

[Gamul]

:: 1 chronicles 24.17 ::

This morning our One Verse Wonder is a man by the name of Gamul, who we find in 1 Chronicles chapter 24 verse 17.

If we paraphrase the opening of this chapter, we get some context about who this man was. Looking at the pertinent information in verses 1, 3 and 5 we read this:

1 Chronicles 24.1,3,5 & 17 - Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron...David, with Zadok, divided [the sons of Aaron] according to the schedule of their service [in the temple]. Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of the house of God...the twenty-second [lot fell] to Gamul.

Gamul, was a leader in the tribe of Levi and household of Aaron. He and 23 other chiefs of Levi came together to represent their families who would be scheduled throughout the year to serve in the temple that David was preparing to build.

The name *Gamul* means 'rewarded'¹ or 'matured'.² Today we will see that he can represent to us our calling as servants and priests here on the earth.

Now, as non-denominational Protestants we *protest* the idea of a priesthood in our cultural sense. In our understanding we see a priest as someone holy who we must go through in order to get to God. Obviously, we believe that there is no separation between God and His people. Every Christian has direct access to God through Jesus Christ and Him alone.

However, God **has** set up a priesthood. You know the verse:

1 Peter 2:5,9 - ...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

So God says, "Oh, there's a priesthood. **YOU'RE** My priesthood." As Believers, we bring those who are lost in darkness to God by sharing the light and the love that He has given us. This is the plan that God has set up for the people of earth. That Believers go through the world and bring others to Him that they might be saved.

So, you and I are priests. Now, while our duties and interaction with the Lord are very different than those of the Old Testament priests and Levites, we can look at what they did, how God called them and learn about our relationship with the Lord, learn about how we serve as New Testament priests.

¹ Strong's Concordance

² Lockyer, *All The Men Of The Bible* pg. 123

I found a great article which explains the duties of the Priests and Levites. Let me read you some excerpts and then we'll make some comparison and application.

In 1 Chronicles 28, before the Temple was built, David received instructions from the Holy Spirit and showed Solomon how to divide the priests and the Levites and how they were to serve.

In the Temple, there were several classes of Levites:

- Priests (1 Chronicles 24:1-19)
- Priests' Assistants (1 Chronicles 23:4,28)
- Singers (1 Chronicles 25:7-31)
- Musicians (1 Chronicles 23:5)
- Gatekeepers (1 Chronicles 26:1-19)
- Keepers of the Treasure (1 Chronicles 26:20-28)

The priests and the Levites were divided into 24 courses within their assigned class. The length of each course was 7 days (1 Chronicles 9:25). The week of service began and ended on the Sabbath (2 Chronicles 23:8). In addition, all the priests served for 3 extra weeks during the year (Deuteronomy 16:16).

Each course of priests and Levites came on duty for a week, from one Sabbath to another. It should be made clear that not every priest and Levite in a course served every day. The service was subdivided among the various families which constituted a course.

The Jewish calendar has only 51 weeks in a year. Each of the 24 courses therefore served twice a year, plus 3 weeks they all served, for a total of 5 weeks during the year. Every 2 or 3 years, there is a leap year which adds a leap month. It was not certain how the priests served these extra days.

There were a great number of priests and Levites in the Temple at all times. According to 1 Chronicles 23:4-5, there were 24,000 priests and priests' assistants, 4,000 gatekeepers and 4,000 musicians. They were divided into 24 courses according to their assignment. When a course was on duty, all its members were bound to appear in the Temple. Therefore there were more than 1,300 Levites in the Temple at any given time, although not all of them were serving on the same day.

Before the break of the day, the priests on duty were ready and they assembled to cast lots to decide the assignment of the various daily tasks. It started with filling the lavers and preparing the altar.

At about 9:00 am, they opened the gates and blew the silver trumpets to announce the commencement of the morning service. The service included slaying the sacrificial lamb, salting the sacrifice, trimming the lampstand, burning the incense, presenting the burnt offering and drink offering, blessing the people and blasting the silver trumpets. This was followed by the Psalm of the day, presented by the singers, accompanied by instrumental music.

Immediately after the morning service, the Israelites might bring in their private sacrifices and offerings. It would occasionally continued till near the time for the evening sacrifice, which was about 2:30 pm. The evening service was similar to the morning service. It ended at about 4:00 pm.

At night, the priests kept watch about the innermost places of the Temple, including the inner court and the Temple itself. They also opened and closed all the inner gates.³

So what do we see here and what does it mean to us?

We already know that we are priests, called to serve the Lord and to dedicate our lives to Him.

So, we should be able to learn from how these men were divided and how they served.

First, these guys were called to serve from Sabbath to Sabbath.

As New Testament Believers living in the age of grace, we are to view *EVERY* day as a Sabbath to the Lord.

Hebrews 4.9 - There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

Now, pair that with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6.34:

Matthew 6.34 - Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Pair those things together and we can see our lives as a day-by-day opportunity to serve the Lord. Each morning, we arise in God's grace, resting in all that He has done for us, serving Him and offering our lives as worship and each evening the day ends, we lie down in bed and the Sabbath concludes, only to start again with the next morning and a new day to serve the Lord.

It is a wonderful freedom to understand that day by day we commune with God, walking with Him in peace and rest, what we can call a spiritual Sabbath every day.

Second, there were different classes of Levies. Priests, assistants, singers, musicians, gatekeepers, keepers of treasure.

There are many different aspects to serving the Lord. There are lots of different tasks that need doing not only in the Church but in the world at large. Different places, different ministries, different focuses, different people, different everything. How do we know where and how we are to serve the Lord?

Well, in the temple, the priests assembled together and cast lots to decide their assignment for that day. It was up to God, not man, to decide what job each person would do.

The schedule of service *itself* was up to the Lord to decide. I suppose that our man Gamul, called for the 22nd course, probably felt like the last kid picked for kickball when they were casting lots for the

³ http://www3.telus.net/public/kstam/en/temple/details/priest_service.htm

schedule of the priests. But, God's wisdom is to place His people where He wants, not necessarily where we think we'd be the most successful.

If we are trying to determine our service and our ministry without the Lord's input, then time and again we are going to be spiritually unsuccessful. His lot is the one that has been crafted and prepared for us, whether we think we deserve a different assignment or not.

Each morning these priests would assemble and see where the Lord placed them. Not based on earthly skill. Not based on merit. Not based on popularity or wealth. It was based on the power of God and the guidance of His Spirit.

Thirdly, we see their daily service. From morning to evening the priests would prepare and cleanse, serve and worship, sacrifice and teach, sing and read, minister and encourage. All day as they served the Lord they would be brought face to face with people who had come to meet with God. People who needed help. People who needed to meet with the Lord. They would be singing Psalms and songs to the Lord and they'd be reading from His word. They'd be getting their hands dirty as they prepared sacrifices and cooked in the temple, as they cleaned the floors or their garments or themselves. They would be in this constant state of devotion and service and humility and worship and effort continually throughout the day.

This is the pattern that our lives should follow. A life lived as a spiritual priest, who represents God to everyone around us. Not as a obstacle between God and men, but as a conduit through which God's Spirit and power can move and effect lives. This is the calling that we find ourselves a part of as Believers.

There is **SO** much we can learn by studying the Levites and the Priests of the Old Testament. These are just a few ideas. I would encourage you to dig deep into this idea and see how the Lord speaks to you personally by comparing your life to the lives of these faithful servants.

But this morning, where does our man Gamul fit in?

He was called to serve, like we are called. He was given a specific time and place to minister, just as we are. When he and his family weren't in official ministry in the temple, they were to serve the people they lived with, out in the countryside, just like we are.

Now, his name means 'rewarded' and 'matured.'

As we close, let's take these two descriptions to heart.

For a while now this theme of spiritual reward has been popping up in our various studies, whether here or Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights, the Lord seems to be reminding us of this principle.

God never forces us to do anything. As His spiritual priests, we are free to ditch our service to Him. We're free to sacrifice nothing to Him. We're free to ignore our calling and the opportunities He gives us to grow and serve.

But if we're willing to follow God in the path He's made for us, if we're willing to love Him in the way that He loves us, then the result is rewards. Whether it's jewels in the crown or this idea of the adornments on the wedding gown that we've heard about on Wednesday nights, our lives are full of

opportunities to adorn ourselves for our Bridegroom in eternity. God is a giver, and His desire is to give us rewards for our service. His desire is to pour out these spiritual blessings on us as we walk in His will.

If we are the kind of people who don't care about spiritual rewards, then, quite frankly, we need personal revival. We need to understand afresh what a relationship with Jesus Christ is all about. Because if we are satisfied with the corrupted things of earth and have no desire for the faultless rewards of eternity, then we have indeed drifted away from the first love that God wants for us and we are in great danger of becoming ineffective, unusable and saved as through fire. Gamul demonstrates that a servant of the Lord is rewarded for his faithfulness.

But also, Gamul's name meant 'matured.'

Serving God is not only about a future reward, as wonderful as that is, but it is also about growing in Godliness and wisdom, peace and fruitfulness here on the earth.

God has great fruit available to us if we are willing to live a life that has room for growth. A life that is devoted to Godly things, taking in God's word and His plan and then producing those things which He speaks about in the Bible.

When we serve, when we minister, when we worship, when we live like a New Testament priest, then the result is going to be growth. Maturity. And that Godly maturity impacts every aspect of our lives. Every relationship. Every decision. Every desire. If we devote ourselves to a life lived planted by God, drinking in His Living Water, then our lives will be powerful, purposeful, revolutionary.

I want that kind of life.

Today, let's enter into God's spiritual rest. Let's purpose in our hearts to serve Him and worship Him. Let's follow in the path that He is leading us. Let's respond to the call to be a mature, rewarded priest on behalf of Jesus Christ, our Savior, our Creator, our Friend.