

The Duties of The Priest

The Mission and the Work of The Church

Part 25

“But you are the 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.” (1 Peter 2:9)

As royal priests serving the Lord in the places that He had put us among people and the society that we are there to live with, He gave us another responsibility is to pray and to intercede for the life of the souls of the people who are around us. We are to be filled with compassion and pain toward the lost who do not know Christ knowing that if they will not meet Christ while they are on earth then they have no place in heaven for them. From this point we are motivated to pray and to intercede for the lost souls who do not know God and His Christ. As well as we are called to intercede and pray for the body of Christ and especially those who disobey God and fall into sin.

The Bible is full of Examples of those who are full of compassion that prayed to the LORD and asked Him to forgive people their sins while they continued to live their lives unto God and to reach the people with the message of God.

1- Abraham: He prayed and intercede in behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah as we can read here: ²⁰ *Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” ²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” ²⁶ The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.” ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.” ³⁰ Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” ³¹ Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.” ³² Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” ³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.” (Genesis 18:20-33) Abraham he prayed and asked God to pardon, therefore the LORD remembered him and brought Lot out of Sodom and saved him. “So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.” (Genesis 19:29)*

2- Moses: He prayed and intercede for the people when they sinned against the LORD and made the golden calf: ³⁰ *The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” ³¹ So Moses went back to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” ³³ The LORD replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. ³⁴ Now go,*

lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.” ³⁵ And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.” (Exodus 32:30-35) As Moses prayed the LORD relented from destroying all the people, but he punished those who sinned.

3- Moses: ¹⁸ *Then once again I fell prostrate before the LORD for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the LORD’s sight and so arousing his anger. ¹⁹ I feared the anger and wrath of the LORD, for he was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again the LORD listened to me. ²⁰ And the LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too.” (Deuteronomy 9:18-20) So as Moses prayed and fast for Aaron who led the people in wrong direction, we need to do the same for those church leaders, teachers and pastors who does not teach correctly, compromise and cause people to live in sin*

4- Samuel: He prayed for the people who committed sin against God by requesting Him to appoint king over them. Samuel did not fail to pray and to admonish the people as he said to them: *“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.” (1Samuel 12:23)*

5- Samuel also prayed and mourned for Saul who disobeyed God’s word and instructions as we can read here: *“The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.” (1Samuel 16:1) God responded to Samuel’s prayer by raising David to replace King Saul. So the same for us, as we continue to pray and intercede for the backsliders, God will replace them by raising another people instead of them to serve Him with us.*

Moses and Samuel as intercessor on behalf of the sinners is well known in the bible and that what God testified about them when He was speaking to Jeremiah about the rebellious people that he was praying for as we can read in *Jeremiah 15:1 “Then the LORD said to me: “Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go.”* The LORD was so angry with the people, but Jeremiah was praying earnestly to the LORD to forgive and pardon. Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet, *“Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.” (Jeremiah 9:1) What we learn here from the example of Jeremiah that the more the people are rebellious the more we are called to pray and intercede for them before the LORD.*

My dear and beloved: As royal priests we are called to intercede for the lost and for those who went away from the LORD and His Church as the LORD is looking for someone to pray with pain and compassion and grieve for those who went astray from the LORD, *“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.” (Ezekiel 22:30)*

My prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to pray and intercede for the lost souls, the sinners, the backsliders and the church leaders who encourage people to continue to live in sin. Lord cleanses my heart from anger toward those people and fill me with grief and compassion toward them all so that I will continue to intercede for them and to reach them with the message, this I pray in Jesus name, Amen.*