



**THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST Part 1 Pastor Gerald**  
**1.7.2023**

**28 DAYS OF PRAYER, FASTING & COMMUNION (All of this can be found in our fasting resource guide on our website, check out the news and events page)**

**Commit**

Pray and decide what kind of fast you will be doing for the 28 days and commit to it. (If you break the fast just start back up the next day.)

Types of fasts:

- A full fast: No food, water only
- A partial fast: This could include fasting 6am to 6pm (intermittent fast), fasting one or two meals a day, not eating certain foods (sweets for example), or only drinking liquids (juices, protein shakes etc.)
- A Daniel fast: Fruits, veggies, water only. Some include whole grains.

**7 FASTING TIPS**

- 1. Develop Personal Prayer Focuses**
- 2. Develop Intercessory Prayer Focuses**
- 3. Focused Scripture Reading**
- 4. Journal Throughout Your Fast**
- 5. Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship (Acts Devotional 28 Days with Jesus through the 28 chapters of Acts)**
- 6. Daily Communion (The Lord's supper)**
- 7. Be safe (get rest, drink lots of water, and if you need to eat for medication your on please continue to do so...and anything else necessary for your to fast safely)**

**Benefits of Fasting**

- Fasting is an act of worship because it is obedience and obedience is worship.
- Fasting forces our flesh into submission and helps us come into spiritual alignment, increasing our sensitivity to the Spirit.
- Fasting increases our hunger for the word of God and the presence of God .
- Fasting brings us into greater levels of dependence upon the Spirit of God.
- Fasting resets our appetites spiritually and physically.

- Fasting forces us to slow down and be more intentional about leaning on God, His understanding and His purpose for our lives.
- Fasting brings us into a place of clarity to hear the voice of God to receive vision and strategy.
- Fasting increases faith & belief. It drives out doubt and unbelief.
- Fasting increases the anointing and authority of God in our lives.
- Fasting will always bring us into greater revelation of Jesus, the Gospel, our identity in Christ, the love of the Father and the inheritance that we have received in Christ!

## **THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST**

**Part 1: THE PRIESTHOOD *and the Great High Priest (There is no priesthood without the Great High Priest)***

**Part 2: THE PRIESTHOOD *and worship (learning to love God with our whole lives)***

**Part 3: THE PRIESTHOOD *and Culture (advancing the Kingdom outside of the temple)***

**Part 4: THE PRIESTHOOD *and the false priesthood (the devil is after our worship)***

**Part 5: THE PRIESTHOOD *and eternity (our forever occupation)***

## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST**

**Let's start where God starts, related to declaring His people to be a priesthood unto Him. You're going to help me read a portion of these verses!**

**Exodus 19:5-6** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. 6 ***And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*** These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

**1 Peter 2:9** ***But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;***

**Revelation 1:5-6 (NIV)** and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed

us from our sins by his blood, **6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.**

**Revelation 5:8-10** And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. **10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.**”

THERE IS NO PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST!!

Let's pray together....

**Hebrews 1:1-3** God, who <sup>at</sup> various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, **2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son**, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the <sup>worlds</sup>; **3** who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had <sup>by</sup> Himself <sup>purged</sup> our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Jesus is the Father's message! Everything we are meant to know and understand about God and His Kingdom on this side of eternity has been revealed to us by the life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of His Son! Whatever we are meant to know and understand about what it means to be a priesthood we should set our hearts and minds to seek out in the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ!

**Hebrews 3:1 (NIV)** Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, **fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.**

**Acknowledge:** to perceive, observe, understand to consider attentively, fix one's eyes or mind upon

Doing this is the first step in growing into who we've been called to be as a priesthood. We will only become the priesthood we've been called to be to the degree that we give ourselves to beholding Jesus Christ our High Priest!

THERE IS NO PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST!!

In the same way Jesus is the perfect image of the Father (John 14:9) He is simultaneously the perfect image of restored humanity, new creation itself (Romans 1:17). This is what makes Him the perfect and Great High Priest for us His people.

**Stop and ask yourself when you think of Jesus' titles which ones have really touched your heart, maybe Savior, King, Shepherd, Lord, Prince of Peace, Messiah, Teacher, Healer, Deliverer, Bridegroom...now ask yourself has the revelation of Jesus as your High Priest fully touched your heart? Let these passages and the rest that we are going to read today be the launching point to experiencing that!**

### **RECEIVING JESUS AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST**

**Heb. 2:14-18 (NIV)** Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants (Spiritually we are also descendants of Abraham according to Gal 3:7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.) 17 **For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**

**Look at the order of the explanation. The first part of the explanation of Jesus being made like us, fully human in every way, is for the facilitation of MERCY! The second part of the explanation is for our sins to be paid for. And finally the third part of God's wisdom included Jesus being made like us so that He could suffer temptation like we do in order to help us as we are tempted!**

**Receiving Jesus as our High Priest looks like receiving His mercy, receiving by faith the payment for our sins, receiving His help in the midst of temptation!**

**Hebrews 4:16-17 (NIV)** Therefore, since we have a **GREAT HIGH PRIEST** who has ascended into heaven,<sup>[1]</sup> Jesus the Son of God, let us **hold firmly to the faith we profess.** 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The revelation of Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest and receiving Him as our High Priest is meant to fuel, motivate and anchor the profession of our faith! The author of Hebrews is convinced that when we steward these two things our capacity to hold firmly to our faith in Him increases!

When was the last time you truly embraced the reality that there is nothing you are going through or will go through that Jesus cannot or does not identify with? More than identifying with it, the scripture says he empathizes with it! This is central to the revelation of Jesus being our High Priest and learning to receive from Him. He is not distant, He is not disconnected nor is it hard for Him to relate to you or understand what you're going through.

The word **empathize** here means to be touched with a feeling, to have compassion, to be affected with the same feeling as another. This is what sets Jesus apart from any other high priest before Him, from any pastor, leader, friend, or person. He is the only one who can look you in the eye while you're struggling with temptation, whatever it may be and say these two things, **#1 I fully know the temptation you feel and #2 I fully triumphed over it!**

But Jesus doesn't stop there. He is not only the high priest that triumphs over temptation, He is the Great High Priest that leads us to God's throne where we find grace to share in His victory! Without the confidence and continual practice of running to the throne of God knowing that we have been given access to grace and victory over our temptations through Jesus, we will not execute our assignment as a priesthood!

THERE IS NO PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST!!

Let's talk about the responsibility of the high priest and priesthood as described in the old testament under the law.

**Hebrews 5:1 (NIV)** Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, **to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.**

So we see two things the high priest did, 1 represent the people 2 offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

**Exodus 28** *Aaron and his sons are called to be priests unto God. The priesthood under Aaron was called the Levitical priesthood because Aaron was from the tribe of Levi. The priesthood served God in the temple and throughout Israel. This is a great chapter to go read about the priestly garments. All of them had great significance. I want to focus on one part of the priestly garments this morning and that is the breastplate they wore.*

**Exodus 28:15** “Fashion a breastplate for making decisions (or for judgment)—the work of skilled hands. Make it like the ephod (which was a linen apron a part of the priestly garments):

**Exodus 28:21** There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

**Exodus 28:29** “Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place (the most holy and intimate part of the tabernacle where the High Priest would stand before God ), **he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastplate** of decision/judgment as a continuing memorial (reminder) before the LORD.

In God’s love and mercy, while Israel was stained by sin, God made a way not only for their sins to be forgiven but for the entire nation to be represented before Him in His presence. He continually wanted His people before Him in the Holy Place so He ensured they were represented on the breastplate of the High Priest. Even their sin didn’t change God’s affection and longing for them to be near. So He initiated this process and system of a priesthood and established a way for people to come to Him. This is what God always wanted, intimacy with a pure people, sons and daughters, a family, marked by His presence, to dwell with, bless, to expand His Kingdom with! This is what was on God’s heart in the establishment of the priesthood then and it’s still on his heart now!

From what we’ve read so far we know that the function of the high priests included representing the people of Israel, to God and offering sacrifices to God for their sins.

What a powerful, sacred and significant responsibility. But there was a major issue. It wasn’t sufficient. This priesthood failed. It wasn’t enough to purify the people, to make them holy. Even the high priests who made the sacrifices for the people’s sins, were sinful themselves. All of the high priests of the old testament died! God knew that model, the high priests and priesthood of the old testament was temporary, a shadow of what was to come!

**Hebrews 7:23-27 (NIV)** Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; **24** but **because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25** Therefore he is able to save completely<sup>[c]</sup> those who come to

**God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26** Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. **27** Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. **He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28** For the law (old testament) appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath (the new covenant), which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

What do we learn from this? The old testament priesthood was temporary, Jesus' priesthood is permanent and eternal. The high priest in the old testament represented one nation Israel, but Jesus our Great High Priest represents all of humanity, every nation, people, tribe and tongue. Where sacrifices for sin by the old testament high priests had to be presented day after day, Jesus presented Himself as the ultimate sacrifice one time, once and for all!

Jesus did not stop being our high priest after His death and resurrection but even now He continues to intercede for us according to verse 25.

In and through His body He at one time offered up as High Priest the only worthy and sufficient sacrifice, HIMSELF! He is our high priest and He is our sacrificial lamb!

**1 Cor. 5:7b** For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

**John 10:17-18** The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. **18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

There was no high priest as worthy as Jesus and there was no sacrifice as worthy as Jesus!

We get to continue to receive Jesus as our High Priest who continues to intercede for us, think about what that means. Jesus is declaring our salvation, our righteousness, our holiness and redemption casting down every accusation and lies of the enemy! I believe the very reality that Jesus pierced the sky, ascended to heaven, and as a human being right now is seated at the Father's right hand, representing us to the Father and being our eternal sacrifice, by His very existence, He is interceding for humanity. His presence alone is standing on behalf of all who've put their trust in Him, ensuring that all of humanity through faith in Him, will have access to the eternal destiny of being one with God as He is now and has always been!

Our priestly activity is meant to be a reflection of what we receive from Jesus our High Priest. Prioritizing the practice of thanking Jesus for His sacrifice and what it has purchased for you and I is how we steward the invitation of continually receiving Him.

How can we confidently participate in releasing priestly activity we haven't first received and or that we've stopped receiving we can't! Forgiveness, expressing love and showing mercy are priestly activities that Jesus invites us to join Him in releasing but always as a result of receiving them from Him continually!

**Matthew 10:7-8** As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' **8** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,<sup>[a]</sup> drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

**1 John 4:19** We love (Him) because he first loved us.

THERE IS NO PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST!!

### **RESPONDING TO JESUS AS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST**

**Hebrews 9:11-15 (NIV)** But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation (speaks of the heavenly & eternal tabernacle of God). **12** He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; **but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.** **13** The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. **14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!** **15** For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, **that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.**

The sacrifices of the old testament high priests could only clean the people outwardly. What Jesus did was not limited to the outside but it brought cleansing to the inside of us! The ministry of the old testament high priests was limited to the earthly realm, and the earthly tabernacle. The ministry of Jesus on the cross, offering Himself for us, reached the heavenly realm, the most holy place where God dwells! And now because Jesus has inwardly cleansed us from acts that lead to death, sin itself, we can **respond** by and serve the living God!



**Hebrews 10:1-14 (NIV)** The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. **2** Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? **For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.**

The priestly ministry under the law could have never brought inward cleansing for us!! God's people remained sinful even with the sacrifices under the law but Jesus alone apart from the law (Romans 3:21) revealed the righteousness of God, made us righteous, through His death and resurrection, so we can inwardly know that we are clean and respond by worshiping and serving God!

The work of cleansing is the joyful job of our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, He is the one who said in **John 15:3-4** to His disciples "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Do you see the order, Jesus spoke over them, He declared that they were clean and because He speaks what is true and He only speaks what comes from the Father, He immediately invited them to abide.

Jesus understood that it was the word of God, the pure, true, declaration of the Father's heart, that cleanses and sanctifies the soul that is surrendered and submitted to Him, dislodging lies and removing the stain of past sin. It's why He prayed the priestly prayer of John 17. The last thing He did in His earthly ministry before going to the cross, wasn't teaching another sermon, wasn't performing another miracle, but it was prayer, interceding for His disciples and all who would follow Him as a result of their testimony, which is us!

Jesus prayed to the Father in **John 17:17** that after He ascended that the Father would continue to sanctify us by His word which is always true! If we would simply believe!

*\*\*\*I want to stop to acknowledge that for some of you, you can't fully embrace the prayer of Jesus in John 17, the voice and word of the Father's truth, because the voices of past rejection, neglect, abuse, trauma, self-hatred, are louder! I want to stop right now and pray for your ears to be opened to the voice of the Father unlike ever before, to hear His truth over you and believe!*

What is the evidence of our belief in the truth that has been declared over us? Abiding, staying in intimate fellowship with Jesus our Great High Priest who cleanses us. More

times than not if you withdraw from God, are distant from Him, and are not living in intimacy with Him it is because somewhere along the way you began to feel unclean again. Either because of sin you committed or sin committed against you by someone else. I am here to tell you don't wait another day, but right here right now decide you are going to let the word of truth wash over you, repent if you need to repent, confess if you need to confess, forgive those who have wronged you, knowing that you have been forgiven, so you can come back into alignment with the cleansing already made available for you!

**1 John 1:6-7** If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

With this truth confession becomes something we look forward to, we come running to the throne, we boldly approach the throne of grace because we know who our Great High Priest is and what He has done for us, and all we need to come out of darkness and into the light is believe in His word over us! And what is the substance of what He speaks over us, the blood He shed for us (**Heb. 12:24**). The blood of Jesus speaks a better word, the blood silences every lie and accusation, the blood speaks: forgiven, clean, holy, pure, accepted, beloved, FREE!!!

What is our response? I want to take you back to Hebrews 10:2 **For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.**

Our response is living lives free from guilt! How do you know you've responded to what Jesus has done as our Great High Priest. At any moment, day or night, you can stop, close your eyes, search your conscience and find the absence of guilt for the sins you've committed because you are convinced of the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice for you! Once you've felt that you won't tolerate going a second without repenting and confessing your sin to the Lord if you fall. And in doing so experience the absence of guilt again. We are meant to be walking billboards that testify that living free from sin, free from guilt, free from shame is a real thing, and when we live that way the fragrance and glory of Jesus our Great High Priest is put on display.

I don't know what your new year's resolutions are, but I dare you to include resolving to live 2024 in the awareness of how clean you've been made through the blood of Jesus, and no longer tolerating guilt for what He has washed you from!

Practically I want to encourage each of you to make a decision to receive communion more regularly even at home! This is a part of what continuing to receive and respond to Him looks like. Saying yes to His invitation to come to His table where He as our High Priest serves us His bread and His cup, His body and blood

**1 Cor. 11** For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks [g]in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the [h]Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many [i]sleep.

The invitation to examine ourselves is an invitation to expose anything impure and unclean we've committed and let in and to come back into alignment with the cleansing He's guaranteed eternal access to for those who come to Him in faith!

Jesus' sacrifice doesn't remind us of our sins, it reminds us that we are free from sin. The old testament sacrifices didn't do that.

**Hebrews 10:3-14** But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. **4** It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (refuse to go back to the law). **5** Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; **6** with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. **7** Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, my God.'" **8** First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them"—though they were offered in accordance with the law. **9** Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. **10 And by that will (the new covenant), we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

**11** Day after day every priest (old testament) stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But when this priest (Jesus Christ) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat

down at the right hand of God, **13** and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. **14 For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.**

How do we respond? We acknowledge the finished work of Jesus and we anticipate the day that his enemies will be made His footstool. We live holy before Him because we actually can now! We walk in the purity and freedom that His sacrifice has purchased.

As a priesthood, before we are going to talk about all of the other activities we are called to, I want to make it clear that abiding with Jesus, ministering to Him, through gratitude and adoration for who He is and what He has done, while living holy lives should be our priority. When we truly grasp the **revelation** of who He is as our High Priest and learn to continually **receive** Him as our High Priest this will be the response.

**1 Peter 1:5-6** but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, **16** because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

THERE IS NO HOLY PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT A HOLY GREAT HIGH PRIEST!!

Holy living. Responding to the ministry of Jesus, our Great High Priest that removes guilt from our conscience and empowers us to live for God, serving and worshiping Him with our whole lives.

What if this was the year you resolved to pursue this revelation that Jesus is your Great High Priest more than ever before. I believe it will bless every part of your life, your walk with God, your relationships, your family, your calling, career, goals and dreams! Let's pursue this together! Next week we are going to continue to unpack the beauty that Jesus is not only our Great High Priest, but He is the Priest-King Zechariah prophesied about would one day come!

## **OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS ALSO THE KING**

**Zechariah 6:12-13** Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch (the Messiah), and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. **13** It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. **And he<sup>13</sup> will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.**

**The altar call focus will be praying to see Jesus as our Great High Priest, receiving His cleansing and freedom!**