

## Presbytery Services!!

- Services organised by Presbytery often get a bad name!
  - thought to be boring, staid, formal...
  - all the ministers at the front all dressed up, looking severe and formal!
  - quite a number of people's reaction to the Presbytery service at which I was inducted here was "that was great" (said in a surprised voice!), "most lively, helpful...", etc - and credit to David Clark and Janie Martin as well as folk here for that!
  - my point is that the expectation for a Presbytery service is that it will be poor!
- Such services most often mark the start of a new ministry in a congregation:
  - such as the induction service here
- If the service also marks the end of the training and the beginning of full time service, it will also include the minister's ordination, where the Presbytery formally marks them out to the particular role and responsibility God has called them to.
- What we have in the passages from Leviticus that we read earlier is a record of the ordination ceremony for the very first full-time "ministers", the priests.
  - Aaron and his four sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar
  - to mark their setting apart, by God, for the role he had called them to
  - and it took a week!!
  - *imagine a Presbytery ordination service that actually lasted a week, and didn't just feel like it did!!*
- Why is this important?
  - it points up two things that are central to our faith!

## The Danger of Holiness

- The first thing the account of this ordination service and its aftermath highlights:
  - God is holy
  - and such holiness is dangerous!
- We have an incredibly involved process of special clothing and sacrifices:
  - all pointing out the holiness of God
  - the difficulty in approaching Him
  - the burning purity that is His
  - like a fire - dangerous, we warn our children of the danger...
- God, through this ordination, through having a priesthood who will be devote their whole lives to worshipping God "correctly" is saying:
  - careful in approaching me - I burn!
- Consequences - death of Nadab and Abihu
  - no idle threat!
- We are just as unholy as Nadab and Abihu!
  - we deserve to be "zapped"
  - God is a holy God

## The Beauty of Holiness

### Wedding Dress

- amount of effort the bride (& often her mother!) put into choosing & fitting the dress!
- amount of time it takes to get the dress on!
- number of people who seem to be involved!
- All so that the bride is as beautiful, as radiant as possible when she comes down the aisle
  - all so that the very best that she can be is presented to her beloved!

- Something of that is going on here:
  - the clothing point to the care, effort, love, devotion that is being offered to God
  - but they also - and perhaps more importantly - point the other way
- God in his holiness is tremendously beautiful
  - holiness, purity is infinitely attractive
  - as the priest came to present worship to God, especially offering sacrifices on behalf of other people, he was in some senses representing God to them
  - God was experienced by the worshippers as beautiful, as attractive in the wonderful clothing the priest had on!
- *"Everyone under the age of 40 knows a Ray - not everyone knows a Cameron, but they wish they did!"*

## Conclusion

- God is dangerous in his holiness!
  - that is why we can't approach him casually
  - that is why Jesus had to come, because otherwise we would never be able to consistently live up to the standard required of someone coming into the presence of God!
  - like being able to stand still enough to not set off the burglar alarm in a house... for a while, but not for a whole night!!!
- God is beautiful in his holiness!
  - Jesus is supremely attractive!
  - allow ourselves to be drawn to him!
  - and Jesus holiness allowed him to satisfy the righteous demands of the Law on our behalf!