

The Duties of The Priest

Part 8

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1Peter 2:9)

The Christian family is a light for the community around them to know God and follow His ways. The family is a small unit in the society and in the church but it has great impact to the life of the people around them. One family can make a great difference for God, and God will enable the family that honours him to stand boldly and face the world with uncompromising message.

God led His people out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses who took them across the red sea and they got into the desert of Sinai. At Kadesh Baarnea, ***“The LORD said to Moses, ² “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.” ³ So at the LORD’s command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites. ²¹ So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. ²² They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) ²³ When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. ²⁴ That place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. ²⁵ At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. ²⁶ They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. ²⁸ But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.” (Numbers 13:1-3,21-29)*** The report that they gave melted the heart of the congregation and discouraged them greatly, ***“³² And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ³³ We saw the Nephilim there (the***

descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” (Numbers 13:32-33)

But, ***“⁶ Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸ If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.” (Numbers 14:6-9)***

Therefore God decided and inform them through Moses the following: ***“³⁰ Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.” (Numbers 14:30)*** ***“⁴² not one except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.” (Numbers 32:12)***

Joshua as man of faith, and obedient to the LORD and being Moses aide he was finally chosen by the LORD to become the successor of Moses and to lead the people into the Promised Land. ***“¹⁸ So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. ¹⁹ Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. ²⁰ Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. ²¹ He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in.” ²² Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. ²³ Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.” (Numbers 27:18-23)***

Joshua truly led the people victoriously across the Jordan into the Promised Land, and he fought the LORD’S battles and he won. He took many cities, defeated many kings and conquer almost all the allocated land that he ought to win for God. In his leadership he showed integrity and he obeyed fully the whole instructions of the LORD that He had given through Moses.

Joshua not only he was a man for war and fight but he was also a man who care for a family. In His farewell speech with the Israelites to follow the

LORD wholeheartedly he challenged them with this statement, *“¹⁴ Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.* ¹⁵ *But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”* (Joshua 24:14-15) Joshua faced the people of God to throw away the idols that were in the mid of them. And he confidently told them, that if they are not willing to serve God then they need to choose which god and idols they will serve. If you don't chose to serve God then you are choosing to serve Satan. Joshua told them *“then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.”* The gods your forefathers served beyond the River, this represent the old religion that they or you were before you come to know God and follow Christ. Or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living this represent the gods of the world, (the love of money, lust, power, worldly things, etc) and that what most of the people worshipping today and that what the word of God admonish us, *“¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”* (1John 2:15-17) If you start to love the things of the world then that is idol worship. So Joshua was aware of all that and he faced the whole congregation of the people of God.

And he also told them the following, *“But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”* And that had the following meaning for Joshua and for us today:

1- Joshua's family was not following the old religious idol worship faith: Our families should leave the old religion and follow God and His word wholeheartedly.

2- Joshua's family was not following the god of the world around them: Joshua led his own family away from the influence of the practices of the non believers' people around them. We need to do the same for our families, we should protect our children from the worldly things and the evil that is so prevalent around us. We should shelter them and protect them from the evil that may come to them from evil people, friends, TV and satellite programs, etc.

3- Joshua was realizing the great impact of the righteous family on the life of the church: He challenged the whole community of the Israelites to follow the example of his family to live in holiness and to serve God and follow Him wholeheartedly. We should realize that our families are to be living holy life to challenge others to do the same as they are seeing the blessing of God that he pour on us and on our children as we continue to walk in His ways.

4- Joshua built up his full trust in God as he did his part to lead his family in holiness: Joshua as he was caring for his family and his household and leading them through the ways of God that was his expression of his full trust in the LORD. And that obedient faith built in him the confidence in the LORD that even if everyone will leave him, that will not be a matter to him, because he and his family with the presence of God in their lives will still have the impact and able to carry the truth of the message of God to the people around them and to the next generation.

The same for us now, as we endeavour to obey God by caring for our families and raising our children in the fear of God and walking in His truth, then we are making a big thrust in the community around us; to the community of believers by setting them a model example that they can see and follow, and to the community of the non believers by showing them the true image of Christianity, and attracting them to the grace of God by the holy life we live and lead our families.

My Dear and Beloved: Your family might be composed of only few members, but will have great impact as you walk faithfully with God and abide with His word and decrees. As well as with your family you can stand firm and challenge the people around you with uncompromising gospel message to follow God and walk in faithfully His ways. Your faithfulness to care for your family is a source of blessing to you because God count more on that to speak and show His qualities and image to the world. God is counting on you with that matter, therefore be responsible and stand firm and do your part for God as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal. Lord I realize now from your word the value of my family that you entrust to me to care. Lord I commit myself fully to care for my family and raising up my children in the fear of you. Lord help me and provide for me so I will continue to persevere in doing that, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.