

As Peter continues his letter to the pilgrims of the dispersion, that is, those who had to leave their homes because of their faith in Christ, he writes to encourage them in the midst of their trials and to tell them that they can still have joy in Christ because of all that God has done for them through the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Last week we saw that Christ was the living stone, the foundation of their faith and as such they were living stones – the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He also told them that this living stone was an offense to some and that he would be rejected by some. He concluded by saying that those who rejected Christ were disobedient to the Word of God.

As he continues to encourage them he describes who they are in some very descriptive and graphic terms – and remember, what he tells them applies to us also. Turn with me to 1 Peter 2:9-10 (READ). Listen to these verses again – (READ again). All I can say is “WOW!” This is who we are!

The first thing that must be noted about Peter’s description of God’s people – that is, the Christians that he is writing to – is that the terms that he is using are not new. What Peter does is describe those first century Christians in the very same terms that God used to describe His people in the Old Testament. So we see immediately a connection between the Old Testament people of God, the New Testament people of God and, very importantly, us.

So now, let’s look closely at what he says. He calls them first, “*a chosen generation*”. Just as God had chosen Israel to be His chosen people, He has chosen Christians to be His people. In Deuteronomy 7:6 we read: “*For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*”

This is one of the more difficult teachings of the Scriptures – that God has chosen some people for Himself. But, it is a consistent teaching in the Scriptures from the beginning to the end.

I just quoted Deuteronomy 7:6, and in the next two verses tell us why – 7:7-8 we read: “*The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*”

We see the grace of God in choosing Israel as His people, just as we His grace in choosing us.

In Ephesians 1:3-5 Paul, in writing to Christians, tells us: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*”

If we call God our Father and Jesus Christ our Savior, it is because God has chosen us. It is a simple, and yet hard truth.

But Peter does not stop there. He then tells them (AND US!) that we are “*a royal priesthood*”. We mentioned this last week when we saw that Peter calls the believers “*a holy priesthood*” – and I said that this meant that we all have equal and immediate access to God through the Lord Jesus Christ who is our High Priest. We no longer need a priest to make a sacrifice on our behalf, we have direct access to God.

Again, this is not a new thought. As Moses was addressing the people of Israel for God he is told to tell them in Exodus 19:6: “*And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.*”

All of Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, in the sense that they were all to offer themselves as sacrifices to God. Since God was their King, and they belonged to God, they were “royalty” as it were, as Peter calls them.

And then, as we see in the passage from Exodus 19, they were also “*a holy nation*” as Peter calls them in verse 9. They were a holy nation in the sense that they were separated from all the people of the earth, that they might worship the one only true God, and abstain from the abominations that were in the heathen world – which is the same today — the non-Christian world.

The non-Christian or heathen world is in conflict with God and the things of God. Look at what is acceptable to the world but is an abomination to God – same sex-relationships, abortion on demand and worst of all – worship of other gods – whether they be Allah, Buddha, mammon or materialism.

God’s people, while they were in the world were not to be of the world. Again, as we have seen from our study of 1st Peter – our true citizenship is in heaven and we are just passing through this earth on our way there!

We see this in the last term that Peter uses to describe the pilgrims of the dispersion and us – “*His own special people*”. The original King James Version of the Bible translates this as “*a peculiar people*.” I like that – we are peculiar people ... we are different ... we get up on Sunday morning and go to worship instead of sleeping in or going shopping ... we believe God and what He says in His Word ... we believe that if God says something is wrong ... it is wrong! We are peculiar ... we are different from the rest of the world.

My wife takes care of handicapped children. The term today is “special needs” children – they have needs that are different from the rest. As Christians we are special ... we are peculiar ... we are different, there is no doubt about that.

That’s quite a description of who we are because of God’s grace and mercy. But as Peter goes on we see that there is purpose to what God has done for us and through us – “*that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*”

God’s choosing us for salvation is not an end to itself – in other words, our salvation is not all there is. We are also chosen to serve God. And one of the ways that we serve Him is to *proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*.

In other words, part of our calling by God is so that we tell others about Him. We can *proclaim the praises of Him* ... we can let others know what God has done for us.

We see two things here ... while it is God who does the choosing ... the calling ... we still have a responsibility to tell others. The reason we are to do this is because we were *called out of darkness into His marvelous light*. We were once in darkness, but now the light of the Gospel has been revealed to us.

The prophet Isaiah, in telling others about the coming Messiah says in Isaiah 9:2: “*The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.*” This verse is quoted by Matthew in chapter 4:16 about the Messiah who has finally come: “*The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has*

dawned.”

Darkness is the emblem of ignorance, sin, and misery, and refers here to their condition before their conversion. This is the condition of all without Christ. Light, however, is the opposite emblem — it is a beautiful representation of the state of those who are brought to the knowledge of the Gospel. We are now in the light of the Gospel.

And as such, we are to tell those still in darkness about the light of the Gospel. Further reason for proclaiming the praises of God is found in 1 Peter 2:10: “*who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*”

Think about – before faith in Christ we were nobodies – but now we are the people of God. What a tremendous thought! Once we had not been the recipients of God’s mercy, but now we have obtained His mercy.

The Apostle Paul, in describing the choosing that God does, says this in Romans 9:15,16 – again, quoting from the Old Testament: “*For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy."*”

Is it any wonder that Peter exhorts those who are pilgrims and undergoing persecution to *proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

As we think about what God has done for us, we need to remember that He has done everything for us and given us everything, especially the salvation of our souls. And in response, we are to tell others.

When the going gets tough – as it most certainly will, let us remember who we are, what God has done for us and what we have been called to do. “*But 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; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*”