discipleship through an illustration of a two houses that is going to go through a storm. Jesus makes the point that it isn't only the one who hears His words (you made it in the room) but those who hear His words and live His words (practice). This is the dividing line even today. Many are familiar with the words of Jesus but few take His word as commands and live them out.

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall." (Matt. 7:24-26)

c. Overview:

Jesus was "sent" from the throne room to embody, demonstrate, speak of, and represent His Father's kingdom (Matt. 4:17-25). The sermon on the mount was the Father speaking the fundamentals of the kingdom of heaven through His son. This is the role of every high priest to embody, speak, and represent God and His kingdom (Heb. 3:1).

⁶ The law of truth was in his mouth [mouth of a priest], and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity.

⁷ “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 2:6-7)

- As a kingdom of priests (1 Pet. 2:4-5) we have been given the privilege to remain in the love of God by committing our lifestyles to God. The apostle John wrote these words to the church:

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

- Lifestyle commitment based on a heart fully in love with Jesus is our only reasonable sacrifice. Peter draws on two important points that Jesus is precious and we are called to sacrifice our lives as priests from the revelation of Jesus being “called” and “precious”. When Jesus is “precious” to us we will be willing to obey and do anything for Him. This is true priesthood and truly apostolic.

⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices [heart and lifestyle choices] acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:4-5)

III. CONSIDERATION TO THE CONTEXT OF JESUS TEACHING ON THE MOUNTAIN

- a. The significance of Jesus ascending the mountain to teach:

¹And seeing the multitudes, He went up on the mountain...² Then He opened His mouth and taught them...” (Matt. 5:1-2)

The Father waisted no opportunity to reveal His Son. *It is significant that Jesus “ascends” to teach the multitudes.* This is a foreshadowing of the prophetic promise of Jesus second coming that the prophet Isaiah predicted in Isaiah 2. This promise include the nations being motivated to come to Israel and receive instruction for life from God Himself. The context of Jesus teaching the multitudes in Matthew 5 is from Jesus gathering the nations through demonstrations of power found in Matthew 4:23-25. Jesus gathered the nations through demonstrations of power and sat them down to teach them about the Father’s kingdom.

- Context of Jesus teaching the sermon on the mount:
²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of

disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria [Jew and Gentiles]; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan [Jew and Gentiles].

- Prophetic promise predicted by Isaiah:

²The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. (Is. 2:2-3)

"Jesus ascension came after a life of descent" (death) in order to ascend to teach.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death [lifestyle of dying to self], even the death of the cross.

- Jesus never taught something He aspired to be. He had lived out everything He taught. This type of teaching carries weight and brings both impact and impartation. This is what we call "apostolic preaching or teaching" when the listener is moved to encounter with God. This is the type of ministry that happens when we are "sent" from God (apostolic sending).

²⁸ The people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matt. 7:28-29)

- b. The significance of Jesus' posture when teaching:

***"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on the mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him."* (Matt. 5:1)**

It is significant that Jesus taught sitting down. By sitting down the people would know the reading of scripture was finished and the words spoken from that point originated with the speaker, not from the prophets and writers of old.

IV. IDENTITY BRINGS CLARITY TO LIFESTYLE