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**Session 15**

***God of Freedom, Week 8b***

**Exodus 29 *and* Exodus 31**

**15-16 January 2024**

**Start at 19:43**

**The Consecration Ceremony –** In preparation for their work in the priesthood, Aaron and his sons were washed and dressed in their priestly garments; then four different kinds of offerings took place. A *sin offering* was made for unintentional sins, the *burnt offering* was to cover general sins, the *wave offering* was offered in thanksgiving, and the *peace offering* was a shared meal of celebration. Vestiges of these offerings remain in our worship today. For example, the Lord’s Supper is the present day equivalent of the peace offering made by the Israelites.

**“I AM the Lord Your God” –** Moses ended chapter 29 with these words from the Lord. God had brought the plagues on Egypt and then brought His people out so that all Egypt would know that this is true. Now He wants to ensure that all Israel knows that this is true to the depths of their being. He is going to pitch His tent and dwell among them so that they would never forget that He alone is their God.

**The Gifted Craftsmen –** In chapter 31, Moses lists all the men that God has specially gifted to do the work that is required to build the Tabernacle and to make all its furnishings and accouterments. Why did God involve these skilled artisans when He could have just spoken the Tabernacle into existence as He did the heavens and the earth back in Genesis chapter one? The amazing truth is that God chose to *partner* with man in this work. Just as He gave Adam and Eve the Garden of Eden to keep and to tend and to cultivate, so He now gives the children of God the “new Eden”, as it were, and they are to build it and maintain it and use it in His worship.

**Men Only? –** At first glance it seems that God has only gifted men to do this work, but the Hebrew word for these skilled artisans has no gender attached to its meaning. There was a great deal of weaving and embroidery work that needed to be done in preparing both the curtains for the Tabernacle and the clothing for the priests, and this work was probably done by women.

**Garments Drenched in Blood –** The priests’ garments were the most costly clothing that the Israelites had ever seen—and yet they would have been continually drenched in blood, day after day, Passover after Passover, year after year. Literally thousands of animals would be slaughtered in just one festival and thousands more over the course of a year. One ancient historian said that there was blood up to the people’s knees. Even if he was using hyperbole to get his point across, there was certainly a vast volume of blood to deal with and clean up. So the most precious garments Israel could ever conceive, in the most precious setting Israel had ever seen, with the entire complex running with blood, boggles the mind. Yet God commanded that these garments be made the way they were when He knew exactly what their primary use would be. Revelation 19:11-14 sheds some light on this phenomenon. It describes Christ as sitting on a white horse, clothed in *a robe dipped in blood,* and His army of followers are wearing robes

of white linen. **We can wear robes of white linen because our great high priest has worn a garment dipped in blood.**

**The Sabbath –** After giving Moses all these instructions about the work that must be done and how to do it and who is to do it, He gives one more command. He says, *“Above all, keep my Sabbaths…”* So even the most holy of tasks must be done with rest in view. Believers all have holy work to do, good work that God has ordained specifically for us, individually and corporately. We need to *labor* as unto the Lord…but we should *rest* as unto the Lord as well. As we end this session, let us remember that our eternal Sabbath rest is secured by the One clothed in a garment dipped in blood.

***Parallels to 1 Peter…from Paul David Trip***

This year Tom and I are reading through *New Morning Mercies*, a daily devotional book by Paul David Trip. The reason he wrote this book is very reminiscent of the reason Peter wrote his two letters: to remind believers of truths they already know but need to keep firmly in mind. In the introduction, Paul Trip says, “My goal [in writing the book] is to confront and comfort people with the life-rattling truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ…**When amazing realities of the gospel quit commanding your attention, your awe, and your worship, other things in your life will capture your attention instead.** When you quit celebrating grace, you begin to forget how much you need grace, and when you forget how much you need grace, you quit seeking the rescue and strength that only grace can give. This means you begin to see yourself as more righteous, strong, and wise than you actually are, and in so doing, you set yourself up for trouble.

**So this devotional is a call for you and me to *remember*.** It’s a call to remember the horrible disaster of sin. It’s a call to remember Jesus, who stood in our place. It’s a call to remember the righteousness that is His gift. It’s a call to remember the transforming power of the grace you and I couldn’t have earned. It’s a call to remember the destiny that is guaranteed to all of God’s blood-purchased children. It’s a call to remember His sovereignty and His glory. It’s a call to remember that remembering is spiritual war; even for this we need grace…

One of the stunning realities of the Christian life is that in a world where everything is in some state of decay, God’s mercies never grow old. They never run out. They never are ill-timed. They never dry up. They never grow weak. They never get weary. They never fail to meet the need. They never disappoint. They never, ever fail, because they really are new every morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Sometimes they are:

• awe-inspiring mercies

• rebuking mercies

• strengthening mercies

• hope-giving mercies

• heart-exposing mercies

• rescuing mercies

• transforming mercies

• forgiving mercies

• provision-making mercies

• uncomfortable mercies

• glory-revealing mercies

• truth-illuminating mercies

• courage-giving mercies

God’s mercy is *general*; all of His children bask in His mercy. God’s mercy is *specific*; each child receives the mercy that is designed for his or her particular moment of need. God’s mercy is *predictable*; it is the fountain that never stops flowing. God’s mercy is *unpredictable*; it comes to us in surprising forms…

So…***remember* God’s new morning mercies and celebrate your identity as the object of a mercy** that reaches beyond the ability of the heart to grasp and the words of one author to describe.