

# 1 Peter 2:4-10 "Mercy and Fate"

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 00 ] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Bow our heads in prayer, remaining standing. Father, you know how easily we get startled and confused and misunderstand things. And so Father, when that happens to us, we ask that your Holy Spirit just continue to remind us that shows how much you love us and care for us, that seeing how we stumble and make mistakes, that you still, you care for us. You don't abandon us, but draw us more to yourself.

So Father, we confess that there are words today that we're going to look at that you meant to provide great comfort to us, but that we take as troublesome. And so Father, we invite your Holy Spirit to move and speak deeply within our lives and to bring your word deep within us so that we might receive the comfort and the hope that you desire us to have and know and to walk in. And we ask this in Jesus's name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

So I don't know how many of you have ever come to the 8 a.m. service. Sometimes when people come to the 8 a.m. service after they've just been at this service, they're a bit taken aback. I wear robes and there's no screen.

[ 2 : 27 ] We have little booklets. And if you'll open up the booklets, a couple of pieces have been removed, but it's basically the 1662 Book of Common Prayer Service, which is basically the 1552 Book of Common Prayer Service and has these and those, and it's a bit of a surprise. Some of you who've been at it will know that I speak a bit differently. I mean, not only is my sermon half the length, but because I'm not on YouTube, I sometimes say things and I'll tell them, this is one of the advantages you have of coming at 8. I'm not going to say this at 10 because I'm going to be on YouTube.

And this morning for my sermon, I said that, and I said a couple of things. I had a different way to opening the sermon than I'm doing right now, actually. But as the service progressed, I came under conviction that I had to start the service in a different way, which is what I'm doing now. But I'm going to say, in fact, something similar to what I said at 8 that I wasn't going to say because I'm on YouTube. And just for those, I think I'm probably fine here, but especially for those who are online or maybe online downstream, if you just give me mercy for a couple of minutes, and then you can send me an angry email potentially or do whatever it is that you're going to do.

We're part of the Anglican Network in Canada. We're not part of the Anglican Church of Canada. Canada and Anglican Network in Canada, the bishops have asked that today would be Pro-Life Sunday, that in some way we make some type of comment, whether it's in the prayers of the people or in the sermon about the pro-life issue. And I, you know, I'm not embarrassed about talking about it, but I wasn't going to particularly talk about it today. But it actually, I realized, this is part of the whole insight that I had later on that talking about this today is actually a perfect introduction for the Bible text that Victor read and that I'm going to talk about. And so here's where I just need a little bit of mercy. I'm a Christian. This is a Christian congregation. We believe that Jesus is our Savior, and

we believe that he is our Lord. And we believe that the Bible is words that ultimately God wanted written and he spoke to us, and that we're bound by them. And that these words are actually true words, not just for Christians, but for all people. But we as Christians have a special obligation to believe them and trust them. And that means that we do not believe that you can kill human life in the womb, that abortion is wrong. You cannot take innocent life. It's breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

We believe that you cannot kill mentally ill people or elderly people or even people in pain, because that is taking innocent life. We are to care for the weak and the vulnerable. We are to figure out how to give them more resources to help them. We are not to kill them. We believe that God created all human beings and he created human beings with sexuality and sexual knowing in mind.

But his intention in creation was that people would either be chased and celibate in singleness, or if they were called into marriage, that they would be chased and celibate there, the marriage of one man to one woman, one biological male to one biological female. And that outside of marriage, people were not to practice sexual knowing that they were to be celibate. That's what we believe the Bible teaches. And that means we're going to oppose things like same-sex marriage, amongst other things. We also believe that since God has created us as male and female, he didn't just create us as male and female, but we believe the Bible teaches that he's also called us to be for a man to be a male and a female to be a woman. And that the way towards wholeness is to be at peace in our body. That's always the way of wholeness. And it's the way of holiness, not just for those who are Christians, but for all people. And that means we're going to be on an opposite side of a very, very important cultural issue today, which is talked about and shouted about an awful lot. And we believe these things because we believe the Bible teaches this, but it's important for you to hear that we do not believe that any of these things that I've touched on, whether it be abortion, whether it be same-sex marriage or a whole lot of other issues connected to LGBTQ plus issues, or whether it be euthanasia or the trans issue, we do not believe that these are us versus them issues. What I need you to understand is we are not the holy and the pure. We are not the people who have never sinned.

[ 7 : 18 ] Everybody, not everybody, everybody in this congregation is in fact sexually broken. We are not perfect in our sexual and your sexual knowing. And in our congregation, both today and in the past, our people who in fact have had abortions, encouraged abortions, struggle with a wide range of sexual temptations, have lived non-celibate gay or lesbian lives, and almost undoubtedly struggle with whether they are in the right gender and feel at peace with their bodies. So for us as Christians, this is not an us versus them issue. But it doesn't mean that we can be silent about it. Because you see, in the end of the day, we are very, very similar to what Charles Spurgeon said that all Christians are.

Christians are beggars. We are, I'm one beggar telling another beggar where to find free bread. I am one sexually broken person telling other sexually broken people where to find the bread of life. And that's what we are. That's all we are. It's not an us versus them issue. Now, I mention all of this not only because I'm honoring my denomination and my bishop who said that we should mention something about pro-life issues this particular Sunday.

I'm also mentioning it because by the providence of God, I'm not smart enough to organize things like this. I really am not. I don't know what I'm going to be preaching on in three weeks. I can tell you the scripture text, but I can't tell you what it says. I can tell you, by the way, since I'm on all the big issues, you could pray for me. Next Sunday, I know many people who are outside the Christian faith say that one of the reasons they can't be Christians is they believe that Christianity encourages slavery. I'm going to, the Bible text next week is going to look at slavery.

I also know that many people say they can't be Christians because they believe the Bible oppresses women. I'm going to look at that two Sundays from now, our scripture text is wives be subject to your husbands. And there's a whole lot of other commands to the husband as well. If you can pray that I can do those things well in honoring Christ. But in this particular day, one of the things that we're going to see, there's like a foreshadowing of what's going to be the issue in a big issue in the rest of the book, which is that sometimes being a Christian costs you a lot and you're going to suffer.

[ 9 : 47 ] The topics which I just said, and those of you who are outside of the Christian faith who might be watching this, you know very well that what I have just said could easily get me canceled in a variety of careers. In fact, I'm conscious that even saying that I could run into trouble with the

group that we rent this building from. And that's why it's a perfect text for today. Because it's going to start, this book of first Peter is going to begin to look at issues of rejection and suffering, suffering in general, by the way, but also rejection and suffering for following Christ.

So let's turn and look and see what it says. It's a foretaste, a foreshadowing of what's going to become a far bigger theme in the book. And it's a foreshadowing, which is profoundly hopeful. So if you would turn in your Bibles with me to 1st Peter chapter 2, verse 4, we'll continue this letter that Peter, Peter is the fellow who was one of Jesus's closest disciples. He spent three years with Jesus, three plus years with Jesus in his public ministry. He would have been an eyewitness of most of the miracles that Jesus performed. He was famously denied Jesus on what we now consider to be Maundy Thursday or yeah, it's no, Good Friday, I guess he denied Jesus. But he is also one of the people who saw Jesus after he rose from the dead. He saw that the grave was empty. And Peter is writing this to a group of

Christians who came out of pagan backgrounds primarily and become Christians living in what we now call Turkey. It was a circular letter to be designed to be read to a variety of different churches. And about a two year, year or two years after this letter is written, Peter will die because he will maintain that Jesus in fact did rise from the dead, that the grave was empty, that they actually saw him and he'll die for proclaiming that truth. And here's, here's what he says. Verse four, as you come to Jesus, to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Now just sort of pause. Here's the foreshadowing that's coming. Look at verse four again. As you come to him, that's Jesus, a living stone rejected by human beings, but in the sight of

God chosen and precious. Now this is going to become, you know, it's, it's, we all know this. I, I remember quite a few years ago talking to a woman who's outside the Christian faith, but a really, really great woman and she'd had a miscarriage and she was marveling with me that her woman boss was completely and utterly unsympathetic to her. But her boss, which was a guy, was very sympathetic to her, even though she just had a miscarriage and she was really, really, really struggling, struggling with it emotionally and in all sorts of ways. And we all know that, you know, just somehow the way it is that we can talk to some people who've been through situations similar to ours and they show no compassion or understanding to us. And sometimes that we can talk to people who haven't experienced anything that we have, but they just really have a gift of compassion and empathy. And we all know that that's the case, but there is something very specially precious when you come across somebody who has suffered in the same way that you have and is also compassionate. You know, there's an extra depth of empathy that you can come to them as you're dealing and sharing with these issues. And that's what, that's what Peter's beginning to give a bit of a foretaste. Later on, he's going to be talking about people who suffer for being a Christian and suffering in general. And he begins that sort of stirring that whole process by reminding people who are maybe struggling with the fact that they've been rejected from a promotion or from being in a guild or rejected by their family, but rejected by their parents, rejected by their children, rejected by their community, now are struggling financially as a result of it, that when we come to Jesus, we come to one who has been rejected by the human race.

And it's very interesting in the original language. You can see it in English if you read it very carefully. The language is not as you come to him occasionally, but the implication is, is that as you come to him in your daily prayers, as you come to him in your daily Bible reading, as you come to him in your weekly small group, as you come to him on Sunday when you gather in public worship, as you're coming to him regularly, as you come to him, remember that he was rejected by human beings.

[ 14 : 52 ] In other words, this is an invitation. Peter's saying, loved my brothers and sisters, my friends, you can pour out your heart to Jesus about these issues. He understands what it means to be rejected.

He understands. And it's also very hopeful because they're reminding, Peter's reminding them that Jesus was rejected by humans. But he, look at verse 4, he, in God's eyes, the triune God's eyes, was chosen and is, is chosen and precious. And then you notice what it says, verse 5, view yourselves like living stones. And there the idea is that Jesus is portrayed, we'll see why he's called a living stone in a moment. There's sort of three Old Testament references to this idea of a stone. And Peter's going to quote all of them. So he's, he's, there's a reason why he uses this analogy. But

when we put our trust and faith in Christ, in a sense, we become like him. And, and, and, and in other words, like him, we might be rejected. But we are going to see as the text goes on that we are also chosen and precious to him. And that even if we are being rejected, even if there is a cost to following Jesus, look at what it says in verse 5, you yourselves like living stones are being built up. And this is a beautiful image that God is building us up, you and me up. He's building us up like a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. And this is a very, very, you know, powerful issue. Those of you who've come to the church more than once know that we often pray for the persecuted church. And that's a very good thing to do in and of itself. But here's the thing, it doesn't say that he's building spiritual houses. He's not building a spiritual house called Church of the Messiah, another spiritual house called Calvary Baptist, another spiritual house called the Metropolitan Bible Church. He's only building one house. And in that house are Christians who've worshipped today earlier in the day in Korea, and in Saigon, and in Manila, and in, I think of a city in India, and all of a sudden my mind's gone blank, Chennai, and in Nairobi, and in Laos, and Lagos, and in Manhattan, and in Ottawa. He's only building one house. And it's the other thing about which is so needed, but he's only building one house. It also means that in that house is Augustine, and Athanasius, is Chrysostom. Our friend Steve here did his doctoral dissertation on the short-lived Spanish Reformation. They're all part of our house too. And he's got ordained while he was in Egypt.

That's all part of the house too. Just one house. Just one house. And this idea of the spiritual worship and the spiritual house. Spiritual to us as Canadians often means it's something emotional, or something about affections, or something intellectual. But in the original language here, it's pneumatikos. And what that means is Holy Spirit empowered. So it's a Holy Spirit directed building of a house. A Holy Spirit empowered building of a house. And it also means Holy Spirit inspired sacrifices, which does not mean sacrificing animals. It means sacrificing it in the sense that money says that I should hold on to as much money as I possibly can. And a pneumatikos, a Holy Spirit inspired sacrifice is to realize that I am to give part of my money away. That, you know, that I'm to order my sexuality in one particular way. The Holy Spirit leads us to move towards, you know, chastity and, you know, repentance when we fail of that. And, you know, in terms of power, the Holy Spirit, our culture teaches us to use power in particular ways. And the Holy Spirit is leading us to use power in very different ways. And that's what's being talked about. The Holy Spirit in all of our life is forming us to live in a different way. See, when you give your life to Christ, there's all these other things that happen. And one of the things that happens is that the Holy Spirit now indwells you. You're born again. And that means the Holy Spirit is going to propel you and empower you and point you in certain types of directions, some of which are very countercultural.

But now, a word of encouragement is often for many Canadians and many Canadian Christians, a word of discouragement. And we need to look at it. It should be a word of encouragement, but for many it discourages. Look what happens. Look at verse 6. It says, 4. So he's going to give some Bible text to sort of back up this big claim.

[19:49] 4. It stands in Scripture. Behold, I am laying in Zion, a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, that whoever believes in him, that is the stone, which we now know as Christ, will not be put to shame. And then it stops the quote, and he has a bit of a comment.

So the honor is for those who believe, but for those who do not believe, and then this Scripture quote, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a different Scripture text is quoted, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

Now here's the part which is very discouraging. They stumble, and the idea behind this is like a type of eternal stumbling.

It's an image of what they do and of judgment. They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do.

And Canadian Christians go, whoa. Whoa. Didn't see that coming. Now a couple of things I have to walk towards this text.

[21:09] This is actually a text that's designed to be a profound encouragement to us. It's both going to be very chastening. In other words, it's going to be very, make us go, oh, like that's harder news than I expected to have.

The Bible is going to tell you your situation apart from Christ is vastly worse than you ever imagined. But your situation in Christ is vastly better than you possibly could imagine.

And it's as you know that your situation apart from Christ is vastly worse, that you have a special ability to then understand how your situation in Christ is vastly better.

So just a couple of things. The first thing to notice with these images is that if there was a buffet of spirituality and religions, Jesus is not on the menu.

He's not on the buffet table. The normal way that Canadians think now about things like religion or worldviews or spirituality or therapies or ideologies is that it's a little bit like a buffet table.

[ 22 : 18 ] And so, you know, Steve and I and Stella and Louise, we might be walking along the buffet table and we, you know, maybe I pile up on one thing and, you know, Steve on another thing and Stella on another thing and Louise on another thing and we do bits and pieces of this.

And at the end, we sit down and we all have our meal. We look and maybe say, you know, I was thinking of taking some of that. What's it taste like, you know? And so it is today. You know, take a little bit of Buddhism, maybe take a little bit of Sufism, take a little bit of Islam.

You know, you take a little bit of Wicca. You take a little bit of, I don't know, like some crystals and stuff like that. And then just because, just to show that you're edgy, a little bit of Christopher Hitchens and, you know, a little bit maybe of depth therapy or psychology and you throw it all together and it's like a buffet.

And maybe occasionally at a gathering you look and you compare. Oh, so you've been trying this type of therapy, have you? Like, how's it working? Like, you know, from Jordan Peterson, you really got into Jung, yeah. But you know, I'm more into Buddhism and a little bit of this.

Buddhism and Hitchens, I think they're really neat. And you have a bit of a conversation about that. And everybody's very, very cheerful about it. I guess it could be the same if you're in a country that's been very influenced by Buddhism or Hinduism and there's many gods and goddesses.

[ 23 : 31 ] And you don't get into fights about it. You just sort of may be interested. Oh, you find this sort of god or goddess very helpful in terms of your walk. That's who you offer your sacrifices to. What this text is saying is that Jesus is completely and utterly different than that.

That, in fact, your whole eternal destiny of not just you, but every human being, turns on how you respond to Jesus. There's only two ways to respond to Jesus.

You either come across him and then you realize that he is that living stone, that cornerstone upon which you are to base your entire life in because he really is God's son and humanity's savior.

He really is the one who will reconcile you to God. He really is the one who has defeated death and hell and sin and his resurrection. And he really is the one that you are to build your life on, imperfect as you might be doing that.

Or you are offended by him and you reject him and you disobey him. And then the Bible says if that's the case, then you stumble over him and you're stumbling as an eternal type of stumbling.

[ 24 : 39 ] And then it adds to our shock, as they, as you, were destined to do. So what's going on here in this particular text?

How are we to understand it? Why is it good news and not something that we should be embarrassed about? Well, the first thing is that this says the word destined, not fated.

Destined, not fated. That's a very important distinction. You see, if I'm fated to do something, you can think of, you know, the story in the Greek myth of Oedipus, that no matter what he tries to do to avoid his particular fate, he's still going to, that it's, the gods have determined this.

It doesn't matter how much he tries to fight against the gods or maneuver or do this or that. He is fated to do this particular thing or have this particular tragedy happen to his life. But destiny is something that comes from within each human being.

It's something, in a sense, that you are building by your habits, by your thoughts, by the choices that you make, by the micro choices and the big choices that you make. It would be, in a sense, to use a very sort of silly example, that if I had a grandson who dreamed of playing in the NHL at some point in time, but as he grows older, all he does when he comes home from school is go immediately to the basement to play video games and eat copious amounts of potato chips and never exercise whatsoever, we'd all say that he is not destined to play in the NHL.

[ 26 : 11 ] That, in fact, he is destined to be overweight and probably have a whole pile of other heart and other body problems. And his life, rather than being famous, might be very short if he continues in that.

And then as he gets older and he can use Uber, he adds poutine regularly to his diet. That's destiny. And the Bible here says, not that you were fated to it, but as you were destined to.

The second thing is that it's not the case that the Bible is saying, here's George, I read the Bible, I'm still married to the same woman, I have a master's degree, go on and on and on, I'm obviously destined for heaven.

You, on the other hand, or you, on the other hand, out there, look at you, you're obviously destined to eternal. No, no, no, that's not what the Bible is saying. Here's the part which is very sobering. Before I responded to Christ, I was destined to stumble forever. And so were you.

[ 27 : 33 ] And so were you. And you. And you. And you. And you. And you. And you. And you. And you. And you. And you. There is nobody in this congregation worshiping here today that apart from Christ we're destined to anything other than to eternally stumble over Christ.

Paul and Romans said, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And in a sense, Peter is saying, all were destined to fall and fall short of the glory of God unless Christ intervened. And Christ intervened in a very, very powerful way. Could you just skip ahead to verse 10, Claire? We'll go back to verse 9 in a moment.

But look at verse 10. And 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.

The Bible is saying that the difference isn't between some of us are destined to hell and some of us in a sense are destined towards eternal life. Not in the way that destined is used here in this particular case.

[ 28 : 50 ] But that some of us have received mercy and some of us have refused mercy. That in a sense, the difference is that God in his mercy called and saved me out of my destiny.

God in his mercy called and saved you out of your destiny. mercy. Now what is mercy? I talked about that a few weeks ago. I'm going to talk about it again very briefly. Mercy is compassion to the guilty and undeserving. Mercy is compassion to the guilty and to the undeserving.

If you are, in fact, not guilty mercy, then you don't deserve mercy. You deserve justice. If you are, in fact, guilty and therefore undeserving of any type of clemency or compassion, you have no right to mercy.

If you have a right to mercy, it's not mercy that you have a right to. You have a right for some type of favor to be shown to you or you have a right for justice to be shown to you.

[ 30 : 12 ] At the same time, mercy cannot ignore justice. If mercy ignores justice, it is not mercy. It is unjust favoritism.

In a few months' time, if Biden loses the election and he gives a whole pile of people a pass on their jail sentences or criminal prosecution and they're all his buddies, nobody other than Democrats will think that justice was done.

We'll all know that it was unjust favoritism. And just to show that I'm nonpartisan, if by chance Trump wins and then down when he finishes and he does it, other than some crazed Trump loyalists, just like there's crazed Biden loyalists, we'll all know that what he did was not just, that it was unjust favoritism.

Mercy is not unjust favoritism. You see, that's the beauty of the gospel. The beauty of the gospel is this. By my natural nature and by my choices, there are things that in me are very dark.

You see, on one hand, this biblical teaching is something that offends us, but we all know on one level that it's true. There are things in every human being that are dark. There are things inside of us that desire to roar, to be ravenous, and maybe it's with greed, maybe it's with a love of power, maybe it's a complete unwillingness to forgive, but in effect to destroy or to stomp or to hoard money or to hoard power or to hoard influence or there's things within every human being which are very dark.

[ 31 : 50 ] There's things within human beings that want to reject God. They want to reject the triune God. They are offended by the triune God. They say, God, how dare you ask me to obey that?

How dare you ask me to obey that? And there are things in every single one of us as human beings which are, and that describes us. In fact, it can describe even more the people who have the custom and the skills and the training and the class background that they can always have a very pleasant front while inwardly they burn and rage.

And God, the Son of God, comes up beside George Sinclair and he says, George, you deserve judgment and you deserve shame and that's what you deserve.

But George, you were made in my image and because you were made in my image, I can stand for you and I will take your place. I will stand for you.

The shame that you deserve very justly, I will have that fall on my shoulders, permeate who I am. The things that you were done wrong that are guilty, the things that you should have done right that you didn't do that deserve punishment, they deserve public punishment, I will take those on myself for you.

[ 33 : 20 ] And the demands of justice that I cannot meet without being unmade were laid on him. And he did that out of mercy and justice was met.

He looked at me and he looks at every one of you who are in him and he looks at you with eyes of compassion. And that shame became his, that guilt became his, the punishment they deserved became his.

And he offers you mercy, new life. He takes what you were destined for. And when you take that offer, you find on the other side of that mercy that now you are God's special, precious, treasured possession.

the mercy is great, the mercy is deep, the mercy is thick, the mercy is wide, the mercy is high. And he calls me and I respond to that call.

He helps me to hear that call and to respond to that call to receive the mercy from him. And I want to say to you who are here, those of you who are online, if you feel that tug, maybe wishing it was true, maybe you're even feeling the tug still have bothered and offended by some of these aspects, I want to tell you that that's the sign that Jesus is calling you right now.

[ 35 : 03 ] How do you respond? There's really at the end of the day, I mean I could tell you words to pray and all of that, but it really goes with that inner disposition as you look to him and it really comes with just doing this.

I give up. I surrender. Take me. Nothing more profound than that, but there is nothing more profound than that.

Why did God show me mercy? At the end of the day, the Bible said there's nothing particularly in me, if there was something particularly in me, that it wouldn't be mercy, it would be some type of favoritism.

All the Bible says is that he chose me because he loves. He is love. And why do I want to have something deeper than love?

What can be deeper than God's love? Like what's better than that? Like is me being able to say that it's, I don't know, my smile or my wit?

[ 36 : 11 ] Those things fade and die. But God's love is eternal. What's deeper or better than that? See, this is why this is such a profound encouragement. That if you have given your life to Christ, it's because he called you and saved you.

And now, well, let's look what he describes. When I became a Christian, the people I became a Christian with gave me a little piece of cardboard on it. There were a variety of Bible passages that they wanted me to memorize.

And this was one of them. I don't remember all of them. I remember that one of them was John 3, 16, for God so loved the world, you know, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life like God gave his only son.

I remember that. And another one was Proverbs 3, you know, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding and in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths. And another one was Romans 12, 1 and 2, about not being conformed to this world but being transformed and one of them was this text.

They wanted me to memorize verses 9 and 10. They're a beautiful text. This is what happens as a result of God's call out of mercy to you. Look at what it says, verse 9, but you are a chosen race.

[ 37 : 22 ] I'll tell you in a moment what that is and what it doesn't mean and what it does mean. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a holy people group, a people for his own possession.

And in the original language this means his treasured possession, his precious possession. That's who you are in Christ. And why are you, what's the point of all that?

That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you, who called you out of darkness, the darkness of what you were destined for.

He called you out of the darkness that you were destined for into his marvelous light. 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.

See back to my beginning of the sermon. See that's why this is not an us versus them issue. That is why it is not the case that nobody in this congregation is sexually perfect and has no problems with feeling at home with their body or has never been involved in abortion or never encouraged somebody to commit, you know, to do euthanasia, never in their entire life.

[ 38 : 33 ] No! We are not the perfect destined for eternity. We were those stumbling and disobedient and offending against God and we stand before God purely and utterly because he calls people who reject him to himself and saves them by what Jesus has done.

That's who we are. So all we can do is proclaim that that's what he does. That it's not just for us, it's for you. Just in closing, that beautiful, but you are a chosen race.

Some of you might remember when I've talked about racism that the Bible doesn't talk about race and in some ways this is an unfortunate translation. Literally it says, but you are a chosen lineage. Lineage. That's what's so beautiful. Listen, some of us humanly speaking have terrible lineages. I don't talk about this very much. My dad spent time in jail as a pedophile.

I don't have a great lineage. Like I don't. In my flesh.

[ 39 : 43 ] But that's the wonder of it. A person today in Malaysia who gives their life to Christ, me who's given my life to Christ, somebody in Rwanda, somebody in India, somebody in Iran, somebody in Israel, somebody in Gaza, when we give our lives to Christ, we all have the same lineage.

A new lineage. Our lineage is from him. It is the most profoundly anti-racist text you could possibly imagine.

It is the thing, we're going to talk about this a little bit in next week when we talk about slavery. The ancient mind could not imagine a world without slavery. slavery. This little tiny virus is eventually going to blow up the world.

That and the whole teaching in Genesis chapter 1 and 2. If I owned a slave and we both become Christians, we have the same lineage.

All of a sudden by grace. What's our vocation? To proclaim his excellencies in word and deed and how we spend our time and how we deal with power, how we deal with sexuality, how we deal with our money, how we deal with our families, how we deal with our relationships, how we deal with being wronged, how we deal with forgiveness, how we deal with reconciliation in all of life to proclaim his excellencies to the ends of the earth, to every people group.

[ 41 : 14 ] That is our vocation. Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, we give you thanks and praise that when we respond to your call, your call, your merciful call, and we come to Jesus who saves us, Father, that we become this chosen lineage that we share in common with people of all different, you know, with handicapped people and brilliant people and physically gifted people and poor people and rich people.

All those things, Father, and all of the lineages that brought them to those places, those things, on one hand, we still have to live with them and deal with them, but Father, that they fall away, that by grace, we are given this whole brand new lineage with you, Jesus, the second Adam, that we become yours and we become your precious possession.

We ask, Father, that you bring these truths of our identity deep within our lives and may these identities form us. And Father, grant us the courage and the gentleness and the ability to proclaim your excellencies, proclaim them to our children and to our family and our friends and in our workplaces and to our nation and to other people groups in the city and other people groups to the very end of the age.

And we give you thanks and praise that we don't do this all by ourselves, that there are Christians today, Father, in Nairobi and Seoul, South Korea, and in Rwanda and in Iran and China and India that are all, Father, that we are doing this together because you just have one house.

You just have one house and one lineage, one chosen lineage. And Father, we thank you for grace and mercy. Help us to live up to our vocation. You know how weak we are.

[ 43 : 19 ] We need your help. We need the Holy Spirit. Help us to live in such a way. And we ask this in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.