

The Priestly Role

1 John 5:1-21 Few know the power God has given them through Jesus Christ to confess and remit the sins of others. This is the ministry of reconciliation. God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Himself. The possibility of the whole world being reconciled to God was extended on the cross when Jesus died not only for your sin, but also for the sins of the whole world. When Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," Jesus was entering into the ministry of reconciliation.

What does this ministry of reconciliation involve? Just after Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into His disciples, He said these words: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23, KJV).

At this time the disciples and all those who would believe in Jesus after them were given the power to remit sins. John speaks of this power in this letter. He says, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (v. 16, KJV).

When we see a brother sin, we are to cover that sin and not talk about it to others. We also have the great privilege of confessing that sin to the Father in Jesus' name for our brother. Then we can ask God to have mercy and not count this sin against our brother. Jesus set the example of the ministry of reconciliation on the cross. We also see Stephen minister reconciliation when he was being stoned. He said, "Father, lay this not to their charge." What a great privilege we have as priests of the Lord. Priests confess the sins of others for them to God.

Wouldn't you want someone talking to God about your sin rather than talking to others about your sin? Much more is gained through prayer than through talk. The promise in this scripture is that as we ask for mercy for our brother who sins, God will give him life. Death is always the result of sin. Something in our soul dies. Our mind, will and emotions are affected by sin. God promises to bring life once again to the one who has sinned, and where sin brought death, the Lord can bring life. Remember always that the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead is able to quicken our mortal bodies (able to give life to us). When we confess the sins of others, we are releasing them to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will then be able to bring conviction to this person about his own sin, and the Holy Spirit can also soften this person's heart so he will confess his own sin and repent.

**READ: Hosea 1:1-3:5; 1 John 5:1-21; Psalm 124:1-8; Proverbs
29:5-8**