

Being Chosen

1 Peter 2:9-10

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

I remember when I was a young boy, I often got up early Saturday morning to go to the lake to play hockey. A crowd of youth would quickly form and prepare the ice for what would be some rather rough but exhilarating time of skating, passing the puck, checking, and rooting one another on to what hopefully would be a glorious victory. Once the ice was ready the two best

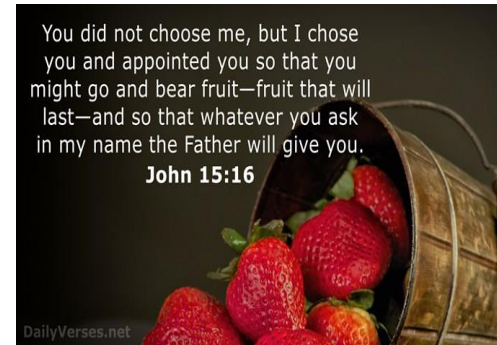


players were assigned captains whose first task was to take turns picking members for their teams. I dreaded this greatly for who wanted to pick the one who skated like a drunken sailor stepping off a Tilt-A-Whirl spinning at warp

speed? When a captain picks a person to be on their team, do they not choose the most skilled person first? For example, if one was to choose a person to join one's baseball team would not one jump at the chance to get a person that has the baseball skills of Babe Ruth or Ty Cobb? If one was to choose a person to join one's football team would not one first, choose a person that has the football skills of Jerry Rice or Jim Brown? If one was to choose a player to join one's hockey team would not one's first pick be the person who plays hockey like Wayne Gretzky or

Mario Lemieux? And if one was to choose a person to join one's Texas Scramble team would not one first choose a person that plays golf like Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, or our very own Mike Fahey? The reason why people get picked to be added to groups is usually because they have something special of value to add to the group.

The way in which God chooses people to be part of His kingdom servants is not based on their human abilities or status. God chose an occasional drunk man Noah to build an ark. God chose the 100-year-old man Abraham to become the father of a great nation. God chose a conniver and supper-controller Jacob to be called Israel. God chose a shepherd boy, adulterer, and murderer to be king of Israel. God chose a fear-driven wimp Gideon to lead His army. God chose the prostitute Rahab to provide refuge for the Israelite spies scouting Jericho and to be



part of Jesus' lineage. God chose a tax collector of Rome Matthew to be one of His twelve disciples. God chose a small boy to provide the five loaves and two fish used in the feeding of the 5,000. God chose

a persecutor of His very own Son Paul to be an apostle and spread the Good News to the Gentiles! To be a kingdom servant and do great things in Jesus' name does not require human but divine abilities. In writing to the church of Corinth Apostle Paul said, "not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth" when chosen by God to serve in His kingdom. "God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of this world to shame the strong" (1 Corinthians 1:26-27). When we

Christians were called from darkness into His glorious light (1 Peter 2:9) we were lost, entangled in sin, and without divine help incapable of becoming saved (Matthew 19:16-26).

God chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) not because of our merits, public status, or genealogy but out of His pleasure and by our faith in the atoning sacrifice of His Son (Ephesians 1:4-6; John 3:16) we became not just members but heirs of His kingdom (Romans 8:17).

It was only upon our conversion that we were given the spiritual gifts needed to perform the divine tasks He has assigned to us (1 Corinthians 12)! This was done so that no one could boast, and no one left out for all have been baptized by one Spirit and form a single body or team, each playing a position of equal value!

How we Were Chosen

To the Christians scattered across Asia Minor who felt like aliens and foreigners in a strange land Peter reminded them that their identity was not determined by their culture but in having been chosen by God as a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9a).¹ While we are tempted to view Peter's words as a call for "individual piety" taken in its proper historical context he is

¹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990-1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

² Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*. The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 116.

³ Douglas Mangum, ed., *Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament*, Lexham Context Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 1 Pe 2:9-10.

⁴ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Black's New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1969), 95-96.

actually referring to the "community of believers, the church, rather than individuals."² The phrase "chosen race," drawn from



Isaiah 43:20 and Exodus 19:6,³ signifies that the "church is the true Israel, the rightful heir of all the privileges pertaining to the Old Testament promises made to it."⁴ For example, the dwelling

place of God is no longer in the Jerusalem temple but in the hearts of the believer. The priesthood who alone had access to God were no longer limited to the physical descendants of Abraham but of those who had the same faith that he did.⁵

Those who have been called out of the darkness into the light form a "spiritual house" not due to the "ethnic identity nor geographical boundaries but rather based on their allegiance to their heavenly King, Jesus Christ, who is truly King of Kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16).⁶

Peter reassures both the Christians of Asia Minor as well as those today that despite being persecuted for righteousness sake we are to rejoice⁷ for it was none other than the Creator

⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 119.

⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 117.

⁷ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990-1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

and sustainer of all life, our Lord, Savior, and King who chose us to be forever part of His glorious family. Imagine what it would have meant to those living in Asia Minor amongst the Romans who constantly looked down at them to be elevated to the status of royalty as ones who would one day rule by Jesus' side as priests with full access and membership to God⁸ as His very own children!⁹ And unlike the being on a team where lack of performance means not being selected or kicked off the team, Christians are sealed by the very Spirit of God and as such are rest assured that their status as external heirs in God's kingdom team will never be revoked (Ephesians 1:13-14)! So, while our allegiance to the Lord brings persecution let us rejoice that we have every spiritual blessing possible (Ephesians 1:3) in He who purchased us at the price of His very life (1 Corinthians 6:19)!

Chosen for Holiness

After having told the Christians of Asia Minor that they were a chosen people Peter tells them that the new church in which they form is "God's special possession" and as such is to be holy (1 Peter 2:9b). It was upon our second birth of the water and Spirit that we passed from darkness to light and underwent a conversion that was so radical that it can only be called a miracle. While it was through faith in Jesus, we were saved it was by the power of the Spirit that our hearts of stone were turned to flesh and given life that this world does not possess. Though we live as "foreigners and exiles" (1 Peter 2:11) in a strange land (Philippians 3:20)¹⁰ we must not forget

⁸ Scot McKnight, [1 Peter](#). The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 114.

⁹ Scot McKnight, [1 Peter](#). The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 115.

¹⁰ Alan Carr, "[Reminders for Pilgrims and Strangers \(1 Peter 2:9-12\)](#)," in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 3328.

that we are "merely passing through"¹¹ to our eternal home in heaven that is currently being prepared for us. A "holy nation" means one distinct from the world and set apart to do the will of the one of whom is the cornerstone (1 Peter 2:4-7). Later in chapter for of his letter Peter reminds us that we have "spent enough time in the past doing what the pagans chose to do – living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry" (1 Peter 4:3).

We are to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16) for any other way is on the broad path (Matthew 7:13-14) that "contradicts our essence as a Christian"¹² and destroys the witness of the Light we profess to have within!

Praise be that Christ has given us what others do not possess, revealed truth others see as foolishness, and prepared a place for us which they cannot enter!¹³ So, let us enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise and though we are in many ways sheep amongst wolves (Matthew 10:16), let us boldly strike blows to bodies (1 Corinthians 9:27) by



¹¹ Alan Carr, "[Reminders for Pilgrims and Strangers \(1 Peter 2:9-12\)](#)," in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 3328.

¹² John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1990-1999\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[Marvellous Light](#)," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 48 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1902), 61.

confessing our sins (1 John 1:9) so that through the power of the Spirit we might be able to never stop doing His good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2). Let us think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable (Philippians 4:8) in the sight of our heavenly Father! Let us through off the human nature that says, “be like them to be accepted by them,” and let us be “set apart for God’s service” as those “inspired and sustained by His very Spirit.”¹⁴

Chosen as God’s Possession

While we were insignificant and unrighteous through the blood of Christ and the seal of the Spirit, we are God’s prized possession. “The literal meaning of the Greek words Peter uses means a people for acquisition or for keeping safe, the verb having the sense of gaining, acquiring, and also that of preserving, keeping for one’s self.”¹⁵ The children of Israel were told that “if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of the all the nations you will be my treasured possession” (Exodus 19:5). To the Christians scattered in Asia Minor Peter reminds that they too have been called out of the darkness into the light and are to offer their lives to God as a holy and living sacrifice. “For the



grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say NO to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who have Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14). As we serve our Lord, we are to do so with unspeakable joy in our hearts for His blessings are beyond measure! Despite having turned away from God (Romans 3:11-18), seeing the cross as mere foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18), indulging in the patterns of this world (Romans 12:1-2), and worshipping many gods, the Good Shepherd still saw the image of His Father within us (Genesis 1:27), called us by name and when we responded in faith gave us new life (John 3:16)! He loves us so very much that not only did God send His Son Jesus to atone for our sins but also gave us eternal life, the Holy Spirit to teach us truth and comfort us (John 16:13-15, 14:26-31). When we enter the deepest valleys of tribulations or face intense persecution for His name’s sake, He invites us to stand upon Him as an unshakeable rock and seek shelter under His wings (Psalms 18:2, 91:4)!

God thinks so much of us that He promises to never leave nor forsake (Hebrews 13:5-6) us for “neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else will separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39)!

¹⁴ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1969), 99.

¹⁵ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *1 Peter*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 72.

Chosen for a Purpose

Before I conclude I would like to tell a story of how “Doug Nichols, the International Director of Action International Ministries, made the excellencies of God known in a tuberculosis sanitarium in India in 1967—he was a missionary with Operation Mobilization and got TB. He was in the sanitarium for several months. He tried to give tracts and copies of the gospel of John away, but no one would take them. They didn’t like him and assumed he was a rich American. At one point for several nights he would wake up coughing at 2 AM. He noticed a little old emaciated man trying to get out of bed. The man couldn’t stand up, and began to whimper. He lay back into bed. In the morning the stench in the ward was terrible and everyone was angry at the old man for not containing himself. The nurse who cleaned up even smacked the old man for making such a mess. The next night the very same thing happened. Doug woke up coughing with his own terrible sickness and weakness. He saw the old man try again to get out of bed. Again he couldn’t stand, and began to cry softly. Doug got out of bed went over to the old man. The man cowered with fear. But Doug picked him up with both arms and carried him to the bathroom which was just a hole in the floor, and then brought him back. The man kissed him on the cheek as he put him down in bed. At 4 AM another patient woke Doug with a steaming cup of tea and made motions that said he wanted a copy of the booklet—the gospel of John. Through that whole day people kept coming to

him and asking for his booklets even though he could not speak their language.”¹⁶

We have been chosen to be on the best team ever, God’s kingdom team! As a member of His team we are not to merely revel in every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus¹⁷ but also to imitate Him and serve many! Peter tells us we are to “live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us” (1 Peter 2:12). John Piper rightly states, “you are not chosen, pitied, possessed, and holy just to fritter away your time doing nothing. You are called now to minister in the presence of God. All your life is priestly service.”¹⁸

Our identities are no longer defined like this world, individualistic for self-glorification, but once born again are defined based on our relationship to and inclusion in God’s family.

Peter tells us that “we are chosen by God, pitied by God, possessed by God, holy by God, and are royal priests by God!”¹⁹ God has given each of us our identities so that His identity might be known as His light shines in and through our very lives.²⁰ We were called out of the darkness into the light not so that we might be chameleons and imitate worldly ways but through our words, deeds and actions “share with the culture around us the mind set of Heaven!”²¹ And while it is

¹⁶ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 118.

¹⁸ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁰ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1990–1999)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²¹ Alan Carr, “Reminders for Pilgrims and Strangers (1 Peter 2:9–12),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 3329.

tempting to say that the churches in Asia Minor were “more pure, more godly, more evangelistic, more worshipful, more interrelated in fellowship, and more theological than contemporary churches”²² and therefore had a better chance of influencing their culture; the truth is we are still the bride of Christ²³ and as His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)! We must never forget we too are empowered to do move the mightiest mountains of disbelief and hostility that this world can muster and boldly declare “He who bought me bought you and offers you salvation this very day.” And to our captain, our Lord, Savior, and King we say thank you for saving a wretch like me for though I was lost I am now found and am willing to serve you forever, for you alone are my portion!

²² Scot McKnight, [1 Peter](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 111.

²³ Alan Carr, [“Reminders for Pilgrims and Strangers \(1 Peter 2:9–12\).”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 3329.