



LIVING BEYOND MYSELF

THE SCROLLS

This week:
What? Me a Priest?
For the week of 10/9/2005

Welcome to our second week of **Living Beyond Myself**. These Scrolls are designed to work in unison with our Sunday services to maximize what God wants to teach us during these 4 weeks. They are best used with a **Spiritual Life Notebook**, which is available Sunday mornings in October at FBC. A notebook provides a place for you to answer the questions in the Scrolls, record insights from Sunday morning messages and write down the things that God is teaching you. For more information about using the Spiritual Life Notebook, see the insert that came with your notebook. These Scrolls and companion small group materials are also available online at www.fbcdavis.org.

A Bold Attack

He was deeply concerned about what the church in Europe had become. It had become "top heavy." In his opinion, a small group of religious elite had seized power and was implementing their wishes. He pondered and prayed about what he should do. Then on October 31st 1517, Martin Luther took action. In a very dangerous move, he approached the church door in Wittenburg and nailed a 95 point plan of reform directed at church leaders whom he felt had gone astray. One of his chief complaints was the claim by the leaders that they had special privileges with God that the average Christian did not have. He later wrote:

"In His own person, Christ is indeed the only High Priest between God and us all. Nevertheless, He has bestowed this name on us, too, so that we who believe in Him are also priests... Each one, according to his calling and position, obtains the right and power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him... every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and whenever necessary."

Luther's goal was to restore to average Christians all the privileges and God-given responsibilities that the New Testament so emphatically proclaimed. It almost cost him his life. In recent times, the church in America has fallen prey to an error somewhat like the one Luther confronted. It has been suggested that the church has become "consumer oriented" and gradually shifted into a mindset whereby paid professionals do the ministry for us. The result is that we miss out on much of what God has for us. Perhaps you have never thought of yourself as a priest. But, if you are a believer in Christ, that is exactly what you are!

Monday – What? Me a Priest?

"The church, as it was meant to be, is a collection of priests who serve together, meeting the practical and spiritual needs of people, both inside and outside the family of God...an equitable contribution is expected from every person." Bill Hybels

1. What is the first image that comes to mind when you hear the word "priest"? Does this term carry positive or negative connotations? Read Revelation 1:4-6. To whom is this written? Who makes priests? Who are the priests?
2. John says that Christ has made us into priests for a purpose. What is that purpose?

Living Beyond Myself – In the Old Testament, "priests" acted as liaisons or mediators between people and God. They had special privileges and responsibilities that came with their title. When Jesus came on the scene he changed all that. What do you think of the fact that the Bible calls *you* a priest? What difference could this make in your day today?

Tuesday – It's Not About Me

"The New Testament did not abolish the priesthood, it abolished the laity." Ravi Zacharias

1. Read 1 Peter 2:4-12 and write down the verses that refer to the "priesthood" in your notebook. Note the descriptive words Peter links with the term priesthood (v. 5, 9)? Why do you think he uses these?
2. How are these verses similar to John's assertion in Revelation 1:4-6? What actions accompany being a priest?

Living Beyond Myself – Many have accused American Christianity of being consumer oriented. They call it "Consumer Christianity." The New Testament clearly suggests that approaching our faith with such a consumer or me-first mindset will never work. The question arises, "Do I come to church (or my small group) mainly for what I can get out of it?" How does your identity as a priest help you to answer this question?

Wednesday – Privileged Access!

1. In the Old Testament, the priests enjoyed unique privileges in their relationship with God (Numbers 3:6-13). Read 1 Peter 2:9 and Hebrews 10:19-25. What do these tell us about our privileges as priests?
2. In 1 Peter 2:9, we read a glorious description of the church: "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God." How does the description of us in 1 Peter 2:9 help you to understand the enormous privilege that Hebrews 10 says is ours?

Living Beyond Myself – Spend some time in prayer after taking a moment to quiet your mind (perhaps reread Hebrews 10:19-22). Acknowledge the awesome holiness of his presence and the confident access he has granted you.

Thursday – Priesthood as Responsibility

"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none (and) a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." M. Luther

1. The idea of being a priest carries with it immense privileges and wonderful responsibilities. Hebrews 10:19-25 expands on both. In your Spiritual Life Notebook, make note (in two columns) the privileges and responsibilities afforded us in this passage because of our priestly status won for us by Christ.
2. The New Testament "**one anothers**" give us a rich picture of our priestly role with each other. Even a quick look at one New Testament book like Romans (Romans 12:10; 13:8; 15:7, 14; 16:16) begins to give us an idea of the opportunity we have to serve one another as priests. Which of these could you do today?

Living Beyond Myself – Who do you know at FBC (or elsewhere) that needs to be spurred on to love and good deeds? How can you help?

Friday – Practicing Your Priesthood

1. At this point in the week, we might all be asking, "Just how do I begin to act like a priest?" Read 1 Peter 4:7-11. What insights does this passage have for us?
2. Acting as a priest on behalf of another involves using the gifts that God has given us. What does this passage say about the strength or power from which we serve? What is the ultimate aim of serving others?
3. **Living Beyond Myself** – Is there someone or some group that needs your giftedness right now. Perhaps you know someone who needs your encouragement. Or your hospitality. Ask God to show you how you can practice your priesthood today.

Weekend - Use the weekend to review the spiritual insights you have written in your Spiritual Life Notebook.