

Placed by God, Living for His Glory

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Preacher: Tyler Bittner

[0:00] Found your place there in 1 Peter chapter number 2. Begin reading in verse number 4. Actually, just start in verse number 1 and we'll read down through verse 10. He said, He said,

But now have obtained mercy. Peter's reminding them and he's kind of reminding, hey listen, remember where you used to be, but look where you are now.

You've been placed in something much greater than we could even imagine and God is not done building our lives. He's not done working in them and he's got a plan for us and we're going to see it here tonight.

So let's ask him to bless our time together. Father, thank you for this opportunity to gather again to open up your word. Thank you for this letter that you included for us, Lord, that we can see that even when times are difficult, even when the world seems to be going the opposite direction, you still have a plan.

You still have a purpose. You still have a job for us. And Lord, we're thankful for that. I pray that you would just help us to take some of these truths that we see here in your text tonight and apply them to our life.

[2:26] I pray you would just help me, Lord, that you would guide my thoughts and words. And we ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. How many puzzle people do we have in here?

You better raise your hand, Miss Brenda. I know some of y'all do. And I know Miss Brenda does too as well. And, you know, sometimes I like completed puzzles. But sometimes I don't have the patience and the attention span to do a puzzle.

And some of them are so intricate. You can see in there, you people that do like snow puzzles, y'all are crazy. Because I'm like, everything just looks white on the thing. But, you know, I remember as a kid trying to do a puzzle and just getting tired of it.

I'm just going to force the puzzle piece somewhere so I can just move on. I mean, because, you know, you're looking for a certain section. You're looking for a corner piece. You're looking for all of these things. And the colors kind of look right.

The shape looks, you know, close enough. So you're just going to jam it in there. And you push it in there and you turn it a little and you push it harder and it still doesn't fit. You think, well, if I just step back far enough, it looks like it's okay.

[3:31] But the reality is, you know that peace doesn't belong there. That peace had a place. It just wasn't that place. And when we come to the Word of God and when we come to our life as Christians, sometimes it's difficult as we're living here in this world.

As we're here in the in-between, so to speak, of salvation and heaven. And we try to sometimes fit in. I mean, we don't want to be that person that sticks out like a sore thumb.

And we try to belong. And we try to just kind of make life work the best as possible we hear. But something just sometimes feels off. It just feels a little bit different.

And sometimes we fight that and we think, I don't like this feeling. But we come to our text here this evening and Peter reminds us, that's a good feeling to have. In fact, that's exactly how you should feel because you weren't made to fit into this world.

Praise the Lord for that. I'm so thankful that this isn't it. That this isn't all that life is. And I'm thankful for the blessings that we have on this side. But I'm thankful for what is coming.

[4:40] And Peter reminds these original listeners, these original hearers, that they were made and they were placed into something far greater when Christ came into their life. He's writing to these men and women, these strangers, these pilgrims, these that are just passing through.

We think to ourselves, well, if I don't belong in this world, where do I belong? And that's what Peter answers. That's kind of where he's been leading it up to in the first chapter. He's reminding them of all the things they had in Christ.

But now he's kind of moving into chapter 2 and really through the rest of the book. He's saying, take all of those things we've looked at and it's going to affect how we live. And it's going to remind us where we belong.

And here's where we belong. We belong with Christ. The Bible tells us that we're already seated in heavenly places with Jesus Christ. That our citizenship is no longer here on this earth.

This is not our final destination. And he says, listen, God is building something. And you're the right piece and the perfect piece for what he's doing. Which is an amazing thing to think about.

[5:44] That God wants to use this piece. That he wants to use you. That he wants to allow us to have a job in his grand plan of redemption. But God's not building a physical structure.

He's not building this massive building that we can see. No, what he is doing, the Bible tells us, we already saw here in our text in verse 5. He's building a spiritual house. He's building a spiritual family.

And as a believer, you're not just saved. Yeah, you're saved, but you're placed in your position. And you belong to him. That's a beautiful thing to be reminded of.

So with that foundation, Peter's going to show us just a couple truths in these few verses we read. That just give us hope for the journey. Number one is this, that we are God's spiritual house. Verse number 5.

So Peter brings our mind to a house being built.

[6:53] And we think of a house and we'll drive by. And we drive by things around Gainesville. And they're building all kinds of things it feels like. And if you're like me and my family, we're like, wonder what that is. Look it up. Google it.

Figure out what's going on there. We want to know what's taking place. But we know something's happening. Because they start moving dirt around. And then they lay a foundation. And we start trying to guess of what it is.

And Peter's saying, listen, this thing that God is building is not a structure. It's made of people. And that kind of is a weird analogy to think of in our mind. But he tells us who these people are.

He's saying it's those that are saved by the blood. We sang this morning. It's those that Christ has changed their lives. He refers to it as this, lively stones.

That we have a hope that is secure in Christ. And the reason we're alive is because we were once dead. And then Jesus showed up in our life. And now we're alive.

[7:51] I know it's super deep tonight. And we're going to, it's going somewhere. But we're not just alive. God didn't just save us so we could just kind of get out of here when he comes again.

We already talked about it this morning. He saved us to be ready and to be working. We're to occupy till he comes. But our life is not built on our good deeds.

Our life is not built on who we are and what we do. That's not the foundation that God is building with. What is the foundation? Verse number four says this.

To whom coming as unto a living stone. We see in verse number six that he's talking about the chief cornerstone, elect and precious.

See, what our life is built on, the family that we're built into, the house that God is building, it is all based on Jesus Christ. And just as we've been made alive, that's why Jesus is the living stone.

[8:50] Because Jesus' whole mission and his whole goal and his whole purpose was to come and to give his life a ransom for many. But we don't, I'm looking forward to Easter, but we can celebrate the resurrection and we should every single day.

Because we don't serve some person laying in a tomb. No, he's alive and he's alive forevermore. That is the foundation of everything we do.

And Peter was reminding him then of this truth because life was hard and it just seemed like I'm not sure I can hold on. Well, here's the great news. It's not built on you.

It's not built on your foundation. It's built on the fact that Jesus lived and he died and was buried and he rose again. Peter already told us in verse number 3 of chapter 1, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Listen, I'm so glad we serve a risen Savior. I'm so thankful that I can talk to him whenever I want to. That I can go boldly into the throne room because Jesus, he's not lifeless.

[10:08] No, he's active and he's on the throne and he's victorious and he wants us as his children to be a part of that. That he's building our life on that same principle.

And Peter wants us to see something though. That this cornerstone, this living stone that is Jesus Christ, there's some people that have differing opinions on who it is.

That God and sometimes mankind have differing opinions on the stone. In verse 7 and 8 we see this, Listen, we can come on a Sunday night and we can be excited about the songs that we sing, that he is able to deliver thee and we're reminded of the truth of who God is.

But here's the sad reality. Many men reject Jesus Christ. We'll hear it today and they won't come out and just be mean about it. They'll say, hey, he was a great teacher.

And he was. I mean, the morals of Jesus, we just need to be good and moral like Jesus was. And we should. But Jesus didn't come to be a teacher. He didn't come to be a moral compass in that sense.

[11:36] No, he came as a savior. Jesus isn't something that we add on to our life, that we were almost there and we were going to cross the finish line and we needed just a little bit of help and Jesus showed up right on time.

No, we were dead. We had no hope. We had a debt that we could not pay. And when Jesus comes, you cannot remain neutral.

And what Peter is alluding to, it's prophecies we see throughout the Old Testament. We'll dig in here in just a minute. But in Psalm 118, verse 22, it's prophesied that this stone, this Messiah that would come, the builders would reject it.

The builders would refuse. Sometimes you're ever building something and they deliver something to your build site. Or you go to Home Depot. You know, like when I go to Home Depot, I pretend like I know what I'm doing.

Anybody else like that? I just kind of watch what all the other guys are doing there and I'm like, let me see if this two by four is straight because that's what it looks like. Like I can do anything with a two by four. Like I just, I'm going to know if it's straight or not.

[12:38] But you know what you do? You look at it and you reject it. You say, I don't like this one. I don't like this one. But what Peter's reminding us here is that's what a lot of people do with Jesus.

They like the idea of a God. They like an idea of a Savior as long as that Savior is the type of Savior they want.

It's the type of Savior they're looking for. Because they would look at our life and we would look at our life and say, well, this is my greatest need. You say, well, what do you mean? Well, look at the Gospels. The reason they had such an issue with Jesus, there's multiple reasons, but one of the overarching things is because they thought the Savior they need is a political Savior.

Because in their mind, their greatest problem was Roman oppression. Rome had no business in Israel's affairs. And so what they thought the Messiah would do is he would show up and he would kick Rome out and make Israel what it should be in their minds.

But their greatest need was their sin debt. And when Jesus began to speak of suffering, when he began to speak of sacrifice, they're thinking, whoa, that's not the kind of God that I signed up for.

[13:49] That's not the kind of Savior that we're looking for. And Jesus showed up and he began to preach and he showed love and he showed compassion. He didn't come on a conquering horse.

No, we're going to see next week on Palm Sunday, he came on a donkey. He came signifying peace. He came with the message of hope. And the Bible tells us in John 1.11 that he came unto his own and his own received him not.

They said, man, we've been waiting all this time and this is what we get? Some random rabbi from Nazareth? There's no way this can be the one that was prophesied in Isaiah, that was prophesied in Micah.

This is no way this is the Savior. Because of that, this stone, this living stone, the foundation of all of our lives, the foundation of the plan of God before the foundation of the world, here's what they did. They rejected it. And they dismissed it. And they kind of cast it aside. They looked at Jesus like a broken piece of pottery and said, well, that's not worth anything. And just threw it away.

[14:56] We'll find our own Savior. But it really doesn't matter if men reject or accept because it doesn't change the fact of who Jesus is.

Because the Bible tells us in verse number four, to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.

Listen, Jesus wasn't in the right place at the right time and all of a sudden become the Savior of the world. That's not how it happened. No, this was planned in eternity past.

And it was by the will of God that this took place. And all throughout the New Testament and really the Gospels, God puts his stamp of approval on Jesus. At his baptism, he says, Behold, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

There on the Mount of Transfigurations, over and over again, God was reminding, hey, this is the plan. And what God did is he has already given us the verdict of his Son through the resurrection and through the ascension and through the exaltation that already has taken place and will come to pass.

[16:04] Because the Bible tells us very clearly in Philippians 2, verse 9, that God hath also highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

And listen, there is coming a day where that will take place. That all these people say, There is no God and there is no Savior. And hey, we're just going to try to be the best people we can. They're going to realize one day that there is a God and that there is a Savior.

And his name is Jesus Christ. And while we live in a world that really rejects Christ and even looks at him as a failure, and he was just this kind of good teacher some 2,000 years ago, some shadowy figure in the Middle East, God says, No, he's chosen.

And he's precious. He's the honored cornerstone. And here's where it becomes personal for us and what Peter wanted them to understand. If you know Christ as your Savior, if you've come to him with all these things, you're now a living stone in him.

That you're built on the same foundation and the same power that walked Christ out of the grave lives within us. And that we can be a part of this work that he's done and every stone is unique.

[17:20] Every stone is valuable. Every stone is chosen. It's placed exactly where God wants it. And Peter was reminding them this because at times it can feel like, What is all this thing?

What is life? It feels so random sometimes. And he's saying, Listen, No, you're part of something great. Listen, I think human beings, it's kind of built into us.

We want to be a part of something. We want to be a part of something that's growing and it's healthy and we feel like we belong. Listen, this is the greatest thing we can belong to. It's God.

That we've been purchased. That he bought us with his own precious blood. So not only have we been placed in this house because he's alive and he's given us his life.

But Peter shows us that we have a function within the house. Anybody have like furniture and things in your house that's just, you're like, What is that? I don't know. It's just there. You know, you want things in your house that are functional.

[18:21] You know, that's what we say. We want a functional living space. Whatever that means. You know, that's just, but we want it to be able to work. And here's what God says. Listen, when you're in the house, when you're part of what I'm building, I have a job for you.

I have something I want you to be a part of. He says this, that you are in holy priesthood, verse 5, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Now, there's quite a few times in these few verses we read that Peter's writing to mainly Jewish believers. And some of these things, man, they would have immediately just ran back to the Old Testament.

They would have understood what he was saying. And when we study the Old Testament, you can see that only certain men could approach God. The priests were kind of the go-betweens.

They were the mediators. And there was different sections of them. And there was one high priest who once a year would go into the holies of holy and make a sacrifice there. And it was kind of a long process.

[19:20] And all of it was there to picture the coming Christ. And I'm thankful that we don't live in the Old Testament. Am I the only one? I'm thankful for it.

I'm thankful that once for all, the sacrifice has been made. That we don't have to go through a priest. We don't have to allow somebody else to go to us. No, I'm so thankful based on the Word of God that every believer has access and has a role for God and is called to serve.

And he's saying that's what you're here for. That you weren't just saved to sit. You weren't just saved to hold on. No, you were saved to serve. You were saved to give a sacrifice. And if we're a holy priesthood, if we're set apart, that's what that word holy means. We talked about it already, set apart, different. What are we to sacrifice?

He says a spiritual sacrifice. Paul says it like this. That we're to lay our life down. That our life should be on the altar.

[20 : 24] That we're to sacrifice ourself. And it has this idea, Lord, whatever you want me to do, I'll do it. God's not calling us to sacrifice animals. Praise the Lord.

Like, I just don't think I could do that. I'm good at eating animals. That's just the only thing I know about it. But I don't want any part of that. I get a little squeamish. I like when it just shows up on my plate already fried.

Okay, that's what I'm just making sure. No, but we're to offer our life as a sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

We sing that song sometimes, that chorus, Take my life and let it be. Consecrated, Lord, for thee. Listen, if we're part of this house, if we are a lively stone, then that should be our prayer.

It's not just for young people to say, Hey, well, give your life to the Lord. No, all of us should give our life to the Lord. That God is calling all of us to do something. We can do this. We can be a priest, this holy priesthood, by serving others.

[21 : 29] By giving generously. By worshiping faithfully. By choosing to obey the commands of God. That we are His people. We are His house.

That we are excited. We're thankful. We're not serving because we're forced to. No, we're serving because we love Him. That's what the whole book of James is about. And Peter takes it one step further.

He shows that not only does this stone, it's important on how you respond, but he shows the different ways people respond. And in these following verses, he reaches back in the Old Testament and pulls from three key passages.

He looks at Isaiah 28, 16. He looks at Psalm 118, 22. And he looks at Isaiah 8, 14. And all of those passages, along with many others, they point to this. Jesus is the stone.

He is the stone. The Bible tells us there in verse number 6, Wherefore, also it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect and precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.

[22 : 37] The cornerstone is the most important stone in the whole structure. It is the standard that everything else is measured by.

That's what a cornerstone is. It is vital that it is good. The alignment of the entire building is based off that cornerstone. And if the cornerstone is off, then everything else is off.

And what many people do, they look at Jesus and they say, well, it's just a little off. It doesn't match. No, we don't get to determine and define what is right and what is wrong.

That Jesus is the standard. That He is what everything is measured off of. And Peter is saying, if the cornerstone is perfect, and it is because God laid it. Listen, this plan of salvation, humanly speaking, makes no sense.

We probably could think we could come up with a bunch of different plans, but that's, it's not our job. No, God laid the stone. Not man, not religion, not tradition, but God.

[23 : 43] And that's what He's reminding us, that He's the one that chose that. And He gives this promise, if we believe that, he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Or we could, it could be translated like this, shall not be ashamed.

Because sometimes we're going to take some ridicule because we place our faith and trust on Jesus and Jesus alone. And people will look at us and say, well, Jesus is just a crutch for the weak. No, He's the cornerstone for everything. That He is what our life should be built on. And when we rest on that truth, we may not fit in, and we shouldn't fit in.

But the truth of it is, is that you'll never be put to shame. You will never regret trusting Christ. I've stood beside the bedside of people as they're about to step into the presence of the Lord.

And I've never heard somebody say, I regret living for the Lord. But I have heard people say, I wish I would have done more for the Lord. And I believe when we see the Lord face to face, we're all going to think, I wish I would have done more for the Lord.

[24:52] We're never going to be ashamed. We're never going to think, man, this is a bad decision. And the world may reject Him, but those who have trusted Him will stand accepted before God. Because He is the cornerstone.

And that's what our life should be built on. You want to talk about real security, you want to talk about real hope, it's in Jesus Christ alone. That's what Peter's saying. But not only does the cornerstone save, He says that stone also causes people to reject.

That stone which the builders disallowed. We kind of already hit on this a little bit, but we just want to unpack it a little bit more. That's what happened to Jesus. That the builders, and who He was specifically talking about in the New Testament, would have been the Jewish people.

The ones that should have known. And they did know. And when Jesus showed up on the scene, every prophecy they had studied, and they had learned, and they were looking for, when He showed up, they thought, well, this is not how we thought it would look.

And they threw Him away. I mean, really what they did is, they looked at Him, and said, He doesn't fit. He's not what we need at this moment. They kind of looked at the puzzle piece, and they tried to put it into their life, and they said, well, no, we'll come back to this later.

[26:12] And they threw Him away. And they got rid of Him. And let me just remind you, people still do the same thing today. They were not called to evaluate Jesus by our standards.

We're not called to reject Him when He doesn't fit our lifestyle. No, we are to be conformed to Christ. Christ isn't to be conformed to us.

Jesus isn't somebody we just put in our pocket when we need a little bit of help. No, our life should revolve around Him. Because that's what we're building it upon. And Peter says, not only do some people reject the stone, but the stone, it causes some people to stumble.

Verse 8, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

See, here's the idea Peter wants us to see. Jesus is not neutral. There's no middle ground. You can't say, well, I'm just not going to make a decision.

[27:19] No, when it comes to this living stone, when it comes to Jesus Christ, you either build your life on Him, or you stumble over Him. That's the only two options that you have.

And why do they stumble? It's not from a lack of evidence. It's not from a lack of understanding. No, it comes from this, a refusal to obey.

The truth was presented. The evidence was laid out. And we've seen it all throughout the New Testament. And even people today, well, I don't want to, I can't believe that.

It's not that you can't believe it. It's that you refuse to believe it. Because the evidence is overwhelming that, that Jesus Christ is who He says He is, that He did what the Bible says He did, and He still changes lives today.

And we talked a little bit about this morning, and really the sobering truth is this, that if someone rejects Christ as Savior here, they are going to fall before Him one day as a judge.

[28:17] And that's this rock of offense. Jesus didn't come to be a stumbling block. But when we refuse to look at the truth, when we refuse to open our eyes, that's what happens.

You ever try to walk somewhere with your eyes closed? You know, and you get up in the middle of the night, you got to go to the restroom, you need a midnight snack. I try to keep my eyes closed as long as possible. Because if you're like me, as soon as my eyes, if they're open long enough, I'm not going back to sleep.

And you know, I think to myself, well, I know my house pretty well. But I also have kids. And sometimes they just decide, this is a great spot to leave something. Sometimes the kids, their name is Tyler.

And I'm like, who left this shoe here? Well, it was me. I didn't see it because my eyes were closed. It doesn't mean that it's not there. It doesn't mean the truth isn't right in front of me. There's a lot of people in this world that just walk around with their eyes closed and say, well, it's just not true. Just because you close your eyes doesn't mean it's not true. I remember when my kids were real little, I'd come in and say, is your room clean? They're like, yeah. I'm like, just because you close your eyes, I can still see your room is messy.

[29:22] And we laugh at a little situation like that, but that's how people live their life. And when we live our life like that and we move forward like that, if we're doing that, we're going to stumble over that.

But I'm thankful that he opened my eyes. That's what the gospel does. Maybe the first time you heard the gospel, you're like, I don't like that. You know why? Because the truth hurts sometimes. You know, because I would imagine the overarching theme when people hear the gospel, well, I'm a good person. You know, we live in the Bible belt. I do nice things.

I'm not as bad as some people. Listen, that's not what saves you. But the more that I heard the gospel, I realized, that's me. That should be my cross. That's my sin that held him there.

And when we look at Christ like that, we're going to run to him instead of stumble over him. So Peter shows here in these first few verses what this cornerstone does.

[30 : 21] It either changes your life or you're going to stumble over it. But he goes on to say, if you accept Christ, if you come to the realization that you're a sinner and he's a savior and you call upon him, it's going to change everything.

And not only are you God's spiritual house, you are God's spiritual people. That's what he says in verse number nine. But ye, talking, he's writing to these believers, ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that you should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Which in times past were not a people, but are now a people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

I love that three-letter word that we see in the Bible all the time, but. I mean, there's some great verses that start that way. We're reminded of who we are, but ye are.

And that really, that phrase, it changes everything here because he's moving out of being a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And he begins to describe those in Christ by looking at our identity from several different angles.

[31 : 40] The first thing he calls us is this. If we know Christ, we're a chosen generation. And this would have been shocking for them to hear in the first century. Because even at this time, and you, we saw Peter, and Peter's grown a lot by this point.

Because even after Christ rose from the dead, and even after God was moving among the Gentiles, they still wanted to have this Jewish sect and this Gentile sect. They didn't really want to cross lines. They didn't like to be together. And Jesus, through the inspiration, Peter, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, listen, you're all in one family. You know, sometimes we look at our own family and think, I'm not sure I want to be in your family.

Okay. Some of you are like, yeah, don't point at people in here tonight. But in Peter's day, there would have been hostility between Jews and Gentiles.

There would have been division. There would have been deep prejudice. But he says, because what Christ has done, listen, you're in this family the same way they're in this family.

[32 : 42] Not from anything you've done, but God chose it. God's the one that placed you in here. You didn't get some special privilege because you were a Jewish person and you were a Gentile person.

No, the same gospel and the same Savior that saved them saved you. And because of that, you are together. In Ephesians chapter 2, we don't have time to go into that, but it says, listen, Jesus made both those things one.

For by grace are you saved through faith. It's not of your works, it's a gift, not of works that any man should boast. And we see that over and over, that we're not divided by race, our background, our culture.

No, we're chosen from all races, from all kindreds, from all tribes, and we become one spiritual people. You read the book of Revelation, it's going to be shocking.

Listen, they're not all going to be Baptists, and they're not all going to be Americans. I'll stand on that, because I'm pretty sure the Bible says, from every tribe, and every tongue, and every nation, we are going to be there.

[33 : 46] And here's the reason why. We're in the same family. That God is building a people, that is not based on skin color, it's not based on religious background, no, it's based on the fact that we know Jesus.

See, before you knew Christ as your Savior, before you were placed into this spiritual house, and this spiritual family, your identity may have been rooted in your past, in your background, in your family, in your culture, but here's where it changes when you know Christ.

It's in Him, and Him alone. I mean, you read throughout the New Testament, read Paul's letters, and you're going to see that little phrase, over, and over, and over, in Christ. That's the difference. That's where our identity is. That's what we're banking on. We belong to a new family. He said, you're a chosen generation. Number two, he says, a royal priesthood. Earlier, he called us a holy priesthood. So not only are we set apart, we're royal. I like that. I like the thought of that.

[34 : 55] Here's what it means. It means we don't just serve. No, we serve a king. We don't serve just a king. We serve the king of kings.

That we are in His presence, and not only that, we serve each other. And when you study Scripture, you're going to find out this, that Jesus is both king and priest. You come to the Old Testament, there was priests, they had their job.

There was kings that had their job. There was prophets that had this. Here's the beautiful thing. Jesus is all of those things. What you're going to begin to see is everything in this Bible, it points to one person, Jesus.

That we are living our life for Him, and because we're in Him, we are holy priests, we are kingly priests, and we don't have to go through other people we mentioned already. That you have access.

The book of Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 16, let us go boldly into the throne room. You don't have to have your preacher pray for you. I will, and I do, and you should pray for one or another, but you can go right to Him.

[35 : 55] Why? Because we're a holy priesthood, a royal priesthood. He goes on to say in verse number 9, we're a holy nation. Kind of reaching back into the book of Exodus when He referred to Israel as that.

And I'll just say this, we don't have time to get into all this, the church did not replace Israel. I just want to throw that out there. There's a weird thing called replacement theology where God used Israel for a while, but now He got rid of them, and the church is here.

God's not done with Israel. I just want to let us know that. The church is not the new Israel. No, God still has a purpose. He still has a plan. That's a whole other message for a whole other time.

But what He talks about as a holy nation is that we are set apart, that we're different by design.

Because when He called Abraham out, that's what He was doing.

He was making Abraham different. He had chose them. He had called them out to make a great nation. And our allegiance, if we're in Christ, is not to a country.

[36 : 57] Listen, I'm thankful to be an American. I am so thankful for the blessings that I have that I was born in a great country where I could hear the gospel. And I'm going to defend her, and I'm going to love her with all her problems.

But listen, my allegiance ultimately doesn't lie to this country. Because I'm looking for a country and for a city whose builder and maker is God. Our allegiance is there. My allegiance isn't to a culture. I'm not trying to blend in with the culture. No, it's not to a system, but it's to Christ and Christ alone. That's our nation. That's our country. And see, here's the tension that these early believers would have had.

Many think that they were persecuted because they worshiped God. Many people then, and I would venture even to say today, many people don't care that we worship Jesus.

Here's the difference that we worship Him and Him alone. Rome was a very polytheistic society. Ancient Greece was the same way.

[38 : 01] Egypt was the same way. But here's where people have a hard time because they'll say, well, you can serve your God how you want to. I love Jesus, but it's just not my Jesus. Listen, we said this morning, there's only one way.

He is the way, He is the truth, and He is the life. And we still have this same tension. That we have a dual citizenship. We live here on this earth, but our main citizenship is in heaven.

And sometimes that's going to clash. And sometimes it's going to create tension. And sometimes loyalties are going to collide. And we've been talking a little bit, we get so wrapped up in living for here that we forget we're actually supposed to be living for there.

And it becomes a difficulty. And that's what Peter was reminding them. Wherever you might be, he's saying, you know, they're persecuted, they're spread out. You still belong to God. That that's where your allegiance lies.

He goes on to say this, that we're a peculiar people. Some people take this part of the verse and completely misapply it.

[39:10] We today in 2026, we hear the word peculiar, we say things like this, well, they're very peculiar. We think they're weird. They're odd. God is not calling you to be weird and odd.

That might be your personality. Cool. But that's not what he's saying. Hey, I want you to just go be as weird as possible for me. That is not what this word peculiar means. Here's what it means. It means different. It means precious. It means treasured. It signifies ownership and distinction. There should be a noticeable difference about our life.

The way that we live, the way that we talk, where we go, what we do. It's not that we're trying to be better, but listen, we have a different family. You ever gone to somebody's house? Maybe you thought somebody, you thought what you did at your house was normal.

And then you get married, and you're like, what are you doing? You're like, well, this is how we've always done it. You're thinking, I married a weirdo. You go to somebody else's house, and you're thinking, what are they doing?

[40:14] Like, who does this? Listen, there's a difference in how people live. Lost people are going to live like lost people. But people that have been saved and become lively stones and are part of something that God is doing and God is working in their life, it should be different.

He says in verse number 10, which in times past were not a people. See, listen, before salvation, we had no identity.

We didn't really belong to anything. Wherever the wind went, we thought, well, let's try that. Maybe I'll find some peace there. Maybe I'll find some happiness there. Maybe I'll find something that's going to help me.

But you know what? We never found it. But he goes on to say in verse number 10, but now, but are now the people of God. See, we're peculiar.

We should have a mark of distinction. Why? Because we belong to God. Because he's our father. We should resemble him. That's what Jesus is talking about in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

[41:17] That we, we're to look like our father. We're to act like our father. Why? Because we're in the same family. As much as you try to not act like your parents, it just, it's just going to come out.

You try to, you try to hide it as much as possible. It's just built in there. But as Christians, it should be built in there as well. We should have that mark of distinction in our life. He goes on to say in verse number 10, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Listen, we used to be guilty, but now we're forgiven. And he's saying because of that, because of who you are, that you're a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, there should be something you do.

Look at the end of verse number 9. You should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

See, we're not called just to gather here at Central Baptist Church when the doors are open. We should. Here's what we're really called to do. Go. We're to go you therefore and to preach the gospel.

[42:25] What are we going to tell him? We're going to tell him what Jesus did in our life. How he called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. How we were going down a road and we were hopeless and we were helpless, but he showed up and everything changed.

Listen, you should never get over the fact of what Jesus did for you. We get all excited that we're going to be walking on streets of gold and sitting at a table with God and we're part of his family and we're trying our best to be ready and to live like it, but part of that is to share what he's done with others.

That's what he's called us to do. You were in darkness, but now you're in light. You were in sin, but now you found forgiveness. You were completely dead, but you're alive.

Paul told the Colossians in chapter 1 verse 13, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear son, in whom we have the redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

See, this light isn't just different, it's life-giving. That marvelous light, it didn't just make your life a little bit better. No, it completely transformed you. In John chapter 1, in him was life, talking about Jesus, and the life was the light of men.

[43:41] And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. I mean, from the very beginning, we see that God has always been in the business of bringing light out of darkness. In the beginning, he said, let there be light, and there was.

And we think, man, what a miracle. Here's the beautiful thing, he did the same thing in your life, if you know him as your savior. You were in complete darkness, and you saw the light, you heard the word of God preached, and it changed you completely.

And Peter says, tell somebody about it. When's the last time you told somebody about it? When's the last time you shared what Jesus did for you? See, we're called to proclaim it to our neighbors, and our community, and to the nation.

The gospel is too good to keep to ourselves. I mean, we share all kinds of things. You find a sale, you're going to tell your friends, hey, this is on sale at this store, you can go right now.

You get a coupon, you do all that. We share just the most most random information with people. When's the last time you shared the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ? The light that changes the world.

[44:49] Peter said, listen, this should stir your heart. Because when you look at where you were, and you look at what you are now, there's only one explanation.

God's grace, and God's mercy. That's the only reason we're part of what God is building. That He brought us into that. We read it already in verse number three of chapter one.

According to His abundant mercy. That's where we are where we are. For by grace are you saved. You see, there was a time that we didn't belong.

We weren't a people. We had no standing with God. There was no mercy in our life. But because of Jesus Christ, everything changed.

That we can have hope. We can have peace. We can have excitement. We can have something to anchor our lives on. Why? Because of the mercy of God. That we are living stones placed into something God is building.

[45:55] Listen, don't get used to that. Don't just say, well, I'm fine. I'm just going to kind of coast. No. We shouldn't coast. We should be thankful and moving forward for the cause of Christ.

See, our lives now have purpose. There's a reason to worship. There's a reason to serve Him.

There's a reason to show His praises. We might feel out of place.

We might feel like a puzzle piece that doesn't quite fit. You might feel misunderstood by everybody around you. But not to God. He's building something in your life.

Stop trying to hide it. Stop trying to act like it's not that big a deal. No way it is. That we're not here on this side wondering aimlessly. That we do have a purpose and we are a part of something eternal.

And I want to leave you with this. If you're in Christ, you're not trying to find your place. You're already placed exactly where He wants you.

[46:56] So get to work and serve Him and thank Him. Thank Him that you're a part of His spiritual family and you're a part of His people. Would we make His mercy known to the world?

Would we stand