

Exodus 29:1-46

“Set apart to serve”

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Intro.

The 29th chapter of Exodus is God's instructions for the ordination of His servants at the tabernacle. Again notice how exact God is in what He tells Moses to do in ordaining the Priests. As we read this chapter Moses becomes a type of Jesus as He, through the ordination ceremony equips Aaron and his sons for service. My first reaction to this is to think of the awesome privilege it is to serve and what promises I would be making to the Lord, as I was about to serve Him. If you have ever gone to a dedication serve, then you know that those that come forward do so promising to do better. But in this dedication service though the priests come forward it is God who does everything for the priests. This fact is clearly seen in this chapter by counting the 43 times the words, “*You shall do to*” appear. These words speak of what God was having Moses to do on behalf of Him to Aaron and his sons. God is telling Moses that he has already done everything necessary for the priests to serve. This ordination was to remind them that they stand before God and the people not based upon what they have done or will ever do but rather on what God has done.

II.) Vs. 1-3 What I've done for them

Vs. 1-3 The ceremony that was to be carried out was quite elaborate and took a week to complete. In Lev. Chapter eight we see it mentioned again but here we are told of the purpose, “to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests.” The ingredients that were to be provided for the service were, one young bull, two rams without blemish, unleavened breads and cakes.

The priest's primary responsibility was to serve the Lord and the way in which he did so was to recognize that his whole life was set apart for that purpose. What we fail to realize ourselves is that you and I are called to the same thing. Our calling is to serve the Lord, now the location of where you do that may be different. We are far too much inclined to think of Pastors as the only ones who have a call on their lives but we all have a call to serve the Lord.

The over view of this ceremony.

- a. 28:1 Aaron and his sons were “*taken*” from among the nation.
- b. 29:4 They were “*brought*” to the door of the tabernacle.
- c. 29:4 They were “*washed*” there at the door.
- d. 29:5-9 They were “*clothed*” with the garments described in chapter 28.
- e. 29:7, 21 They were “*anointed*” with oil and blood.
- f. 29:10-14 They were “*forgiven*” by the sacrifice of the bull upon the altar.
- g. 29:15-22 They were “*dedicated*” by the sacrificing of the two rams.
- h. 29:23-28 Their hands were “*filled*” and they were “*fed*”.

The outcome of all of this was that in verse 44 God declares them as been set apart. In all of the weeklong ceremony they did absolutely nothing! Not once will you read in this passage of Aaron and his sons doing anything rather it is all being done to them. ***They were called to serve but before they ever serve they are shown the basis of their service, what the Lord has done!***

This flies in the face of all the normal thinking that Pastors or leaders have done something to get to where they are. The consecration of you and I, has nothing to do with what we have done. It has everything to do with us appropriating what God has done. All that we do is rest upon the finished work of Christ. Titus 3:5-6 (N.L.T.) says, “*He saved us, not because of the*

good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did.” Not once do we read that they promised anything, instead they went through a ceremony that was designed to show them that they were to serve the Lord and the nation based upon what God had done for them! Folks, what ever else you will discover about this ceremony do not forget this point, ***we never come to God based upon what we do, who we are, or what we promise in the future. No we come to Him empty, just as we are and allow him to do everything. It is only in this that we are set apart for service!***

III.) Vs. 4-9 Washed, clothed & anointed

As I look at this I see six distinct aspects of this ordination and all of them point to what Christ has done for us as well as remind us of how we should respond towards the Lord and others.

Vs. 4 Remember that this was a public ceremony and the location of this took place at the door of the tabernacle, so it took place before they entered on behalf of the people.

1.) **Vs. 4 They were striped down and washed!** Now when you take a bath or shower you do so because you are dirty and the water takes away the dirt. In the Bible sin is depicted as dirt or defilement. In 1 Cor. 6:11 we read that *“now our sins have been washed away, and you have been set apart for God. You have been made right with God because of what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done for you.”* When Aaron and his sons were washed all over it was symbolic of the complete cleansing of the Lord. It is interesting to note that this was only done once at the priest’s ordination after this they need only to wash their hands and feet. Remember the words of Jesus to Peter at his reluctance at having Jesus wash his feet? Jesus said this, *“A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you are clean.”* Once Jesus has cleansed us all that we need to make sure of is what we do (our hands) and where we go (our feet) are washed through the word of God. What response would you have in being stripped down and bathed by someone else in front of thousands of people? In a word, “humbling”! Think about that for a moment and it makes since, God wanted these priests to remember two things before they went in to serve in the tabernacle.

- 1.) They were washed from sin. Not by themselves but rather by the work of another!
- 2.) They were not cleansed from sin from by their own goodness. No they were laid naked before one who knows them completely, so they ought to always be humble as they go into the tabernacle.

Oh may we never forget the truths of this in our lives! Folks, we are no better than anyone else in fact we know our own unworthiness better than anyone else, thus we ought to serve each other not through, *“selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”* We stand, before the Lord as cleansed sinners, so our attitude ought to always be one of humility!

2. Vs. 5-6, 8-9 They were clothed: Now notice here two things:

- a.) They did not clothe themselves they were instead clothed by Moses. We are told in 2 Cor. 5:21 that God made Jesus *“who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* You see God has clothed us in Christ.
- b.) The clothes they wore were not their own! They were the clothes designed by God. So not only do we not dress ourselves we are not dressed in our own clothes or righteousness. If we did it would be filthy rags.

When you do some good work for the Lord you can say, I did not do this God did and further more what was good was not mine but rather His! Clothes speak of the character of the believer and what is good about us has everything to do with what He has done. Paul admonishes the believers of this fact in Phil. 4:8 when he says; *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.”*

3.) Vs.7, 21 They were anointed: They were anointed with two things, the oil and the blood. Further more they were anointed with the same two items that tabernacle was anointed with. Thus the servant was forever linked with the place of service.

- a. Vs.7 The oil: In chapter 30:23-25 we are told of what the anointing oil was to be made out of, “myrrh, cinnamon, cane, cassia and olive oil”. This would have been very fragrant oil. It was poured over the head so that it dripped off of the beard and onto the breastplate with the engraved stones of the tribes of the nation. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and we read in 2 Cor. 2:14 that, *“God always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.”* That *through us* is the work of the Holy Spirit in your life diffusing the knowledge of Jesus every where we go specifically those whom God has called us to serve.
- b. Vs. 21 The blood: What makes this interesting is where the blood was to be placed on the priests, right ear, thumb of their right hand and the big toe of their right foot. God was giving them three vivid pictures of what He was anointing through the blood of the innocent ram. He was setting apart *“who they listen too, what they put their hands to work on, and where they were to walk.”* God wanted to remind them that they must always *listen to His word, do His work, and walk in His way.*

IV.) Vs. 10-21 Forgiven, dedicated and marked

4.) Vs. 10-14 They new they were forgiven of the past presence and future through the death of an innocent victim. Here we are told of a bull being offered as a sin offering on their behalf. This is the first time we read of Aaron and his sons doing anything, they were to place their hands on the head of the bull thus identifying themselves with the innocent victim. In fact, they would repeat two more times with the rams. The animals had to be chosen from the best that they had to offer and they had to be in the prime of their lives. They then symbolically

transferred their sin to the bull, this would be repeated each day for a week, (verse 36-37). It was like saying, *“I have failed to give you my best, so this animal is dying for my failure.”* We too need to realize that we fail and based upon His shed blood are forgiven. When they placed their hands on that bull confessing their sins the bull was going to die because of their failure. Then they would see it butchered before their eyes, blood placed upon the altar. The flesh of the animal was taken outside the camp and burned. For the next seven days the same thing would take place. I’m a failure and my failure has cost the life of the only begotten Son that’s the only basis of forgiveness today!

5.) Vs. 15-21 They were completely dedicated to the Lord through the death of another.

Here we see that the animal was completely offered to the Lord. This is a picture of total surrender but again it is of another’s surrender on our behalf. Again our complete dedication to the Lord is because His Son has completely dedicated Himself to us! It is interesting that the burning of these animals was not seen as destruction but rather a sweet aroma before the Lord.

V.) Vs. 22-37 A life of celebration

6.) Vs. 22-37 They were fed while they had empty hands. The last thing they had to do they has to eat that which had given its life for their nourishment. Notice first that they came in with empty hands, that is to say that they had nothing to offer and what they had to offer first came from the Lord. So they would offer it back to the Lord in thanksgiving. Once it was waived before the Lord the fat, two kidneys and the right thigh was placed upon the altar and burnt while the priests sat down and ate the meal before the Lord. In a way they were sharing a meal with the Lord so fellowship was being provided by way of what another had given. You and I enjoy fellowship with God because of what His Son has sacrificed. For a week all of this was repeated, the tabernacle became home for the priests as they ate with the Lord each day and each day saw the animals sacrificed for their failure.

VI.) Vs. 38-46 A life of service

Vs. 38-43 During the weeklong ordination the priests stayed in the tabernacle, (Lev. 9:33-36).

When the week ended they were put right into service. There service was to offer two lambs a day one in the morning and one in the evening. So everyday started and ended with the Lord recognizing that it was because of the death of an innocent lamb that their sins were forgiven. In placing flour, oil, wine and grain they were recognizing that their sustenance came through the Lords provision and sacrifice. We to need to see that all of everyday belong to the Lord as He has provided all that we need to sustain our lives!

Vs. 44-46 God leaves no doubt as to His acceptance of their service as they applied His provisions! Folks, the work has all been done by Him all we have to do is apply it to our lives.

The reasons for setting us apart is so *“I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their*

God.” Also He wants them to realize that He has been faithful so they can continue to trust in Him. May we continue to praise the Lord for all that He has done for us!