



Sermon Notes, 17 January 2021

Term Spring 2021

Series 1 Peter (Trust, Surrender, Confidence)

Gatherings: the 11, the 6

Title 1 Peter 2:13-25 – Spiritual Sacrifices

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Reading – 1 Peter 2:13-25

Last week, we saw that Peter calls those who put their faith in Jesus a holy and royal priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:4,5)

The NT uses the word *priest* in only 3 ways, referring to

- the Jewish priesthood [now historical]
- the perfect priesthood of Jesus
- the priesthood of all believers

What are the consequences for the way we see church if everyone is a priest?

What are the dangers for those denominations which use the word 'priest' of only a select few?

What if success for a church lay not in packing the building with people who come to observe today's priesthood (in the widest possible meaning: clergy, staff etc.) at work ... but rather in how many priests it enables, equips and empowers to be Jesus in the world beyond?

In Ephesians 4, Paul tells us what Jesus gave to the church, and it wasn't priests!

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

'Spiritual Sacrifices' can stand as a heading above all that the New Testament calls us to be and do: it is, quite simply, the way we live. For example, *Honour one another above yourselves* (Romans 12:10) is just one among many. We can't do that without an attitude of sacrifice.

In this passage, Peter calls us to

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor (17).

What does it mean for me to

- Respect everyone ... a person living on the streets ... someone who radically disagrees with my worldview or understanding of ethics?
- Love the family of believers ... the word here is *agapate*, the NT's word for self-sacrificing love?
- Fear God ... is my understanding and approach to God worthy of his Majesty and Goodness?
- Honour the Emperor ... do I honour secular authority? Or am I caught up in the cynicism, mistrust and criticism common to much of society?

Peter is clear that one spiritual sacrifice we are called to make is the way we deal with suffering. He points us to Jesus as our pattern and model (22,23). I wonder what this says to me about the way I respond to the [relatively minor] suffering I have experienced as a result of the Pandemic.

For prayer: intentionally and prayerfully and gratefully work through the words of v. 25

For 'you were like sheep going astray,' but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.