

Lenten Devotional 2020

Saturday, March 28, 2020
Day 28, Exodus 28

Grab the Horns

Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the Lord. (Exodus 28:29)

This Christmas my daughter bought me a six movie collection of Clint Eastwood—all westerns. I was excited. Other than the westerns that have an ensemble cast, westerns feature a lone hero who breezes into town, sets everything to rights, and then breezes out again. In certain ways, this type of hero can be similar to the priestly role described in this section. He does for the people what they cannot do for themselves (soldiers bear this burden today). Not only does he clean up the town in a way they couldn't, but he has to live with the killing. The movie *Shane* demonstrates this well. The last scene is him speaking to a boy and explaining why he can't stay. His actions preclude him from remaining.

This is the role Aaron and his sons will perform (not killing people) for Israel. The priest bears/embodies the community of Israel when he goes into the Tabernacle to make sacrifices. He does what Israel cannot do (due to holiness issues, that is being set apart). Now, many Protestants, in their rejection of Catholicism, have rejected the role of the priest today. This comes from a misunderstanding of an emphasis of Luther during the Reformation—the priesthood of all believers.

What this phrase has come to mean is that I do not need anyone to act as a priest for me, I am a priest in my own right and can relate to God directly. Yes, we can and should relate to God directly. However, that is not what Scripture or Luther means when they use that phrase. Rather, they are pointing to our role as priests to one another. Rather than one priest for the whole community, the whole community is priest to each other. I am a priest to you and you are a priest to me.

With that understanding, we can see what an important role the priests have for Israel. The focus on the garments of the priest is so extensive and detailed because the priest has been set apart for this holy calling. Now, we don't need the fancy duds, but we should recognize the weightiness and privilege we have to play this role for each other. We are called in Galatians 6:2, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Like Aaron we carry our brothers and sisters into the presence of Jesus and bear their sin to the foot of the cross where it is done away with for good.

Prayer

Lord of grace, thank you that you have not left us to deal with our sin on our own like a lone cowboy. But, rather, you have gifted us the community of brothers and sisters to bear our burdens and carry them to Jesus to be destroyed. Your grace and mercy are overwhelming. Help us to be this type of community where we can trust and love one another. Amen.