

# Chosen People, A New Purpose

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Preacher: Jon Moffitt

[ 0 : 00 ] Today, we will specifically examine Peter and how he provides a new heritage to the church in this letter, how we really see ourselves in our entire life. This week at Men's Group, for those of you that weren't able to attend, we were talking about the purpose of our life. It was a great discussion. What drives us? Why do we do what we do? And then in youth, we also got to talk about this specific subject as well. Sometimes we discuss what I think about because I'm preparing a sermon for it. We are often a product of our culture. As much as Americans love to pride themselves on being unique, we strangely believe in our uniqueness while copying everyone around us and yet proclaiming,

I am unique. But here's what's interesting. They want you to be who you are. Reflect what's inside of you. But yet, if you do so in a way they don't agree with, then your uniqueness is rejected.

There are parameters to the uniqueness. There's a parameter to your identity and it's set by the masses, whatever it is the majority would think. The pressures to fit in are powerful and our children are facing them. One of my favorite ministries of our church is the Youth Grace Group where I get to spend time sharing God's word with them and then hearing and ministering to them about their concerns. And these kids truly love Christ. It's refreshing. We also take time every week to talk about their struggles. We literally ask them, what are you struggling with? They are real, powerful, and painful struggles. The activity of Satan's army is felt within the hearts and the minds of these young people. We know, we feel it. Sometimes youth don't, they don't know how to describe it. The sin that they see and they deal with is heavy upon their heart and I'm thankful we give them a place to talk about it and build it up because of the pressures that are out there.

I pray these young adults will never fall prey to the lies of the world and this is why Peter is writing this very letter for all generations, for all ages of believers that we might walk away and know for a fact we are being lied to and what it is that we need to do. I found this paragraph from an author very helpful in light of Peter's words this morning in verses 9 through 12. He says this, in Peter's day, identity came from externals, town, occupation, lineage, gender. It was especially painful for Gentile converts who were reviled for leaving old customs and associations. They lost much of their identity. I found this observation healthy because knowing the experience of the believers of Peter's day is really no different than ours today. It's the same tactic, same evil.

Customs and associations will change once someone embraces the king which is different from the world. We don't think, love, or live like those around us and that becomes evident. It reflects.

[ 3 : 47 ] The differences become a vast cavern that can be seen. They should be. The author went on to make this commentary to make an important point of those who live in Rome. So Peter's writing to people on the outskirts of Rome. And so you have to imagine, sometimes we just forget about this. We're 2,000 years away from it. So we just, we don't think about Jesus' real feet walking on real dirt, right? Having real conversations. Jesus had a reputation amongst the town. We don't, we don't read Roman literature that's, has a negative in, insight into Jesus. But it was there and Peter is writing in light of it. This is what the author was trying to convey. That Jesus was conceived and born out of wedlock. So his, his start to the story to the Romans wasn't miraculous of virgin birth. It was, it was scandalous. He's from a small town, impoverished city with no power tied to it.

He didn't own any land. He was a simple craftsman. No one knew if he officially was trained, but yet he claims to be a teacher. And then his life ends by public execution.

You see, the Romans took the position that Jesus was embraced not because of who he was and his power, but somehow in some way was able to rally the people. They were worried about a revolution. So they put that to death to prevent Rome from being under attack. And that's who Peter's writing to. You love this man. Call him your king. You sacrifice everything. And when people ask you why, you have to point to that man. The one born out of wedlock with no power and died an executioner's death. This is why Paul, when he wrote to the Romans who still lived in Rome, maybe 50 years after Jesus' death, more like maybe 30, Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

For it's the power of God. I know you look at that man and the world around you says, what a fool. What an idiot. That guy's nuts. And we look at it and go, oh, but he loves us. He's our God.

Say, what? That is the weakest God? You ever seen the Roman gods and what they could do? And your God died by the mere hands of men. This is why they mocked him and said, why don't you call down your army and stop us if you're that powerful? And he didn't.

[ 6 : 35 ] So from the world's perspective, following the story of Jesus would be a strange act. Not only in the modern, or in the, that's this context of Peter, but also in our context. So this morning, I really want to pull out in these verses from 9 through 12, Peter gives us three truths, new truths to embrace. Since we've left the old life, we're embracing this new life. There's a new way of thinking. We live because of these truths. And so here they are up front, and then we'll walk through them. Peter gives us a new perspective on our life.

He gives us a new purpose. We used to be driven by the flesh. And then he gives us a new practice. What does it look like? And this third one is the one that we all are waiting for because we love the story of Jesus, but then we're like, how does that work tomorrow when I wake up? The practical side of the Christian faith. Peter actually gives us that, thankfully. So let's begin with a new perspective that he tries to implant in the believer. And the end of verse 8 going into verse 9, he's just contrasting the believer with the unbeliever. He says it this way in verse 8. He says, they stumbled because they disobeyed the word as they were destined to do. He's describing those who rejected Jesus. Jesus being the foundation of our faith is the very thing the world trips over. It's annoying to them. Jesus is in the way of their life. And so now he's going to explain what life is going to look like in hostility.

In a world that's going to attack you for being an idiot, a fool for believing in the gospel. And so he says it this way. He's trying to give you the point of view from God's throne. He says it this way in verse 9. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. You're not a fool for following some guy born out of wedlock and died an executioner. You're a royal. You've been chosen to be a part of the kingdom far more powerful than anything in this world. And what's your purpose?

That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. You once were not a people. But now you are God's people. You once had not received mercy. Now you have received mercy. Okay. So he's saying a lot of things here. We've heard these titles. Y'all hear the titles? How many of you within you, your stomach became, like it turned with joy? Oh man, I'm a chosen people. Anybody? I'm a royal priest. We're so far removed from the Old Testament, it's hard for us to see the images. To feel the weight of how Peter is shifting all of this joy over to us. This last quote in Psalm, or sorry, 10, he's quoting Hosea, the prophet. Verse 9, he's quoting Isaiah and Psalms, which we'll get to here in a little bit. But if you understand you once were not a people, but now you are a people, he is, if you know the story of Hosea, this becomes extremely heartwarming to the people. And so I want us to take some time. Even Paul makes this connection in Romans 9, 25. He says it this way, as indeed he says in Hosea, those who were not my people, I will call my people, and her who was not beloved, I will be their beloved. Again, if you're not really familiar with the story of Hosea, it doesn't mean anything. So I want to read to you something I found helpful, really retelling the story of Hosea in a poetic form. The parents, I'm going to warn you ahead of time. This is graphic, but it's no more graphic than what the Bible is. But I'm going to choose to use some separate words than the author uses. The safest thing I can say to you is that it's the most, well, just read verse 2 of Hosea 1, and you'll understand what I'm trying not to say. A woman of the night, but there's a more graphic way of saying that. So if I pause and don't say something, you know what I mean there.

He begins, can God divorce his bride? Can God break his marriage vows? What if his bride left him for another? What if she sold her allegiance to another spouse? This is what Hosea is about. For Israel, was under the threat of war, instead of running to her husband, she ran to foreign gods of foreign lords. She paid tribute to buy foreign support from foreign swords. Israel was cheating on God by trusting in a foreign military force. By flying other flags above the temple's door, his wife was breaking the vows, she swore. So how would God respond? What does God do when his wife becomes this woman? The problem was Israel didn't see herself this way, a bankrupt lover for whom no one would pay. So God called Hosea to portray his fractured relationship with Israel, to put God and Israel's broken marriage on public display. Hosea paid the marriage price for Gomer, a woman who embodied what Israel had done through the foreign policy. Yet, Hosea pledged his allegiance to her maritally. This would be a picture of God's own covenant ceremony. When God pledged his allegiance to Israel as a people and country, and when Israel vowed themselves to love

[ 12 : 28 ] God as a king and trust him, his kingdom only, God would keep them safe as Israel kept their vows. God would prove his allegiance to his people by protecting them in his house.

But what about when Israel continued to sleep around on their spouse? What about when Israel left the free political protection of God's house to sell herself to a foreign love? What about when she makes costly payments for military safety offered by the false lovers God had just freed her from? Would God divorce his bride?

Would God break his marriage vows? What if his bride left him for another? What if she sold her allegiance to another spouse? The answer comes not in display between husband and wife, but between parents and their kids?

Instead of his wife's behavior prophesying, his children's name became the prophets. Their children was named after a battlefield where evil kings were assassinated and evil kingdoms were repealed.

That place and his name was Jezreel. His name revealed that Israel's foreign activities would save their kingdom, but would be the reason God crushed them under his heel. Their second child's name was No Mercy, to state it overtly, that the child of Israel would not be forgiven of their national adultery.

[ 14 : 16 ] Their children's name was the most, the third children's name was the most pointed, and for Israel, the most unbelievable. His name was Not My People. Israel had so broken her vows, her allegiance, and had been so abandoned that God said, I will not be my wife and I will not be your husband.

Is God divorcing his bride? Is God breaking his marriage vows? After all, despite Hosea's warning to Israel's perpetual activity, she continued to steal from the temple, take her husband's earnings to find her fearful yearnings. She intended herself to other, sorry, she indebted herself to another nations and other gods, other lovers, those who were frauds. In fear, she sold the allegiance her husband had bought.

She pawned off her vows to buy a protection she'd already got. Shouldn't God's love lead to a holy anger? Shouldn't God's jealous wrath burn for his spouse? Shouldn't God divorce his bride? Shouldn't he break his marriage vow?

But the good news of Hosea is that God will not ultimately let his bride walk out. For he will not give up his wife no matter how far she run down her adulterous path.

The very thought makes his heart recoil within him, so he will buy her back. He will not execute his burning anger because his compassion burns hotter than his wrath.

[ 16 : 00 ] But Hosea promised something must first come to pass. Israel's lovers would betray her. The arms she ran for protection would raise up against her in attacks. Israel would collapse.

In exile, God would abstain from Israel separate from her because of her adulterous acts. Israel would be trapped by the very sword and chariot she paid for with her love and tribute, with her trust and tax.

Israel, again, by the bankrupt lover from whom no one would pay, stuck with a debt owed to a foreign lover and broke in vows that needed to be remade.

Like Israel, maybe you have never seen God's people this way. But to us, Hosea would say that we too are constantly under the threat of violence and war.

But instead of running to our husband, we run to our nation's gods and our nation's lords. We give our allegiance to the safety and support of our nation's sword, cheating on God by trusting in a foreign military force.

[ 17 : 16 ] We praise politicians in our pulpits and fly another nation's flag above our church doors. How will God respond? What will God do when his wife becomes?

Shouldn't God's love lead to a holy anger? Shouldn't God's jealous wrath burn for his house?

But Jesus shows us that God will not divorce us. He will not break his marriage vows even though we left him for another. Even though we sold our allegiance to another spouse, Jesus paid the marriage price for us.

His blood buys back the safety we sold and gives us a home that cannot be lost. For he renewed our vows and pledged his allegiance when he died for his bride on the cross.

Jesus is our king, our master, our president, our Lord. But he is also the best lover and husband we can trust and adore. Jesus protects us in this new kingdom so we don't have to lust after other flags anymore.

[ 18 : 30 ] Jesus moved us back home with God. He made a beautiful wife. So pledge your allegiance to Jesus for he will protect us.

Even if we lose the kingdoms to which we offered our trust. Even if we die under the armies and politics we've run after in lust, there is still a kingdom for us.

Jesus will never give us up no matter how far we've run down the adulterous path. The very thought that made his heart recoil within him, which is why he bought us back.

On the cross, he extinguished his burning anger and showed that his compassion burns hotter than his wrath.

Now when you read Peter and he says, you were once not a people because God divorced you. And now you are a people because he gave you mercy.

[ 19 : 38 ] Changes your perspective. Encourage you to read Hosea later today. It's a quick read. But worthy of our time. This is why Peter says, this is our cornerstone.

He is the perfect covenant keeper. We received mercy because we didn't earn it, but we needed it. Our actions broke the marriage and created the distance.

And now he's changing the titles. Not because of what we have done, because what he has done. Whatever you think about yourself that God could never accept or love you, it's far worse than what your mind conjures up.

Take the two verses of Hosea and the title it to your own thoughts. Our life demanded that God reject us because of the way in which we treated his holy name.

And then Peter says, so, how does he see you now? But you are a chosen race. You were not anyone before.

[ 20 : 53 ] Now you actually belong to a people. You have a purpose because you are a part of the royal priesthood. And you're not just any nation.

You're a separated nation. Under God's possession. You're a holy nation. And the purpose of your nation is not to judge other nations. Not to cast anger upon them.

You are reflecting to them the same excellencies that you have received. It says that we may proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of the darkness of our actions and our life into his marvelous light and kingdom.

Once you were not a people because of what you did. But now you are God's people under his mercy.

You are not simply a Christian who no longer has the stain of sin. That's not how he sees you. You are now part of a holy nation.

[ 21 : 51 ] Something that is special for God because you belong to him. His name is stamped upon you. You are God's people. Not just freed from sin.

And how does God treat those who belong to him? This is why we'd say prayers on Sunday. Because we believe in his mercy. We word it this way, church.

We are not the sum of our actions. Past, present, or future. That is hard to believe. But that is the truth. Whether we have a failed marriage, parenting, careers, finances, health.

Whatever you want to put in there. That is not the identity you bear. Peter says, here's your new perspective. As worse, as bad as it was.

This is how you are to see yourself now. We are called the people of God. And that is new life.

[ 22 : 58 ] But with this new perspective, he then also gives us a new purpose for our life. The hardest part of this transformation we are undergoing is pulling ourselves out of the old life.

To have spiritual eyes. We were dealing with this with the ladies yesterday in our class. We'll put the audio out soon. But what does it mean to walk by the spirit? This is what Peter is now giving to the church.

We now belong to a nation that does not have a physical presence here on this earth. But yet, our actions are still required to reflect the kingdom. Our king isn't ruling with the physical kingdom yet.

But he will. Yet, we in allegiance to him must act in certain ways. Listen to how, in verse 11, Peter's description of those who are part of this new nation.

Verse Peter 1 to 11. He says, Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

[ 23 : 57 ] Because we belong to a new king, we are part of this new world that is waiting to be brought. That's what these titles make of us, sojourners and exile.

The moment you decide to live in light of your new perspective, that exile, surjoiner part, you will feel around you.

This is why he said you have to live with this perspective. That way it doesn't shock you as if something is wrong. I have to remind myself and those around me, when we get angry at sinners for being sinners.

As if somehow they should know better. Peter assumes that they're not going to act as we act. They're at home in this evil, broken, cursed world under a God that is not our God.

That's why he's like, you're the sojourners, not them. They're not at a place, you are. This is why you have to think and act different. This is where he changes our purpose.

[ 25 : 02 ] You see, what I find struggling about modern Christianity is that most of modern Christianity is about how to make myself feel better about myself.

Help me not sin so I'm not frustrated by my sin. The focus is very internal. Help me become righteous so I can be excited about my righteousness. And that's just not the perspective.

He always is pointing us outside of ourselves. But yet we keep wanting to focus on ourselves. My problems. And my solutions. Until we embrace this new title of a people. It's not an individual.

It didn't choose you as an individual. It chose you as a people. As a nation. As a group within this identity. And because of this, there is a purpose behind our new residency.

So, he says this. Because you're sojourners and exiles, you need to abstain from the passions of the flesh.

[ 26 : 04 ] Which, this is powerful, which raves war against your soul. You see, it isn't that these sinful habits we had in the past are just not helpful.

They actually attack your soul. That is just, I just want you to take like 10 minutes this afternoon and try and comprehend what he means. This is, our sins in the flesh are a direct attack against the very thing that's connected to God.

See, God dwells within us. He's redeemed our soul and brought it to life. So, when we go back to our former habits and former life, they are an attack on the very thing. They're not just a sin against the glory of God.

They're not even just a sin against others. But we're sinning against our bodies. Our souls. So, our purpose change. We have to have a new purpose.

And that purpose is related to our identity. It was fun wrestling with the men. Metaphorically, many of them would beat me. About the concept of the purpose of life.

[ 27 : 08 ] Boomer's like, yeah, I know I can take you down. I saw that. I've gotten to a certain age where the injuries aren't worth the exertion. So, I'm like, yeah, I think I'll pass on that.

This is a broken illustration, but I think it can be powerful. What if I handed you a book? Just a little tiny one. And inside the book had a few words.

If you went and read those words over someone in a hospital, whatever it is that they were struggling with would be healed. Instant. Forever. They would never struggle with that again.

And then I demonstrated it for you. I took you to the hospital and I read the words over them and set them free. They walked out of the hospital. And you waited a few weeks, a few months.

They never went back in. Then I handed you the book. I said, what do you think you could do with that? You're not going to get paid to do this.

[ 28 : 09 ] You can never ask for money for the people that you heal. Would your life change? Anybody in here, would your life change? Thinking about the potential of what you could do.

Somehow I have to get a job to support myself so that I can go and provide this unbelievable power that's never been seen.

The job is just to support the real work. Setting people free from their pain. Everything else really doesn't matter at that moment.

How many people can we touch with these words? You know where I'm going with this. This is exactly what Peter is saying. Set aside the passions of your flesh because they're not a part of the new purpose.

They're distractions. They're going to weigh you down. They're going to pull you down. Because your new purpose, you're a priest. You see, we just still are struggling with that. A priest is one who literally takes the presence of God and brings it to the world, to the people.

[ 29 : 14 ] And then takes the people and brings them to God. This is why the Bible uses this concept of a sweet aroma. There's something about the aura of a believer because the spirit lives within them.

That means truth and life seep out in the way that they talk and the way that they act. It's powerful. I think this is why people were drawn to Jesus.

They were drawn to him because he had something they wanted, but they didn't know how to get it. Jesus never condoned people's sins.

Zacchaeus didn't want to know how to keep his wealth that he gained inappropriately. He wanted to know how he could be set free from this anxiety that he tried to fill with money.

And the woman caught and the acts of adultery is at his feet. How do I set free from this burden? The woman at the well, seven husbands.

[ 30 : 15 ] How do I get free from this? He gives her divine power. He gives her his words. And then he leaves.

I find this imagery powerful. It says he blows on the disciples and the Holy Spirit comes inside of them.

The word spirit is the same word we use for wind, rock. The concept of the force of movement. That spirit now lives within us, this force of movement. And as we move out through our world, the way in which we do changes our purpose.

I am not trying to gain what I already have. I can't gain more forgiveness. I can't gain a new identity because I already have it. I'm a chosen people.

I'm part of his nation. I'm adopted. And because that's true, I'm going to live in his kingdom. And he's like, look, all the wealth I have there for you. What does he say? Seek first my kingdom. Don't worry about these things.

[ 31 : 13 ] I've already added them to your name. Your name already has them all. So the purpose of your life is to set people free. Now, here's where things get complicated.

And this kind of leads us to the practice of our new life. We've got a new way of thinking, this new perspective. We have a new purpose. Set people free by a power that is not in us.

We just put it on display. We demonstrate it for them. This is how it works. In essence, we read it over them. Then he changes to a practice.

This is the first practice he's talking about is this. Verse 9, he says, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we think of the word evangelism, most of us, it's like, oh, great. Here we go. The guilt trip is on its way. I went to a college that you'd be kicked out of if you missed two Saturdays in a row not going evangelizing.

[ 32 : 19 ] We produced a lot of false converts, let me tell you. And there were a lot of five-year-olds who heard the gospel who had no idea what it was. But I told somebody the gospel. Unfortunately, Satan's really good at getting us to despise the very thing that God wants us to be excited about.

I think it's interesting that Peter doesn't say, go evangelize. He says it in more specific ways. He says, you have a new identity.

And all you need to do is just tell people about how awesome it is. Proclaim to them the excellencies. Now, not everyone's a preacher. Not everyone's going to go town to town like Paul.

He's talking to people who are exiled outside the city. They're going to the market and raising their families. He's like, in the markets and in your families, you have this new perspective. It's okay to tell people about that.

You let God deal with the reading of the divine power. Let God deal with the planting of the seed. But our job is just to be a light.

[ 33 : 29 ] See, often we think evangelism or proclaiming the excellencies is getting into theological debates with Mormons at your front door. But that's not true.

We think it's getting into heady debates with people who have hard questions. But that's not true.

He's saying, just be willing to live out what you are. Entitled. Now, listen. We know we're still sinners. This is why when someone looks at you and says, well, you're still a sinner.

I said, yeah, I know. That's why we have grace. And why you can have grace. But there's another part of this practice. If you read verse 12, he says this.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good work, your good deeds, and glorify God on the day of visitation.

[ 34 : 27 ] See, our obedience to the king in the eyes of the world is evil because it exposes their wickedness. This is the stumbling stone, right?

So the reason why they're going to look at our good deeds and say that's evil is because, what does Paul say? The world calls what is good evil and what is evil good. Right?

We celebrate that which is destructive and really disgusting. Not we, but the world. And for those of us who stand up in love and meekness and gentleness and kindness, proclaiming the excellencies of God, we're going to be pointed at and say, you're judgmental.

You're racist. You're sexist. You're a bigot. You're mean. You're hateful. You're unkind. And yet, in the midst of that, in the midst of that, Peter says, God will still be glorified because some will see your actions and understand where they come from.

So we can't downplay what we call the tilling of the ground. I think it's interesting that Jesus always uses gardening perspectives when thinking about the spreading of the light.

[ 35 : 38 ] He says, you have to, first before you start the process, you've got to till up the ground. Then you put in a seed and you throw water on it.



But just like gardening, anybody garden here? Raise your hand. I know some of you do. All right. Great. How are you doing at making those plants grow? Anybody want to take credit for that? No.

You can't. Why? Because it's a miracle beyond your power. You have a limited involvement. You're involved. And it's important that you're involved because there is no fruit or vegetables unless you plant them.

But in the end, how does someone truly come to Christ? By the power of God. This is why Paul says, some plant, some water, but after that, we're hands off.

God gives the increase. So this weight that we feel that we need to convert people, no, we need to be the light of Christ to the world. And we let God take that planting.

[ 36 : 42 ] Do something with it. See, this is where your whole perspective changes. Your life changes. Every opportunity you have within the proximity of another person means that you are actually within range of the potential of changing their life forever.

You don't know where you're at on the chain. Am I planting? Am I watering? Or am I going to watch the increase? I don't know. But I'm just going to be kind and loving and I'm going to reflect what I am.

I'm a priest. I don't need to be an apologist. I don't need to be an angry street preacher. I don't need to be those things. Because there's nowhere in the text that it says we're going to be those things.

You see, to share what we have is natural because we're different. I want to show you how Peter then takes this and makes it very practical.

We're not going to look at this now. We'll look at it in a few weeks. But if you keep reading, if you're in your Bibles in verse 13, look how he takes this new identity that we have, the new perspective of our life, this new purpose that we understand, we have this powerful possession that we can share with others and therefore it changes our practice.

[ 37 : 57 ] Verse 13, be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

For this is the will of God that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor. So you can do that if you understand your perspective. I'm just an alien here.

I don't really belong here. And so I can follow your rules because I got one goal. I'm a secret implant transitioning people out of that kingdom under those rulers into another one.

You see, you lose this perspective in politics and changing culture and preaching politics and culture from the pulpit becomes, you guys, how do you make that?

[ 39 : 06 ] I don't understand. What I have to preach is the kingdom and what we've been transferred out of and the power that we have because that's what changes people. Not who the president will be.

Not what flag we decide what country we're going to praise. Our allegiance is to a whole other world and a whole other king. And yet, because he lives within us, we live respectable and honorable amongst those two who are gardening.

It changes our life. I want to go back and just make one observation because this is where Peter is going to keep flip-flopping back and forth. So the greatest danger the church faces in Peter's time, Paul, John, James, they all write about this, is that the moment you start giving back into the passage of your flesh, which we've been freed from, no two people agree on how the flesh should be indulged in.

This is why marriage counseling exists. We, as two sinners who come together, don't agree on how you should satisfy me.

You don't do it enough. You don't do it right. And you do it annoying. And that creates. This is why James says, why do you fight and quarrel? Is it not that your sinful passions are at war with one another?

[ 40 : 30 ] Well, how does Peter fight this in our perspective? He reminds us of who we are in Hosea. This is what your sinful passions produced, adultery. You turned on God hard.

He brought you back by his mercy. He gave power within you. He gave you a whole new identity. He gave you a whole new purpose. So therefore, you have a whole new practice.

Most of the conflicts in my life and in your life are because we stop thinking about who we are in Christ, our new purpose in life, and we start listening to our flesh, wanting to protect ourselves, wanting to satisfy ourselves, wanting to participate in that which God freed us from.

Think about it. Think about where your life has been recently. The decisions that you made. The priorities of your life. What kingdom can you really say are coming from?

I don't say this in judgment. Most of you know me. Most of you know I struggle like you do. I need you to remind me. My wife did this week. One of our elders, Ben, reminded me this week of, Don't let that seep in, John.

[ 41 : 49 ] That's not reality. Don't believe that. Don't trust that. That's the flesh talking. I need that. This is what today is for. Today is us to fall on our knees one more time and say, Oh dear God, why would you ever love a sinner like me?

And he picks you up, dear child, and he grabs your hand. And he points to the kingdom and says, That's where you belong. I chose you.

You belong to me. Oh, and here is a robe so that everyone in the kingdom knows that you have a really important job. You're a priest. And that job starts with your kids, your spouse.

Just let everyone know that you're here to bring them the freedom of coming out of darkness into light. But God, I keep failing.

I know. I know my mercies are ever new. As a matter of fact, this week, when you fail, don't try and fix yourself.

[ 42 : 55 ] Come back into my presence and have a conversation with me, casting your anxieties on me and your sin and your struggle. And we will keep focusing on what it is you're doing until I come back.

He's tender. You know how Hebrews describes him? He's sympathetic. But John, it's so hard to be a parent. But John, it's so hard to be a teenager.

It's so hard to be a spouse. All of this is complicated. Peter writes, pointing back to the old and how disastrous it is, showing you you cannot go beyond his mercy and grace.

And he has secured you and planted you next to him. So, as a church, we have to figure out how are we going to do this? How are we going to build each other up, take the truth and watch it over our minds?

When the flesh comes in and says, I need to satisfy this, we need to be able to speak the truth to each other and say, don't believe the lie. Don't fall back into that. And when we do, confess it to someone.

[ 44 : 03 ] I fell back into it. I need you to remind me of what I have in Christ. If we see a brother and sister in sin, we need to go to them. What does Galatians 6 say? The spirit of gentleness, lest we too fall into temptation.

I pray that as you go back, I encourage you to read 1 Peter 1 and 2, connecting it all together, and ask yourself this, are my priorities in line with what Peter is saying?

Does my life reflect the grace that I have received? Or am I still being driven by the flesh that Peter told me to leave? Let's pray.

Our Father, we are humbled that after so much pain we have caused you, you still want to be our God.

You chose to be our God. You put your mercy upon us, and you put your name upon us. Lord, in five minutes I'm going to forget this.

[ 45 : 07 ] Lord, would you please encourage my heart and the hearts of all my brothers and sisters. May we think about the rest of our week and how we can lift each other up.

Think about the role of the priesthood that we have. But next, Father, we just pray that you will bless to us this meal, that it would increase our faith, that our eyes would be focused on you.

In Christ's name, amen. Thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee, where everyone is in equal need of grace.

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