

I believe brothers and sisters still remember the theme of the conference is “To the praise of His glory.” The burden I received this time is to share on priesthood and stewardship. Let’s begin by reading some of the Lord’s words.

*Exodus 19:6*

*“And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.”*

*Hebrews 5:1, 4-6*

*For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee”; just as He says also in another passage, “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

*Hebrews 7:14-17*

*For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him, “Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

*1 Peter 2:5, 9*

*You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

*Revelation 1:6*

*And He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

*Revelation 5:10*

*“And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”*

The theme of this conference is *“To the praise of His glory.”* This phrase is from chapter 1 of Ephesians. It appears three times in Ephesians 1:3-14, revealing the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. After Paul spoke of the work of the Father, he said, *“To the praise of His glory.”* After he spoke of the work of the Son, he said, *“To the praise of His glory.”* After he spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit, he said, *“To the praise of His glory.”* Accordingly, God’s ultimate intention is for His work to receive the praise of His glory. This declares the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is filled with glory. A brother once defined “glory” as a state when God’s heart reaches complete satisfaction. This is a very good definition. The prime objective of the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is for God Himself to be the first to gain full satisfaction. When God is completely satisfied, He manifests Himself in glory.

Why does it also say, *“To the praise?”* It conveys when God’s work is completed, He will obtain praise from all creation, a declaration of His perfect, finished and beautiful work. Our God is One who works and He most certainly will bring His work into full fruition. In God’s work, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each carries His share of responsibility. It is as if They split the task and yet work together. At last when They complete the work, it will not only be full of glory, praise shall fill all creation. Eventually, we will witness this scene one day. Therefore, when the Apostle Paul received the revelation, he saw the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God’s greatest work or purpose in this universe is to establish the church as the body of Christ. This is a clear revelation in Ephesians. Our God desires to make the church to be in perfect union with Christ; this is God’s most essential work within time on earth. After reading Ephesians chapter 1, we can sense God exerts His all into this work. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit each paid a price. Consequently, the church is God’s most significant work on earth. Our God not only set a purpose but He also works for the fulfillment of His will. Of course, those who understand the Bible know God doesn’t work alone. He also chooses those who are saved to work with Him. God has set this purpose before the foundation of the world to accomplish His work together with those whom He created.

Our God is omniscient, all-sufficient and omnipotent. It would be so easy if He does the work Himself. He utters a word and matters are accomplished. But for God to co-labor with the fallen man, His work in the church on earth becomes very difficult. The fallen man hinders God’s work. God encounters many obstacles when He partners with the fallen man. We are saved by grace and under the Lord’s light, we confess we are troublesome. We are fallen sinners and have

many problems. It is most onerous for God to use us. In the universe, there is no force that can get in God's way. This morning our elderly brother mentioned that the enemy is nothing. We must understand the greatest obstacle to God's work is you and me. We hinder and shortchange Him greatly. Why is it that we still cannot see this glory in the church on earth today? We must realize we are the ones who hinder Him.

It is very challenging for the Lord to work through us, but thank Him for His great mercy and love because His calling is irrevocable. Since God has destined us to complete His work with Him, He will never give up regardless how great the difficulty or opposition we pose. God will complete His work in us and that is His tremendous grace upon us. If we have experience serving the Lord, we know we shortchange Him in our service. The troubles and difficulties we present to Him far exceed what we could ever do for Him. But to this day, the Lord has not forsaken us because He has endless mercy. He is God Almighty and He can perfect us. He is full of patience in leading us. By the Lord's reminder, may we be mindful of His heart. For those who serve the Lord, it is appropriate for us to feel we shortchange Him from the depth of our spirit. We are foolish if we think we have done much for the Lord. We thank God for choosing man to cooperate with Him to accomplish His work.

Henceforth in His work, He gave us two crucial ministries, priesthood and stewardship. The Lord has entrusted these ministries to us so we could work together with Him. This is also the burden the brothers have entrusted to me to fellowship in this conference. If we flourish in these ministries, His glory will then be praised on earth. Before we enter into the two topics of priesthood and stewardship, we must first know two indispensable principles concerning God's work and service in order to succeed in these ministries.

Thank God He chose characters from the Old and New Testament, Moses and Paul respectively, as good examples of service. We will first look at the two critical principles of service from these two men. Let us look at *Exodus 3:12*. *And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."* "Sign" can also be translated as assurance or evidence. God said to Moses, *"I have sent you, I will be with you."* God's presence is the most important evidence, or assurance, in service. What is our assurance when the Lord sends us to serve Him? Oftentimes, we use our knowledge, education, eloquence and talents as assurances

while serving the Lord. But God said to Moses, *“it is not these but My presence is your assurance.”*

We must remember God’s presence is the greatest assurance or evidence in service. That means God didn’t simply send Moses but He went with Moses. If God sent Moses off and God was just a bystander, Moses would not have been able to do anything. God sent Moses to take the people of Israel out of Egypt when Moses was already eighty years old; he was not capable at all. God said, *“you go and tell Pharaoh to let My people go so they may serve Me.”* Moses was very afraid and said, *“Who am I that I should go?”* Would it be possible for Moses to lead millions of Israelites out of Egypt by himself? It would be totally impossible. It was God who sent the ten plagues to Egypt and then Pharaoh allowed all the people of Israel to leave.

After they left Egypt, they came to the shore of the Red Sea. The Egyptian soldiers were chasing them and the people of Israel were very frightened. They complained and said, *“Moses, you brought us out to die in the wilderness. We’d rather be in Egypt. It would be better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”* What did Moses do? He spoke words of faith and said, *“You must stand firm. Don’t be afraid. God will fight for us. Keep silent.”* It was as if Moses had much faith. But if you read Exodus chapter 14 carefully, Moses himself became afraid soon after he spoke those words. He ran to God and cried out. God then said to him, *“Moses, why are you crying out to Me?”* This is our condition in service most of the time. Before the people of God, we speak words of faith, so full of strength, but then we realize the severity of the problem and we are incapable of solving it.

How could Moses lead the people through the Red Sea? We thank God. He said to Moses, *“Lift up your staff.”* Moses lifted up his staff and a strong east wind caused the waters to divide and the people of Israel crossed over the Red Sea. This was very unique in history because God is hidden and the people only saw Moses. As a result, they considered Moses to be a great man. He led the people of Israel out of Egypt and they went through the midst of the Red Sea on dry land. Moses knew clearly he was weak and God was the One who did all the work. So regardless what type of person we are, whether or not we are educated or able, God can use us as long as we have His presence. Many could attest to this throughout church history. God’s presence is the greatest assurance in our service.

Oftentimes, we only see man's outward appearance. Many view God's servants as great men, to the point they are perceived as idols. This is such a big mistake. How could Moses have the ability to do these things? If God doesn't do the work, we can never do anything. All of God's work is accomplished by Him but He completes it through man. As a result, those whom God uses end up gaining the glory. Today, whenever Moses is mentioned, especially among Jewish people, greatness is attributed to him. When I was in Europe, I saw a statue of Moses perhaps carved by the Catholic church. It was very peculiar because there was a horn on Moses' head. I don't understand why they did that because Moses didn't have a horn on his head in real life. It is because they felt Moses is different from us. This was the great Moses, full of power. In their hearts, they turned him into an object of worship and placed a horn on his head, like a unicorn. It is absurd. In the Gospel According to John chapter 15, the Lord Jesus tells us, "*Apart from Me, you can do nothing.*" If we can do anything in service, it is done by God. We must grasp this principle.

The same is true in the New Testament. On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood, preached and three thousand souls were saved. There are less than a thousand people in this meeting hall today. You can hear me clearly because I have a microphone. Imagine, Peter didn't have a microphone. How many people were present listening to the message? Yet three thousand souls were saved. When they heard the message, they were pierced to the heart. Was it the power of Peter? Peter had the great gift of evangelism. Not only were three thousand souls saved the first time, five thousand men were saved the second time, excluding women and children. In that gospel meeting, probably over ten thousand souls were saved. I often thought perhaps Peter had a loud voice. So when he spoke, a few thousand people could hear him without the use of a microphone. Perhaps the ones in the far end could hear his voice but they would not be touched easily. No wonder Peter never boasted about this incident during his lifetime. It was clear to him the power was not of his own.

The Apostle Paul was called and met the Lord, as recorded in Acts chapter 9. Later, God sent Ananias to Paul and said in Acts 9:15, "*Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine.*" This is another significant principle revealed in the New Testament concerning service. This tells us man is but an instrument in God's hand. Paul was a vessel and all brothers and sisters are vessels. A vessel has at least two aspects. One aspect is that it has a function. We all have different types of vessels at home. Each vessel has a different function and is useful. You use different vessels according to your need. Today, each brother and sister is a vessel and is useful.

Another aspect is that a vessel cannot be the initiator. The vessel is used by the master and should be passive. In service, we should remain passive, as we cannot take any initiative. If one day when you return home, your cups, plates and bowls came running to you, that would be scary. You would tell them to return to the cupboard and come only if you need them. Today concerning service, it is not necessary for us to act on our own initiative. We are but vessels and the Lord will use us according to His need. We ought to wait upon Him, as we remain vessels even when He doesn't use us. When He uses us, it is for His need. Any work originated by man is not God's work. We see many works on earth today but they are mostly initiated by man's zealotry. We must remember we are but vessels to heed commands of the Master and to be used only by Him. We need not seek after service but simply wait before God and He will use us according to His need.

Whether in the Old or New Testament, God shows us the fundamental principles of service through Moses and Paul. Of course, in order to be used by God, they underwent the vital experience of self-denial. They could not live in the flesh. This morning, our elderly brother strongly emphasized this point; one who serves the Lord cannot look within himself. We must deny ourselves. God will use us only to the extent of the salvation of our soul. This is also a very valuable experience. If we can be used by God today to fulfill His purpose, to finish His work, then His glory will be praised. We must hold fast to these two crucial principles of service, as we can only be good priests and good stewards while standing on this foundation.

God's thought concerning service is very glorious. When the people of Israel left Egypt and arrived at Mount Sinai, God first revealed to Moses in Exodus chapter 19 that He wanted the people of Israel to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. In this kingdom, everyone would be a priest, thus becoming a kingdom of priests. Today, we are saved by grace and have entered into God's kingdom. Each one of us is a priest. When we read Exodus chapter 19, there is something very peculiar. In Exodus 19:22 and 24, before God's revelation concerning the tabernacle, priests were already mentioned. It was as if after God spoke of the kingdom of priests, they appeared among the people of Israel. This is very special because God's desire is for all who are saved by grace to be priests and to serve Him.

We know true service is to co-labor with God, to build and administer together with Him for His glorious purpose. But when the term "priest" is used, it is easy for us to turn it into a religious figure, a clergyman. When Joseph went to Egypt, he married the daughter of an Egyptian priest.

Also later, Moses married the daughter of a Midian priest. Accordingly, we see priests in pagan religions. Hence, it is easy for us to have a notion that priests are religious figures or clergymen, which is a grave error. Even today in Catholicism and Christianity, many still have this impression. Whenever “priest” is mentioned, it is associated with a religious figure. We must be clear on the meaning of “priest” in the Bible. God wants us to be priests in order to serve Him.

We know the people of Israel failed God at the foot of Mount Sinai before God’s heart was fulfilled through them, disrupting His purpose. While God was showing Moses the pattern of the tabernacle on the mountain top for forty days and forty nights, the people of Israel were worshipping the golden calf at the foot of the mountain, which enraged God. As a result, God chose the tribe of Levi, the household of Aaron to be priests. Consequently, service was turned into a “substitute service,” creating a clergy class, making them distinctive because only Aaron’s house could be priests while all others were excluded. Actually, the reason God chose the house of Aaron to be priests was not because He changed His mind. His heart concerning priesthood didn’t change; He simply chose them to illustrate the meaning of priesthood. God never intended for them to become surrogates. Once God set His mind, He never changes it because His heart is ultimately on a kingdom of priests. Though temporarily this thought could not be carried out, God still wanted His people to have a sense of the substance of priesthood.

In the New Testament, especially in the book of Hebrews, the author thoroughly expounds on the ministry of priesthood. Since Aaron could only represent the side of humanity, the ministry portrayed by his household only showed half of the meaning of priesthood. Accordingly, the author of Hebrews added the priesthood of Melchizedek. Aaron plus Melchizedek made up the full essence of priesthood. The priest mentioned in the book of Hebrews has a dual nature of God and Man. Thus in service, there is the nature of humanity and divinity. Melchizedek in the Old Testament was a mysterious person. He appeared during the time of Abraham. The Bible said, *“He was king of Salem, a priest of God Most High.”* Where did this person come from? He appeared all of a sudden. The reason for his appearance was because the house of Aaron couldn’t fully portray the meaning of priesthood in the Old Testament. Therefore, God left a hint and this character appeared all of a sudden. When Melchizedek appeared, he was a king and a priest. Only this could fulfill God’s purpose. Peter said, *“We are a royal priesthood.”* In the eyes of God, a priest is not only a priest but also a king. We thank God that through Melchizedek, the explanation of priesthood is made complete.

Hebrews also mentions Melchizedek was without father, mother, and genealogy, just like the Son of God. This tells us in God's heart, priesthood is not passed down to the next generation. In the Old Testament, you were fortunate if you were born into the house of Aaron. You had an opportunity to be a high priest and a chance to be a priest, passing down from generation to generation. Then came the order of Melchizedek and there was no generation change. Today, it is the same in church service. Just because a father serves the Lord doesn't mean his son will serve the Lord as well. Not only that, Melchizedek had neither beginning of days nor end of life, and not according to our physical requirement. God is after a priesthood that is perpetual, stretching from eternity to eternity. Even as we come to the book of Revelation, priesthood is still mentioned.

When our Lord Jesus came to earth, He assumed the combined ministries of Aaron and Melchizedek. He is the perfect High Priest. Only our Lord Jesus is able to wholly demonstrate the reality of priesthood. He is not only of a human nature but He is also of a divine nature. To this day, He is in heaven on the throne and is still the High Priest. Today, we are in Christ and each one of us is a priest and forever a priest. Unfortunately, many of God's children don't realize they are priests and have no concept of being priests. We are actually priests the moment we are born. This means we ought to serve the Lord from birth. Regardless of our profession or career, we ought to serve God. No wonder the brothers ahead of us told us that serving the Lord is our vocation. You may be a doctor, an engineer, an attorney or whatever but that is secondary. The emphasis is that you don't forget you are a priest, a servant of the Lord. From this point forward, you know you are first a priest and you are employed as a doctor, teacher or businessman. Our primary purpose is to serve God; that is His desire.

Why is it that God wants man to be priests? We can see some significance from the ministry of the high priest in the Old Testament. One who is a priest can come to God directly. In the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter the holy of holies once a year with the blood of the lamb. Come the time of the New Testament, our Lord completed salvation and opened a new and living way. Today, we get to enjoy the privileges of the high priest. Every child of God can enter into the holy of holies and draw near to God directly. Throughout church history, especially during the time of the Catholic church, many children of God have been blinded in believing man could not come directly to God; man could only come to the father. This is not the mindset of God.



We can come to God directly and offer spiritual sacrifices before Him. In the Old Testament, only priests could offer sacrifices. Of course, there are many meanings concerning the offering of sacrifices. When sacrifices were offered in the Old Testament, it meant total consecration. Through the sacrifice, they could restore their fellowship with God. Through the altar, they could proclaim the sovereignty of God. Today, we can come directly to God. In the perfect sacrifice of the Lord, we can offer ourselves to God. Unfortunately, many children of God don't realize they have such a precious privilege. In the past, I have come across many brothers and sisters. When they have issues, they would often say, "Let's ask the ministers to pray for us because they are closer to God. Their prayers will be heard." Brothers and sisters, you have forgotten you are also a child of God. You can come before God directly, as this is one of the privileges of a priest.

The high priest entered the holy of holies with a censer in his hands, meaning he could pray and have direct fellowship with God. In his first epistle, the Apostle John said, "*We can hear Him, see Him and touch Him.*" We can draw near and come before Him directly; there is no need of a mediating class in between. Brothers and sisters, don't ever forget we are priests. We are under the principle of the high priest. We can come before God directly and everyone can pray to Him. Even though many Christians know they can pray to God directly, most still do not realize the preciousness of this privilege.

The high priest could gain direct revelation. When he came before God wearing the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim in it, God could speak to him through them. Today in the New Testament, God speaks to us directly; we thank Him. It is paramount for God's children to hear His voice. It is a pitiful condition many of God's children only listen to the words of man and not heed the words of God in living their life. It's best we hear God's voice more often. We are priests and have this privilege. We can come directly before God, have fellowship with Him, gain revelation and hear His voice.

We can also wield the power of resurrection for Him. A story is recorded in the book of Numbers chapter 17. Each of the twelve tribes of Israel brought a rod into the tabernacle; at the end, the rod of Aaron sprouted, produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds. This shows Aaron was confirmed. That rod became a life of resurrection in his hands. It was dead but then it blossomed and bore fruit. This clearly shows we who are priests can exercise the power of resurrection for God, especially in the New Testament. We live in an age filled with death; the power of death is

everywhere. Whether in daily life or service, the children of God can easily encounter death. But don't forget, we hold the power of resurrection in our hands. The book of Revelation tells us we can reign with Him even while we are here on earth. This power of resurrection is the authority of the King. This is the greatest blessing God has bestowed upon us with the priesthood ministry.

When our Lord, the High Priest, ministers in the true tabernacle, He made the new covenant of God effective, as recorded in Hebrews. The covenant of God is His will; He can accomplish God's purpose so the word of God can be realized. From the life of the high priest, we can see it is tremendously meaningful that God wants man to be priests. I don't know if you feel you are priests after what I shared. I don't see many brothers and sisters showing any facial expression. Now, do you feel you are priests? Amen, we are all priests and have this privilege. We thank God He wants us to accomplish His work together with Him. On account of this, you must be a good priest in order to collaborate with Him to fulfill His will. Just like in the Old Testament when the tabernacle was erected and all the priests were fulfilling their duties, suddenly the glory of God filled the tabernacle.

The story of priests in Aaron's household serves as a sober reminder from the Lord. When priests came to the tabernacle, gathered together with the people of Israel and fulfilled their duties, they must make preparations. This thought appears to be lost among God's people these days. How many brothers and sisters actually prepare themselves before coming to the assembly? In the church, there are only a few who prepare. Those who preach, translate, play the piano, usher, serve the children or youth are the ones who prepare. The rest of the brothers and sisters makes no preparation. We feel it's sufficient to just come and sit there but that is not being priests. In the Old Testament, you could clearly see all priests made preparations when coming to the tabernacle to fulfill their duties. When you read Leviticus chapter 8, you see the priests' preparation was quite complex, as they fulfilled their duties before God. Even though we are in the age of the New Testament, we are also priests and must prepare.

In the Old Testament when the priests came to the tabernacle, what preparations were made? First, they must change their clothes; they must take off their earthly outfits and put on the priestly garments. Earthly clothes represent our earthly conduct and way of life. When you come to the assembly, you must put away all that is of the world. You cannot bring anything worldly into the assembly. When you put on the priestly garment, you put on Christ. Just as the Apostle Paul said,

“Our Lord is our garment, our righteous garment, our beautiful robe.” Brothers and sisters, when you come to the assembly, you need to put on Christ, putting away the things of the world.

According to my own experience, oftentimes when I come across hardship and it’s time for worship, my sad countenance reflects the heavy load and sorrow in my heart. Before I go to worship, I pray, “Lord, now You need to bear my sorrow. I am willing to take off my old clothing. Let me put You on. When I come into the assembly, I do not want brothers and sisters to see my sadness. May Your joy fill me.” So each time we meet, brothers and sisters see a smiley face. This doesn’t mean I have no difficulties or I am a fake. I simply allow Christ to be put on me so others do not see my true condition. Priests must make preparation by putting on Christ. I met many brothers and sisters who say, “I am a true Israelite; I will show all my bitterness.” No, you must take off your worldly clothes and put on Christ.

After you take off your earthly clothes, you must bathe and cleanse yourself. This means you do not bring your flesh into the meeting. When we come to the assembly, how many brothers and sisters prepare in this fashion? Oftentimes, I feel ashamed that we lag behind the priests in the Old Testament; they were genuine. They bathed and cleansed themselves. No flesh should be brought into the assembly.

Moses anointed Aaron, the high priest, as they entered the tabernacle. The anointing oil was very fragrant and costly. Not only was the high priest anointed when coming to the tabernacle, all the utensils and even the entire tabernacle were anointed. You could smell the fragrance from a distance when approaching the tabernacle. The church is a place where the fragrance of Christ is emanated. Especially as priests, we must be anointed, full of the anointing. Before you go to the meeting, you must pray before the Lord to be filled with the Holy Spirit’s anointing. That means you are led by the Spirit. When you enter into the assembly for bread breaking, you are already filled with the anointing from within. You will then naturally praise and worship according to that anointing. We must remind ourselves that is the outflow of life.

Why is it that oftentimes there is no life in our assembly? It is because we come with no anointing. For us older Christians, as soon as we open our mouth, we know how to pray, even without the prompting of the Holy Spirit. For the new believers, regardless how the Holy Spirit moves them, they would not pray. Under such condition, life cannot flow out in the church. So before you go to the meeting, you need to be anointed before the Lord. Try it by preparing

yourself at home. I am often filled by the Lord's Spirit at home and cannot wait until I go to the assembly. Just like when I was young, I would ask the Lord on Monday to give me a few words to praise Him during bread breaking. Then come Sunday, I feel I am about to explode. Such prayers will move others. That is why we need to be anointed.

Not only that, priests must bring a bull for a sin offering. We can never bring sin into the presence of God. Today we come before God too casually; we have not dealt with our sins completely. Paul especially tells us during bread breaking if you do not distinguish this is the body and blood of the Lord and you do not deal with your sins completely, you are not eating and drinking in enjoyment of the Lord but you are eating and drinking your own sins. This is such a solemn matter. We cannot serve God with sin in us. Of course, we know our Lord is merciful. Our lives are full of weaknesses; we often sin, offending man and God. So before you come to the meeting, you must ask the Lord to cleanse you with His blood. When the priests came to the tabernacle to serve, they must first use the blood of the bull to deal with their own sins completely.

Then the priests must bring two rams. One ram was for the burnt offering. That means when you come before God, you need to offer a burnt offering, consecrating yourself totally to the Lord. You are both the priest and the sacrifice when you come before God. You need to consecrate yourself first and tell Him, "Lord, I belong to You completely and all is unto You." When the second ram was slaughtered, some of its blood was put on the lobe of the priests' right ear, thumb of their right hand and big toe of their right foot. That means our ears are circumcised. We come only to listen to God's word. Our ears need to be cleansed because we often hear gossip, criticisms and many other bad things. We ask the Lord to cleanse our ears with His blood so we can truly hear His voice. So often when God speaks, we cannot hear Him because our ears have not been consecrated. It is not easy to preach or listen to messages. It's difficult to deliver a message clearly and it is also difficult to hear it clearly. That's why blood must be applied to our ears. Blood must also be applied to our thumb, representing both our hands and heart are clean. We serve the Lord with clean hands. We cannot serve God with filthy hands. Our feet need to be set apart and walk on the Lord's path.

The priests in the Old Testament had to go through a complicated process when coming into the presence of the Lord. They also had to take the thigh of the ram, portions of fat, and put a few pieces of bread on top and wave them before the people. This represents abundance in your hands, serving God with fullness. You don't come and serve God empty handed because He prepares for

you when you serve. Every brother and sister come to the Lord with fullness. The wave offering points to Christ, our abundance. Every brother and sister is abundant. Then the whole church becomes plentiful. We must prepare when we come before the Lord.

God also commanded them to boil the flesh and eat bread at the entrance of the tent of meeting. This depicts those who come into the presence of the Lord to serve Him must first be made full in their spirit. In the Old Testament, it was an outward fullness but in the New Testament, it is fullness in the spirit. We often hear many brothers and sisters pray, "Thank the Lord, we come empty but we leave full." No, that is not in accordance with God's heart. We come with fullness and we leave with fullness because our God is rich. We truly don't understand God's heart. A lot of brothers and sisters are in a state of hunger in many places but that should not be the case because we are priests. As priests, we eat until we are full; then we are able to serve the Lord.

There was much preparation when a priest entered the tabernacle in the Old Testament. Why is our gathering so poor and weak? Why doesn't our gathering bring us satisfaction? It is because we do not prepare ourselves. We come before the Lord without any preparation whatsoever. Do not place this responsibility on a few. This is the responsibility of you and me. We are priests and it is of great glory that we can come into His presence to serve Him.

When the priests were fully prepared, the glory of God manifested every time they entered the tabernacle. His glory was praised because of their wonderful service. Throughout many generations in the Old Testament when the priests' service was normal, the condition of God's people was good. But during the time of Judges, the priests neglected their duties and the people of Israel fell into a dark and frightful situation. In the time of David when he restored the priesthood, the entire nation was filled with glory and praise.

Today, God has chosen you and me to co-labor with Him. He first granted the priesthood ministry to us. Oftentimes, I am saddened whenever I think about this because the kingdom of priests has become a lost truth today. Though many brothers among us have preached this truth, we still linger at a doctrinal stage. We don't see brothers and sisters fulfilling their priestly duties. Thus "substitute service" is still a deeply embedded concept in God's children. Brothers and sisters also feel there are only a few serving in the church, fulfilling their responsibilities. Many who serve the Lord have the same feeling. Even though we don't hold any titles, we feel we are surrogates for God's children in service.

In the Old Testament, priests performed matters pertaining to man on behalf of God, and matters pertaining to God on behalf of man. Oftentimes, we fall into this mindset in our service. We know “substitute service” is an incorrect concept. What is the crux of the matter? It is because we don’t realize we are priests and have no concept of priesthood. As a result, we have the condition of “substitute service” in the church.

In order for the church on earth and God’s work to have a glorious appearance, for His work to be full of praise, we must fulfill our priestly duties. Wherever there is the appearance of the kingdom of priests, there will be the praise of God’s glory. Tonight, I ask again, do you feel you are a priest? Don’t forget after the meeting is dispersed. May the Lord be gracious to us. We hope the Lord will speak into our heart through this conference and change the condition of each brother and sister so we can fulfill our priestly duties in the house of God. Together with our brothers and sisters, we bring about the work of God to gain praise so His glory will be manifested. Let’s bow our head for a word of prayer.

*Lord, we thank You with all our heart. It is You who gathered us here. You want to speak to our heart. Once again, You reveal Your will within us. You are the God who works until this day and You want Your work to be the praise of Your glory. You chose us to work with You and granted the ministry of priesthood to us. Lord, we have short changed You greatly and have not fulfilled our priestly duties. We ask that You change us from within so we have a clear understanding of this truth. Lord, we are vessels in Your hand and are willing to be used by You. For Your own glory, Lord, use us. In the short time we have and because of Your work in us, manifest Your glory so that Your glory will be praised. Thank You for being with us this evening. Hear our prayer. In Jesus Christ’s precious name. Amen.*