

Immerse Day 43 :: March 31

It's hard to be a pastor. It's the greatest blessing in the world, and I couldn't imagine doing anything else, but it's hard to be a pastor. In fact, when I was first starting out in the ministry, my mentor told me, "Steve, if you can do anything else with your life and feel fulfilled, do it. But if you can't, then you know you've been called to the ministry."

After 25 years of ministry, I know what he meant. Being a pastor is hard, and unless you are called by God to it, it is an occupation to be avoided. But if you are called to it, it is the most important work you can do. But trying to run a school, a small business, an entertainment venue, a social reform movement, a counseling center, and a volunteer organization at the same time can be difficult. Sometimes we pastors wish there was just a simple set of rules, a simple playbook to follow.

But then we read Leviticus, like today's reading. And rules and a playbook don't seem quite so alluring. The steps the priests had to go through just for the offerings, day in and day out, every day, are daunting to say the least. From knowing which offerings were which, knowing which animal was necessary for which offering, and judging the financial means of a person to know how expensive their offering needed to be, just this alone was difficult. But then to know how to slaughter an animal, ranging from a bull to a dove, what to burn up and what to remove, where to take the offal and just how to burn it up outside of camp, what to wear and when, the rules just seem to go on and on.

But then we read about the ordination ritual, and I remember the incredible privilege of being a pastor. To be anointed with the oil of ordination, to be dressed in the one robe that marked you as the people's representative before God, that must have been amazing.

This summer we will all be able to take part in the ECC Ordination service, right here at LCC. We have 3 ordinands who will join us and after watching the service on our screens, singing the hymns, and hearing the speakers, we will be able to watch as three new pastors are ordained in our church. While the ceremony won't include any anointing with oil or golden head pieces, it will include the giving of stoles representing the yoke, the burden, of ministry, bibles representing the Word of God that centers our ministry, and the laying on of hands representing the passing on of the role of pastor and priest.

The bible calls us as God's people, "the priesthood of all believers." And as those anointed with the Holy Spirit for the task of bearing the Word of God into this world, we are blessed to be included in God's plan. But we know well that it's hard to be a pastor. But hang in there, everyone. Don't give up on your mission. Don't look for rest, or popularity, or comfort. God has anointed you for His good work. And there is no greater blessing.