1 Peter - Commentaries by Heinz Brinkmann

Chicago Conference: 1988, We Are Holy Priests

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I'd like to turn for a few verses in Peter. 2nd chapter of first Peter chapter 2 verse five ye also a lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to OfferUp spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, our brother has brought before us the exercise of gift and that each one has a gift and. My thought is to point out that. We each won if we know the Lord Jesus as our Savior, our priests. Are privileged to be holy priests who can draw nigh to God? What a difference it is in Christianity. Compared to Judaism. And let me emphasize, this is not the exercise of gift. You and I do not have to have any gift to draw an eye as a priest. It doesn't need to be in a way that is with oratory skills. That might be a feeble prayer or Thanksgiving that is offered up. But if it is by the Spirit. And that if it is by Him that we offer up our worship and praise, that is acceptable to God. And I believe, and I have often told our young brothers back home, I firmly believe, that debt is where we begin as young believers to avail ourselves of our priestly privilege. You do not have to be very far along. In your Christian life in order to say thank you to the Lord Jesus for what He has done for you. And how much he appreciates that we know ourselves if we do things for people and they don't show any appreciation. That grieves us, but when there is appreciation for any feeble service rendered to anyone and they thank us for it, we appreciate that. But what could anybody do for us compared to that which the Lord Jesus has done for us? You know when we have a conference such as we. Have had where much? Was before us about a wonderful position and the wonderful person of the Lord Jesus and so on. We might say, perhaps, that we feel somewhat like. A let down when we hear about the truth of the body of Christ. I believe, beloved, it is very fitting that we do because. If we. Recognize who the Lord Jesus is. And that he himself is the head of the body. We honor him. If we give him that place and allow him to direct as head the activity of every believer in the assembly. And he is the one really, that also in prayer and in worship. Leads in the assembly. He would draw out your heart. And what difference it makes if he fills our hearts. And the praise and worship that flows might be very feeble according to the way man looks at it, but it is so acceptable to God because it comes from hearts that appreciate the Lord Jesus and what He has done for us. We don't have time to go into depth, into another side of the truth where we also will greatly honor the Lord Jesus in our assembly life, and that is. In connection with him being Lord over his house.

You know we have gifts. And we have the Scriptures have been referred to that especially deal with that subject in Romans, First Corinthians, and Ephesians 4 But there is a whole line of truth of utmost importance in connection with our assembly life, and that is offices. And they're distinct from the exercise of gift. And there might be bread and in the assembly who do not claim to have a gift but seek to serve in administration. You know, we have the church presented as the body of Christ. We have the church presented as the House of God and as the bride of Christ and as the Candlestick. And when it comes to the body of Christ, it speaks of unity, of oneness. When it speaks of the House of God, it speaks of order, of discipline. And as Christ is honored in being given His place as head to direct by his Spirit. Individual member to function for the blessing of all and to the glory of the Lord Jesus. So the Lord Jesus is glorified when he is given His place as Lord over His house, and that we acknowledge that order that He has given, and that we make every effort and cry to Him for help to help us maintain godly order. You know, as the weakness increases, we tend to replace the divine order. You know, one of the things that was so shocking to us when we visited in Egypt. Last year. Was to find that among those brethren once gathered to the name of the Lord. Now in the amalgamation company. That they had an order been allowed to be introduced, which is almost unbelievable. Totally setting aside scriptural order for discipline and administration in the assembly. And the laborers? Decide everything the laborers actually put out of the assembly. Individuals who come from assemblies who are not even one of the laborers is present. And they put out a certain brother. And I don't delight to repeat this here. Except to give us a warning because they at one time were gathered to the name of the Lord. And how is it possible that they could introduce such a system as I'm going to describe it to you? And we are in danger if we don't take heed to scriptural direction in order to fall into the same snare. To burden the laborers with things and try to have them straighten out things in the assembly. But what happened? Actually, at a conference, a labourer stood up and said, brother so and so, he's going to be put out. The Brethren testified that the vast majority of brethren protested against that action. And his home assembly said we have no reason to see him put away. It's our responsibility, leave him to us. 23 laborers as one man stood up and said, you either you have the choice between this brother or with us, we would walk out of the conference. That's the kind of a system that has been introduced among. Brethren, once scattered to the name of the Lord Jesus. Like we believe to be still gathered. Let us beware, beloved. We honor the Lord Jesus in giving Him His place as head over His body, to let Him direct by His Spirit, and to ask Him for grace to help us maintain godly order when it comes to discipline and administration in the assembly. You know one thing. That I hope you accept as a loving. Admonition. I believe that there is a tendency among us that we look at the brothers meeting. As acting on behalf of the Assembly when it comes to discipline.

Beloved, the brothers meeting, whether it consists of individual brethren from various assemblies or of all the brothers from one local assembly, has no authority for action. Let me restate that. All the brothers of one assembly have no authority for action. Because the Lord has placed his authority in the assembly of the two and three gathered to the name of the Lord, and that includes everyone in the assembly. Now the Lord has given to some brothers in the assembly more responsibility than others. The elders, you know, an apostle was an office. It was also a gift, but it was also an office, as we see from Acts when Matthias is chosen. But we find that. The Overseer. Is a local office local only? And. A brother might have responsibility as an overseer in a local assembly. But in no other assembly, we have no apostles today. Apostles had universal authority. They could deal with problems in any assembly and could even deal in discipline with an assembly. But we have no such an apostle today. But we still have overseers, but we don't have official ones because we don't have Apostolic authority that can put these men into that office. As we have it in the in the days of the apostles. But there are two scriptures that are great comfort to us, and that is in Thessalonians. And in Acts chapter 20. In Thessalonians chapter 5. It wasn't Assembly Dear and Thessalonica that was only in existence for a few weeks. And. The apostle had to flee, as we find from Acts, and he writes to them, it is believed. About five or six weeks after their conversion, and there were no official elders there at that time in Thessalonica, but he admonishes them to know them that have the lead among you. Rule is an unfortunate word that is translated in various passages that deals with the office of an elder. Which misleads, as if

there is a hierarchy and those that they're ruling over are down there. But Mr. Darby much more fittingly renders these scriptures usually lead those who have the lead among you. And the Saints in Thessalonica were admonished that they should know that they should recognize those whom the Lord has put into that position. Unofficially, they were serving the Lord there and in Acts chapter 20. We have Paul speaking to the elders. In the elders of Ephesus and he says. Over which or among whom the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, we still have to day those beloved that serve in that capacity, and it is our responsibility to recognize them, to acknowledge them, and to esteem them worthy of double honor, especially if they also serve in doctrine. You know, we find that it was desirable. That an overseer be apartment to teach. It was not that one who wasn't apartment to teach could not be an overseer, but his office would be more effectual if he was apartment to teach, if he had a measure of ability to bring the truth of God to bear in any given situation where he was to serve as an overseer. Well, how good it is, beloved, that we remind ourselves, because in the day in which we live, where there is great weakness and weakness increasing on every hand, the danger is that we look to human crutches, to human arrangements, and, well, they don't really know how to deal with that problem in that assembly, so we better go there. Some of us and we going to tell them how to handle this.

Beloved, beware lest we develop a system of oversight which will dishonor the Lord in not allowing Him to be Lord in the assembly. And you know every week assembly has the presence of the Lord Jesus in the midst to guide them. And you know there is no such a thing as one assembly presiding over another assembly unless. Of course. There are such cases where. Things get totally out of control and we have no apostle that can come to deal with the situation such as we have in 3rd of John where diatrophies throughout of the assembly people and where John could say when I come, I'll take care of that. Well, we have no apostle, but we have the presence of the Lord Jesus. In other assemblies, that's our resource, and the nearby assembly can be of help when such a condition arises. Well, beloved, we have a wonderful Savior, we have a glorious head, and we have a Lord who is Lord over His own house. Let us honor him by giving him the place as head. We honor him when we allow him to use us. As it pleases Him, and we're really honored, are we not, that we should be elevated into such a position? Once the slaves of sin, now we can serve the Lord. And we will honor him if we do allow him to do that. You know, when Paul was saved, what was the first question? Who art our Lord? The second question what wilt thou have me to do? And what a wonderful thing it is to be able to serve the one who has redeemed us. At such a cost to himself and to serve those who are the dearest to his heart, his own, and then to recognize His authority in the assembly for discipline and to remind ourselves the authority of the Lord is in the assembly. Not to individual brothers, not even the brothers meeting. The brothers can investigate a thing and bring facts before the assembly and can even propose an action to the assembly. But the Assembly has to ratify it. Otherwise it is not an assembly action. And may the Lord help us that we. Honor him and allow him to have his place in the assembly. You know some of us many times. Are forced to seek to be of help in an area where we feel very incompetent and where we feel. It would be so much better if people better gifted would be able to do it, whether it is the exercise of gift or bringing ministry to the Saints. In many assemblies things are so weak. And what a good thing it is to fall back on such scriptures as Apartment to teach. We might not be able to claim to be teachers, but maybe the Lord has given us to enjoy. Things in our own souls and given us a measure of ability to pass it on for the enjoyment of the Saints. And even when it comes to oversight in small assemblies, perhaps even younger brothers are forced to take responsibility that they would much rather would see older brethren. To take well the Lord in such circumstances can give the needed grace and the humility to keep us from being proud and uplifted and help us to carry on for His glory.

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