

Saved to Proclaim

1 Peter 2:9-10

Introduction

Why are you here this morning? Why are you a member of First Baptist Camden? Why are you visiting First Baptist Camden today? Is First Baptist Camden important? Is any church important? If so, why? If not, why bother?

Is attending church important? What about our life groups or our prayer meetings or outreach events?

Why does the church exist? Does the church exist to make you feel better? Does it exist to help you cope with all of your problems? Does it exist so that your family will be stable and happy? Does the church exist so that you can hear the style of music that you like or so that you can dress up in your finest clothes? Again, I ask, why does the church exist?

Well, these are the types of questions that I want to allow Peter to answer for us this morning from our text. I believe that the church is important and that it has a divine purpose for its existence, but my belief does not matter one bit if it is not Biblical, so to Bible we will turn, please turn back to 1 Peter 2:9-10...

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Exposition

I. Who Are We (Vs. 9a) - But you are...

As we have already seen in the book of 1 Peter, believers, that is, Christians, are the ones who are being built up into the "spiritual dwelling place of God." (Vs. 4-5). They have trusted in the salvation come from God. (Vs. 6-7) Believers make up the church of Jesus Christ. They gather together in visible assembly as a manifestation of the body of Christ. In verse 9, though, Peter is going to introduce and apply ancient language to his audience. He is going to use language that has a rich heritage in the Old Testament. Specifically, he is going to describe his audience of believers in four ways: a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nations, a people for his own possession.

So, let's start by looking at Peter's first description: A Chosen Race...

This language comes from **Deuteronomy 10:12-15**, which states,

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? ¹⁴ Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

So, what is Peter doing when he calls his audience “a chosen race?” He is alluding to the language of God’s election of Israel. In Peter’s mind, the church, that gathering of Jews and Gentiles in the name of Jesus Christ, constitute “the elect of God who have been born anew.” They constitute the “one race of people,” those born of God. How, according to Peter, does one become a part of this chosen race? By being born again! By being a part of the covenant people of God through faith in Jesus Christ. But there is more to Peter’s description of his audience. He goes on to refer to his audience as **A Royal Priesthood...**

Like the last description, this language comes from the Old Testament as well. Specifically, **Exodus 19:5-6**, which says,

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.

This is probably the richest passage in the Old Testament to be applied to the church, but there is a significant difference in the application. Notice how with the Old Testament passage, there was a degree of contingency. Exodus 19 said, “if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be to me a kingdom of priest,” but 1 Peter 2 says, “you are a kingdom of priest.” Through faith in Christ, we can be certain that we belong to His people. We are God’s people. We are a royal priesthood of priestly rulers who belong to God. But we not simply a chosen race and royal priesthood, we are also **A Holy Nation**.

Peter is drawing upon the language of **Deuteronomy 7:6-8**, which states

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

A holy nation. This means that Peter’s audience has been set apart, sanctified by God to be holy devoted to their God. And we, like his audience, as believers, as followers of Christ, have been called to holiness. To be known as God’s people in the world. Why? Because we are God’s possession, which is Peter’s final description: **A People for His Possession**.

Peter is continuing to take Old Testament language about the people of Israel and apply it directly to the church of Jesus Christ. Here, among other passages of Scripture, Peter echoes the message of Malachi 3:16-18, which reads

Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name. ¹⁷ “They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.” ¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

We have already seen the language of possession, but here we see in even more explicit terms, that God possesses the people for His own purpose, that the world may see the “distinction between the righteous and the wicked.” There is a purpose to God’s possession of His people, and that purpose, much like Israel in the Old Testament, is rooted in God’s work in His people.

TS – So, what is that purpose? At this point, Peter has identified his audience and thoroughly described them in relationship to the rest of Scripture, but question remains, why do they exist?

II. The Purpose – Vs. 9b – “that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

All of the glorious details of Peter’s description of the people of God are foundational to understanding why they even exist. Our existence as a member in the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, and the people who are possessed by God is moving in one great direction! That “you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light!”

So, what are the “excellencies of Him” that we are supposed to proclaim? Specifically in this context, the “excellences” refers to God’s powerful deeds of salvation in Christ Jesus. Note how the text goes on to describe God as the one “who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” He is the God of light who calls those in darkness into “his marvelous light.” It does not say that he calls “you” into light, but rather, into HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT; into personal fellowship and enjoyment of his glory.

And how are these excellencies of God’s salvation in Christ to be proclaimed? Through the Words and Deeds of the Church and Its Members (1 Peter 1:22-25, 2:5, 11-12)!

TS – In one sense this is all fine and dandy, but in another sense, what gives this multi-ethnic congregation of Jews and Gentiles the right to be described as the people of God and be commissioned with the purpose of proclaiming the praises of God? Where did this idea come from?

The reality of our identity and purpose as God’s people once again comes from the Old Testament, which Peter references again in verse 10. Here we will see that this was always God’s plan for the proclamation of His greatness...

III. The Plan – Vs. 10 – “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Foundational to Peter’s point is Hosea 1:6-9; 2:21-23. This passages speaks to the spiritual captivity that all people were in prior to the powerful work of God to save them. Hosea 1:6-9 says this:

She (Gomer the Prostitute) conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. ⁷ But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.” When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹ And the LORD said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

The next passage that Peter has in mind is Hosea 2:21-23, which states

And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, ²² and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, ²³ and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'”

So, what is Peter doing by referencing Hosea at the end of this passage about the church of Jesus Christ? Peter is simply reinforcing the great blessing of their salvation by pointing them to God's work on their behalf. He is the God who takes His enemies and turns them into His children. He is the God who takes who have no share in the promises and the blessings of God and makes them His own! This reality, according to Peter, should provoke us to tell someone about the “excellencies” of God's grace toward sinners in Jesus Christ!

In other words, you were once far away from God! You were separated from God! But now, in Jesus Christ you have been brought near to God! And that reality should move you to tell somebody about Jesus!

Conclusion

Peter is teaching his readers that the church has been saved for a divine purpose: to proclaim the glory of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to all peoples.

This is your purpose in life! This is why you exist! This is why First Baptist exist! To proclaim the excellencies of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to all peoples! This is God' purpose and plan for His people.

Which leads me to conclude by asking, “Do you belong to God's people? Have you experienced this type of grace? Has God drawn you into His marvelous light out of the darkness of your sin and rebellion against Him? It is my prayer this morning that today will be the day that you will become a child of God through faith in Christ! That today, you will become a member of the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the people possessed by God” so that you also might “know the excellencies of God's grace to you” in Jesus Christ!