



SECOND LAY TALK

TALK #3 PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Overview of All Talks

One message is delivered during The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience; it is communicated throughout the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You have been selected to deliver one of the 15 talks. In reality, you will deliver 1/15 of the Emmaus talk—one message, fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. In general, 2/3 of your presentation will come from the outlines; the remaining 1/3 will come from your original insights and personal experience.

The talks are sequenced in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims with the complete message of Emmaus. Do not try to cover more than your assigned topic. The expanded outline intends to provide a solid understanding of the material from which your talk will be developed. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the main points. *Neither outline is a script*; you will need to add personal examples to give life to the content and make it real to the hearers. Use visual aids to help convey the main points.

The Holy Spirit, as well as feedback from the team after your talk preview, will provide additional guidance for your unique presentation of this talk. Once you incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview, your presentation no longer belongs just to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

This presentation is allotted a maximum of 20 to 25 minutes. Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, good stewardship of time, and consideration for the hearers.

Overview for Speaker

The first talk, **PRIORITY**, challenged pilgrims to live up to their human potential—to rise above the animal world. The second talk, **PREVENIENT GRACE**, encouraged them to become aware of God's grace in their lives—in other words, to recognize that God calls them into a relationship in Christ. This talk invites pilgrims to participate in the active fellowship and ministry of the Christian community—the priesthood of all believers.

The word *priesthood* may bring negative associations to some Protestant minds. However, when properly understood, “the priesthood of all believers” expresses the core of the Protestant Reformation and has been reaffirmed among Roman Catholics through the action

of Vatican II. It means that all believers, laity and clergy alike, are called and given authority to be priests to one another—to serve as instruments of God's grace in other people's lives.

This presentation initiates the concept of the laity in action in and through the church. This concept is further developed in subsequent talks throughout the weekend.

This talk is scheduled for Friday at 1:45 p.m.

Expanded Outline: PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Opening Story (1-2 minutes)

Choose a story or experience from your own life that is brief, personal, and directly related to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult with the Lay Director or the Community Spiritual Director for assistance. A good introduction will engage the hearts, minds, and attention of pilgrims and move them into the theme of this talk. For example, you might do the following:

Option 1: Share a personal story of a time when you acted as a priest, or mediator of grace, to someone else.

Option 2: Move immediately to the content below.

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS.

I. Introduction

- A. Much of the world today has turned away from God. Evidence of this abounds. *[Give a few examples of dishonesty, violence, abuse, and inhumanity.]*
- B. While the situation today can be discouraging, the proper attitude of the Christian is not to complain but to seek solutions to problems and apply them.
- C. True happiness in humanity will be found only in God and the grace of Jesus Christ. This is not an oversimplification.
- D. Through salvation offered in Jesus Christ, God has bridged the gap of sin and death that separates people from God, and people from other people (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Moreover, God calls forth persons in each generation—people like you and me—to stand in the gap with Christ and bridge the separation between people and God where the grace of Christ needs to be made real.

II. What is the priesthood of all believers?

- A. The priesthood of all believers is a biblical concept that is important for understanding the church and the role of laity in the church. *All* believers, laity and clergy alike, are called and given authority to be priests to one another.

1. All believers are baptized in Christ and are one in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27-29).
 2. All are members in the body of Christ, every member is important, and no individual is more important than another (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
 3. This means the popular notion that clergy "do ministry" and laity consume it is wrong and unbiblical.
- B. What is a priest?
1. **A priest functions as God's representative in the world**, communicating God's word and shedding light on God's will in people's lives. A priest pronounces God's word of forgiveness and healing grace.
 2. **A priest also acts as the people's representative to God.** A priest intercedes for the people, going to God for the sake of the people, and offering sacrifices of love on their behalf.
 3. **A priest is not only the ordained clergy but anyone who has experienced the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of God**, and who helps others experience that grace as well.
- C. Jesus is the great high priest, the supreme mediator between God and people (Heb. 6:20; 7:23-28). In Christ, the separation between God and humanity is overcome.
1. Jesus is God's representative to us. He is the Word made flesh, mediating God's grace and truth to us.
 2. Jesus is our representative to God. He shared our humanity and lovingly sacrificed his life for our salvation. "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).
- D. All believers share in this priesthood—in partnership with Christ. The members of the Christian community are a royal priesthood. *[Read 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10.]*
1. As part of the priesthood of all believers, each of us is called to represent Christ and share his grace with others. Believers are called to bridge the separation between people and God, to stand in the gap with Christ.
 2. As part of the priesthood of all believers, we participate in Christ's ministry when we perform loving, sacrificial acts and share the good news of God's grace and forgiveness.
- E. Do not misunderstand: the phrase "priesthood of all believers" does not mean every person acts as his or her own priest. Rather, believers are given the authority of love to be priests to one another. Christ laid down his life for others to make the grace of God real; we too are called to do this.

- F. The church is the body of Christ—people who have experienced the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of God and have committed their lives to Christ and to his ministry of sharing God's grace with others.

III. The priesthood of believers has a mission.

[Give an example of how you have participated in the priesthood of all believers.]

- A. *To make Christ real for people*; to incarnate Christ in all circumstances of life: personal, family, work, leisure, etc. The church is not a building or an institution but a ministry of love. The church is the community of believers in ministry, the royal priesthood who are the body of Christ in the world. We do not just belong to the church; we *are* the church, wherever we are.
- B. *To be channels of God's grace*; to share love, acceptance, and forgiveness with other people. God has put in our hands the keys of the kingdom—the power to bind or unbind people (Matt. 16:19) by how we share or withhold the grace God has given us. To a person in pain, the words “God loves you,” “You are forgiven,” or a simple prayer can be a word from God. To someone drowning in difficulty, the touch of a hand on the shoulder, the company of a friend, or an offer of help can represent the presence of God.
- C. *To “proclaim the mighty acts of [God]”* (1 Peter 2:9) with all of our lives. This may mean reflecting light in the midst of darkness and promise in the midst of problems or overcoming deadly attitudes of narcissism, cynicism, fatalism, and hopelessness, which are widespread in our world today.

IV. Characteristics of the Mission

- A. *The mission is personal.* Start with yourself. Jesus struggled in the wilderness with his own temptations before setting out on his mission. Be authentic. Avoid religious language and stereotypes. Witness for Christ in a way that is natural to you.
- B. *It is spiritual.* The spiritual is not life after death but the wholeness of life in this world according to God's will. Jesus worked for God's deepest desire for people in this world: life in the fullness of God's grace and truth. This is our mission from God. The priest helps interpret God's will for people's lives.
- C. *It is service oriented.* We do not act on our own authority but as representatives of our Master. Our mission is to serve as Jesus served (John 13:12-15).
- D. *It is shared.* The mission requires teamwork. This includes laity and clergy working as partners. None of us can accomplish Christ's ministry alone. Jesus' first action was to call together twelve others to share his life and mission.

E. *It calls for our best.* This is not something we leave to the last; it calls for our best in attitude, ability, and action. Jesus Christ gave his best for us (John 3:16). In turn, we are called to give our best for Christ.

[Tell about a personal experience of functioning as God's representative to the world.]

V. Conclusion

God calls Christians today not to be passive participants in the problem but to be active partners in mission—to be the church. We have the opportunity to make our lives modern-day translations of the Gospels. Each of us has a personal and nontransferable mission: to make Christ real in our lives and share his grace so that others may know God's salvation. Let's be the church where we are and help resolve the crisis of spiritual leadership in our world.

De Colores!

Abbreviated Outline: PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS.

I. Introduction

- A. Evidence abounds of how today's world lives apart from God.
- B. The Christian seeks solutions to problems and applies them.
- C. True happiness will be found only in God's grace.
- D. Through salvation offered in Jesus Christ, God has bridged the separation between people and God.
- E. God calls Christians today to be part of the solution, to stand in the gap with Christ.

II. What is the priesthood of all believers?

- A. "Priesthood of all believers" means that all believers, laity and clergy alike, are called and given authority to be priests to one another.
- B. What is a priest?
 - 1. God's representative to people
 - 2. The people's representative to God
 - 3. Anyone who has experienced God's love, acceptance, and forgiveness and helps others experience grace.
- C. Jesus is the great high priest; he represents God to us and represents us to God.
- D. All believers share in this priesthood. The members of the Christian community are a royal priesthood. *[Read 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10.]*
- E. This does not mean every person acts as his/her own priest. Rather, we are to be priests to one another.
- F. This, then, is what it means to be the church: people who have experienced grace sharing that gift with others.

III. The priesthood of believers has a mission.

- A. To make Christ real for people in all circumstances.
- B. To be channels of God's grace; to share love, acceptance, and forgiveness with other people.
- C. To "proclaim the mighty acts of [God]" (1 Peter 2:9) with all of our lives.

IV. Characteristics of the Mission

- A. It is personal. Start with yourself. Be real.
- B. It is spiritual. The spiritual is not life after death but the wholeness of life in this world.
- C. It is service oriented. Our mission is to serve as Jesus served (John 13:12-15).
- D. It is shared. The mission requires teamwork. This includes laity and clergy working as partners.
- E. It calls for our best. Jesus gave his best for us (John 3:16). In turn, we are called to give our best for Christ as disciples.

[Tell about a personal experience of functioning as God's representative to the world.]

V. Conclusion

Each of us has a personal, shared, and nontransferable mission: to make Christ real and share his grace so that others may know God's salvation.

De Colores!