

Finding Your Position in the Church

Who knew that the book of Numbers could be so deeply spiritual!

OK, we must admit that God wouldn't put a book in His holy Word that didn't have some kind significance for our lives. But all my life I've battled with finding the book of Numbers boring.

All the lists of people and offerings ...

And yet, tucked inside the repetitive lists of tribes, duties and locations of tents, I began asking myself if I truly understand my identity in Christ, as it is so eloquently laid out in the first four chapters of Numbers.

We see that as the Israelites prepared to go to the Promised Land, they number those able to go to war because they will face off with their enemies as they go in to seize the land God had promised them.

Do I know how to battle my enemy? Do I properly use the weapons God has given me to face off with the enemy of my soul and defeat him?

But there was one tribe they did not number: the Levites.

Why?

Because they were the priestly tribe, they held the sacred duty of serving the Lord in the tabernacle. In fact, we see this all throughout chapter 3:

"You will take the Levites for Me (I am the Lord) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel" (Num. 3:41).

Why would God say that. ... not just once, but a handful of times?

We see the answer in Exodus 19 and 20.

In Exodus 19 we read these words that God spoke to Moses to tell all the people of Israel. "And you will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).

God never intended there to be a tribe of priests, His intent all along was for the nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests!

But then we see this in chapter 20:

"All the people witnessed the thunder and the lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. They said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear, for God has come to test you, so that the fear of Him may be before you so that you do not sin.' The people stood a distance away as Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (Ex. 20:18-21).

The nation of Israel had experienced an amazing visitation of God unlike anyone in history before had experienced. He came down to them in all His glory and power, and rather than standing in awe of Him, rather than embracing His visitation, they chose to withdraw from Him.

But they didn't just withdraw from Him, they rejected Him. They said to Moses, "We don't want to hear from God, we want you to hear from God and then you can tell us what He said."

The result of their rejection of God was His implementation of plan B – the tribe of Levi becoming the priestly tribe.

Are there times when I withdraw from the presence of God rather than daily standing in awe of His presence?

And yet an amazing thing happens in the New Testament!

After Jesus' death, burial and resurrection we read Peter's words:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet. 2:9).

God's redemption of mankind redeemed our position in Christ and once again made us a kingdom of priests unto our God!

Every tribe had its own position surrounding the temple.

Do I know my place in God's kingdom?

But I saved the best for last!

In chapter four we read how each family in the Levite tribe had a special role in carrying parts of the tabernacle as they traveled through the desert.

This was a very serious thing because each utensil in the tabernacle was consecrated. And then you have the ark of the covenant which contained the literal presence of God.

They were not to look up on it nor touch it, or they'd die.

But God no longer dwells in a box.

God dwells in the hearts of mankind and we have become His holy tabernacle!

What do I carry around with me wherever I go? Do I carry around the sacred presence of God? Or do I carry around worthless garbage:

- My past
- My shame
- My hurts
- My disappointments
- Rejection

- Self-condemnation
- My perceptions of what others think of me

What am I carrying around with me?

These questions are significant, because our understanding of our identity in Christ will determine how we approach our role in the body.

No one role is more significant than the rest.

No one role is better or higher than the rest.

We are all priests unto our God.

Yes, we all have a different function in the body: some are lay ministers, some are pastors, some are prophets, some are teachers; but we all have a role in the body and just as the kidneys—which we don't see—are vital to the health of our body, so the head is also vital to the life of the body. One is seen, the other is not. But the body cannot exist without either!

Our ability to recognize that our role is vital to the body of Christ will be determined by what we carry around inside of us!

Our ability to recognize our place in His body—just as each tribe knew where their camp was in relation to the tabernacle—will be determined by what we carry around inside of us.

Dear sister in Christ, what are you carrying around inside of you? Do you need to find a place to dump the worthless waste you're carrying around?

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fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.