

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: March 13, 2011

## Remain True to the Calling of God on Your Life

by Dan Trygg

"What shall I do with you? ...For your loyalty is like a morning cloud, and like the dew which goes away early. ...For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" Hosea 6:4,6

"My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him as an object of reverence; so he revered Me and stood in awe of My name. True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned back many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But as for you, you have caused many to stumble in the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant..." Malachi 2:5-8

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." Jude 20-25

Last week, we looked at Heb. 13:7, where we were encouraged to think about those who had influenced us toward God, evaluate the outcome of their lives, and imitate what was "the faith" exemplified in their lives. What about you? Do you see that *you* are given an opportunity to be an influencer of others? In fact, God *has called you* to do just that. **Every one of us is called to be a "priest for the King"** (I Pet. 2:9). Every one of us is called to "disciple all nations" (Matt. 28:19,20). Malachi 2 was referring to a covenant that God made with Phineas, the grandson of Aaron, whose blessings were extended to include the entire priestly family in Israel. Malachi, in a word of correction to the priests of his day who had wandered from their calling, made observations about godly priests in general. **Priests functioned in two ways.** They brought the needs of the people to God in prayer, and by offering their sacrifices, and they also brought the ways of God's provision and blessing for humanity to the people. **They operated as a go-between, telling God about people, and telling people about God.**

What can we learn about our role as priests for the King? **(1.) A good and effective priest needs to revere God and have intimacy with Him.** Out from this would come the blessings of life and peace, which God says were given by Him "as an object of reverence". What does this mean? Simply that *people should see something about us that is healthy and good* which they will respect. Vitality and peace were gifts that were visible signs of God's blessing to the priests. They were indicators of God's presence in that person's life, intended to give them credibility when they spoke about God, or life. These blessings were not only seen by others, but by the priests themselves, motivating them to a deeper sense of gratitude and awe. **(2.) A good and effective priest must have sound teaching to pass on to those whom he or she influences.** Paul said that you must "make every effort to show yourselves approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). *Being an accurate teacher does not come haphazardly. It requires study and effort.* Malachi observed that the priest "should preserve knowledge", meaning that they should faithfully convey the truth. They should not let it get watered down or mixed with worldly thoughts which are not consistent with God's ways. *People should find us to be a source of reliable instruction, because we have been made messengers of God to them.* The priests in Malachi's day had caused people to stumble by teaching them things that were not true. Notice that Malachi also said that "unrighteousness was not found on his lips". That means that *we need to clean up our speech, if we want to represent God.* Paul said the same thing in Eph. 4:29, "Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but *only* such a word as is good for building up others according to the present need, that it may give grace to those who hear." By their words *and their actions*, they had misrepresented and corrupted the covenant of God, and the result was that people went away after their own ideals. Have you ever thought of *yourself* as a messenger of God to those *you* hang out with? How are *you* doing? Are *you* faithfully, accurately and consistently conveying what is important and true about God to people? **(3.) A good and effective priest will influence many to turn away from sin and follow God.** The obvious thing about this is that *you can't do this by living a strictly private existence. We are called to come alongside other people and influence them toward God.* Jesus told the original disciples that *if* they would follow Him, He *would* make them fishers of men. That hasn't changed, or been modified for you or anybody else. To follow Jesus will bring us face to face with the responsibility and privilege of drawing, leading, attracting, and motivating others toward Christ.

As I said, **the priests of Malachi's day had wandered from their calling.** Like those of whom Hosea wrote, they had strayed from being faithful to their God, and what He expected of them, and instead had settled into

an empty, phony, compartmentalized religion. **They made the outward show of some religious practices, but, in truth, they were no longer "tracking with God". They were off on their own agenda.** They had become distracted from, and disloyal to, the covenant of God, as well as their own personal calling. They had faded away, like a morning cloud in the sunshine. *Their claims of allegiance to God became empty, as their life choices began to take them away from God's purposes for their lives.* God says, "I'm hearing your words, but *I'm watching your actions* to see what's real." Their actions had shown that they were unfaithful, ...that they had wandered away. **God is not impressed with religion. He wants people who are loyal to Him, and who will obey Him.**

This is not the end of the story. It never needs to be. God does not confront people with their disloyalty just to "beat them up". He points out our errors and our foolishness *so that we can make a course correction.* **If we have wandered, God is here to brush us off and help us get back on track.** He knows who we really are. **He knows what great and good things we can do in partnership with Him, if we will apply ourselves to do as He says.** He has even put a sense of that inside of us. We know there is more to us than what we've experienced. We know that there is more that God can do with us. *I have never met a Christian who did not sense a call to great things, significant things, within their heart.* **God wants us to discover and fulfill the unique potential He has built into each of us. We will do that as we faithfully, humbly, honestly walk with Him in His ways.**

Now, sometimes people get so beat up by life that they don't think about these inner nudges much anymore. Almost invariably, however, somewhere deep inside they *know* that God has gifted and called them to great things. Sometimes it seems that life has so many obstacles, and throws us so many curve balls, that we want to just quit trying. Well, that isn't just "life" doing that. You and I, **we have an enemy who is consciously and intelligently at work to oppose us, to discourage us, to block our way, to lead us astray, to lure us into sinful and destructive practices, to numb us out and to distract and debilitate us in any possible way, so that we do not fulfill God's calling on our life.** He is relentless. He attacks us from inside our heads, from the appetites of the body, from the world around us, from other people, etc. It can be discouraging just seeing what we are up against. BUT, the Bible tells us clearly that **"Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world"** (1 Jn. 4:4). **By faith, we can overcome.** There are twice as many angels as there are demons. God's Spirit is everywhere present and all-knowing, whereas Satan can only be in one place at a time (relying on communication from his spies for information), and is imperfect and limited in knowledge. AND we know that he is a defeated foe. Christ overcame him by His resurrection, and stripped him of his basis for power. He manipulates us by lies and deception, but when we stand up against him in the power and truth of God, he flees.

That brings us to the passage from Jude. **What Jude is describing in those last six verses of his short letter are a description of what we, as a church, gather to do.** *We meet together to build ourselves up in faith.* We meet to pray for one another in the Holy Spirit. We meet to keep ourselves in the love of God. And we do these things together waiting for, expecting, receiving, welcoming and holding onto the merciful acts of our Lord Jesus, which He does in our midst. *These "touches of God" propel us into the Kingdom-quality life which He desires us to experience.* **Why do we meet? First, because God has called us to meet in this manner, but, secondly, because we know we'd be "sitting ducks" out there without a community of believers watching out for us.** We have seen so much healing and support come one to another that we have become committed to the idea that we really do need each other, and show up here to serve and be served. Then, we are also busy showing mercy toward some who are hesitating or struggling in their spiritual journeys. We are doing what we can to rescue others, snatching them out of the fire. We are learning to respond to the opportunities God brings to us to help others, and to care for them when they join our group.

**The dynamics of healthy Body-life are meant to (1.) help us grow up in all aspects into Jesus; (2.) to grow up to maturity in our faith, our experience of God, and our character; and ultimately (3.) to equip us to do the work of service God has called us to do** (Eph. 4:11-16). We are still learning to do Body-life more effectively, but *one thing we are definitely committed to is seeing you become all that God wants you to be.* **God made you with a purpose in mind. He has gifted you and will enable you to do what only you and He can do together.** Believe me, it is *much more* than you or I could ever ask or imagine, and I can say that with confidence (Eph. 3:20). **He has given you gifts, and He also has a calling for you, a functional purpose, something He would like to do with your life.** No matter if you have wandered off the path in the past. God assures us that His gifts and calling are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). That means, He hasn't changed His mind, or given up on you. **Do you want to see what great things God can do with you? Then, go after God, learn His ways and His teachings, and do what He shows you to do. Don't get distracted.** Keep your heart and mind single, committed to God's best, whatever that may be. And, **keep those around you who can help you recharge and mature, and who will be committed to whatever God's will for you may be,** even if it leads you away from them. Check out this verse -- II Chronicles 16:9a -- He is *for* you.