

A Peculiar People

1 Peter 2: 9-10

It is quite possible that our text is familiar to many here today. We have read a portion of Peter's first epistle written to the church at large, scattered throughout due to intense persecution. It is widely believed the letter was written very early in the life of the church. He speaks simply, dealing with the purest doctrines of the faith.

As you read the epistles of Peter, you immediately sense the warmth of a pastor – one who cares deeply for the church and her well-being. He sought to challenge and strengthen the believers facing great adversity and opposition. He offers several reminders that they do not belong to this world, but are in fact just pilgrims and strangers passing through on a journey to the eternal home in heaven. Such encouragement was much needed and surely was well received.

While I am well aware that the western church is not dealing with the intensity of persecution the early church faced, Peter's words are relevant to believers of every age. We are facing an increasingly intolerant society, and we must remain strong even in the face of opposition. I hope these eternal words will challenge and strengthen our walk with the Lord, just as they did the early believers. I want to examine the [expectations](#) of Peter as we consider: [A Peculiar People](#).

I. The Character of Believers (9a) – [But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people](#). Having dealt with Jesus being the Chief Corner Stone of the faith, and the rejection of many to accept Him as the Christ, Peter addressed the character of believers. They were different than those who denied the deity of Christ. Every believer possesses these same characteristics. Consider:

A. Our Selection – [But ye are a chosen generation](#). I am certain this brought much comfort to the early believers. While the majority had rejected them, wanting nothing to do with them or their faith, Peter reminded them that were a chosen generation. While their situation may have appeared dire, they had reason to rejoice – they were chosen of God, saved by His grace, and placed within the body of Christ. They were no longer strangers from God, but strangers to this world. They had been called out of sin and condemnation unto forgiveness and life!

- Isn't that an amazing and humbling thought? God chose those of Peter's day and He has chosen us as well. We may be ridiculed and rejected by this world, but the saved are chosen by God. The guilt of our past is forgiven; we are cleansed in the precious blood of Christ, and promised eternal life. I remember being at recess on the playground as a boy. I wasn't the most

athletic, so I was typically one of the last ones to be chosen when the captains picked their teams. I wouldn't be chosen by the majority today, but I have been chosen of Christ my Lord!

B. Our Position (9a) – *But ye are a...royal priesthood*. Following their selection by the Lord, He immediately elevated their status. The majority viewed them as unlearned and ignorant. They were forced to the fringes of society, with little hope for inclusion. They may have lacked status within their culture, but God had positioned them within a royal gathering. He declared they had become part of an elite group – a royal priesthood.

- Being within this special group revealed a couple of significant characteristics. First of all they were now the servants of the Most High God. They had been provided the opportunity to serve the Lord and worship Him. That flies in the face of humanism and arrogance, but it is a great privilege to serve the Lord and devote our being to Him! *1 Peter 2:5 – Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

- Also, prior to Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sin, access to God was limited. The high priest was the only one permitted behind the veil where the Ark of the Covenant was located. He was the only one who had the opportunity to enter God's presence. He was thus responsible to be the people's representative to God. This changed as Christ fulfilled His redeeming work on Calvary. The veil of separation was torn in two. Man no longer had to depend on the high priest to take his petitions before the Father. Every believer has equal and unhindered access to the throne of grace! *Heb.4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

C. Our Separation (9a) – *But ye are a...holy nation*. The church had been chosen of God, called out to serve Him and proclaim the Gospel. Peter wanted to lovingly remind them of the responsibility to honor the Lord with the lives they lived. There would no doubt be temptation to abandon the faith and conform to the ways of the world. He reminded them they were a holy nation unto the Lord, quite literally a separated, set apart and different people. This nation would be comprised of people throughout the world, but they were all consecrated unto the Lord.

- They had not only been separated from the condemnation and eternal death of sin, but they were also expected to live separate from the practice of willful sin. This is a subject that is little preached and often ridiculed today. Those who continue to preach biblical separation are accused of being legalistic. While I agree we have not been called to live isolated lives, we have been called to live separated, set apart unto the Lord. One cannot engage in the pleasures and desires of the flesh and live a life of separation at the same time. The world must see there is a

difference! We have been bought with a price, placed in the body of Christ. Our actions not only reflect upon us, but they influence the overall testimony of the church. [Rom.12:2 – And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.](#) [2 Cor.7:1 – Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.](#)

D. Our Preservation (9a) – [But ye are a...peculiar people.](#) In our modern day some might take offense to Peter's description, but it actually revealed a great blessing. He is not implying that they were strange or difficult. This actually has the idea of *being the purchase possession of God, literally belonging to Him!*

- If that is peculiar by today's definition, and it likely is, then I will gladly identify as peculiar unto the Lord. I belong to Him; He purchased my redemption on the cross of Calvary. I am preserved within His loving care and grace. There is nowhere I had rather be than securely kept within the sovereign grip of my Lord. He loved us enough to die in our place and I have no doubt His great love and care will continue to guide and keep me throughout eternity. Thank God I'm peculiar!

II. The Charge to Believers (9b) – [that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.](#) Here Peter urged the church to faithfully witness of the grace they had received. Consider:

A. The Mandate – [that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you.](#) It's apparent that Peter does not offer a mere suggestion for their consideration. He challenged them with the responsibility to show forth, literally proclaim their praise unto the Lord. He wanted them to publicly and vocally identify with Christ. The word praises speaks of the Lord's *virtues, His excellencies, the sovereign qualities He possesses.*

- This mandate was not reserved for the early church alone. We too must be willing to proclaim the virtues of our Lord, telling a lost and desperate world of the loving and gracious Savior we serve. We cannot expect the world to embrace the Gospel if they never hear it proclaimed. The western church needs to regain her focus and once again unashamedly proclaim Jesus as the Christ, Savior and Redeemer of humanity! [Psalm 66:16 – Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.](#)

B. The Method (9b) – *that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Peter revealed a significant truth – their greatest influence for the Gospel was their personal testimony. Peter simply charged the believers to tell the world what Christ had done for them. Tell how He had brought them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Peter knew their personal testimonies would resonate with others.

- We tend to make this much more difficult than is necessary. You don't have to be a biblical scholar with a seminary degree to tell someone what Christ did for you. Those within your circle of influence are far more interested in your personal story than you realize. By sharing your story, others find hope. They begin to think if Christ did that for you, He would be willing to do the same for them. Tell others of how Christ delivered you from the darkness of sin and brought you into the light of grace.

III. The Change in Believers (10) – *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* Finally Peter spoke of the miraculous change that had taken place within the believers' hearts and lives. Consider:

A. Our Past – *Which in time past were not a people...which had not obtained mercy.* We all were born in sin, and because of sin we were alienated from God. We had not received the grace of God and experienced His great mercy. I remember the time in my past when I did not belong to the body of Christ. God was merciful and gracious in offering salvation, but I stood in danger of judgment.

B. Our Present – *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* Through the gracious provision of Christ and their receiving salvation by faith in Him, they had become the people of God. Their dreadful past of separation had become a glorious moment of inclusion and acceptance. They were part of God's eternal family, placed within the body of Christ.

- While I remember my past, I rejoice for all I currently enjoy in Christ. He offered grace and pardon to one who was undeserving. Because of my present state in Christ I am assured an eternal future. He could have left me in my sin and forced me to face the judgment I deserved. He would have been just in doing so, but thankfully He offered grace!

Conclusion: This is a beautiful passage that reminds every believer of who we are, where we've been, where we're headed, and what's expected in the meantime. I want to honor Christ with my life. Are you part of the group Peter described? If not come to Christ and be saved!