

Who I Am

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[0 : 00] You're listening to the sermon podcast of Grace Reformed Church in Spring Hill, Tennessee. To learn more about us, visit our website at gracereformed.org.

And now, today's sermon. Hear the word of the Lord. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

According to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, and the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood, may grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[1 : 00] Our Father, we ask that you now bless this to our soul, that our hearts might be encouraged, and that our faith might be strengthened in your name. Amen. Please be seated. Over the last few weeks, we have been studying through spiritual warfare, which then led us into 1 and 2 Peter, which will be our exposition for the next few months.

And thinking about spiritual warfare, and really going back to that to tie it into today's service, we recently spoke of the higher powers Paul references. He says the principalities, the higher powers, and the air, mainly the existence, referencing a couple of weeks ago, the existence of other gods that haunt our world.

The most important part of what we learned is the aim of this war. What are they trying to bring in opposition to our king? And that is, very clearly stated, destruction and death.

One of the areas that are constantly under attack, not just for Christians, but the whole of humanity, are those who bear the image of God.

All humans bear his image, therefore all have his likeness. And Satan and the powers of darkness despise our God and despise and destroy anything that would reflect his goodness, his holiness, or anything that resembles him.

[2 : 31] You see, it's not simply good enough for them just to kill us, but to destroy any resemblance of purity and of holiness. They want to destroy who we are at our core.

And instead of the Bible being our guide to our identity here, we as Christians, the world has turned up the volume under the power of this darkness to a volume so loud that it's hard not to hear it every day.

The world tells us what you are. It gives you your identity. Unfortunately, we often listen. The world tells us what you are. The world tells us what you eat, what you wear, what you do for a living.

Your political party, your marital status, or your perennial status. It's how you are defined. Or how you go about these is defining of you.

We're all drowning under the social pressures. We can all admit that at times we even find ourselves believing the lies and acting upon them to test to see if they'd be true for us.

[3 : 48] Our significance as humans is often found in what we do or what we have or what we have not done. And here is why this is a lie. The world is under a curse.

Nothing is as it should be. So many times in scripture we're reminded of this. Humanity is estranged from its creator. Evil exists corrupting everything that is pure and good.

And we live in a world with death. This is not the world we were created into. We were not brought into a world of death, but yet we live in one. So it's not right.

And secondly, the world is born into sin. This is what we believe here. The depravity of man. We have been removed from all that is holy that is within us. And so our attentions and our desires are evil.

And we can't see God's image in us because sin blinds our hearts and our minds. This is why it's natural for us to be self-centered and to be self-pleasing.

[4 : 51] When I get frustrated with my children, I often look at them and tell them to stop being sinners. As if they're the only ones who struggle with it. We all do. We all struggle.

And on top of this, the kingdom of darkness only fuels what is already in existence in us. And here is the scary part. The great Satan, the great adversary, knows how to turn us against each other to fulfill our desires.

And leads to destruction. Peter is also dealing with what happens when you decide to reject the social norms. This influence that's upon the culture.

And how damaging it can be. Real persecution. See, we spoke of this last week. Our country, specifically just for us, and this could be said of the whole world, but our country worships sensual immorality.

We talked about this last week being the spirit of Babylon. You can turn on any streaming service that you want or listen to the top radio hits of the day. And you're going to be faced with the concepts that they're not going to word it this way.

[6 : 06] It sounds much more appealing. But what it is, is adultery, fornication, and homosexuality. That's what you're constantly, constantly bombarded with. And I am shocked.

Not that the world acts this way. We're told that the world's going to act this way. It's been acting this way since the fall. In Genesis chapter 3. And Paul says the whole world is under the power of the evil one.

So this makes sense. But what is shocking is how Christians are embracing the world's identity. And ignoring God's freedom from it. It's become so normal that we laugh and mock at the very sins that the Bible calls us to reject and walk away from.

We embrace the world's way of looking at sexuality. And we begin to dress and speak and even partake in the sensual pleasures. This is what Peter is going to get into later in the letter.

But he addresses it here in the beginning. As we spoke of last week when he says, elect exiles. Meaning that we are not a part of the spirit of Babylon. But I do want to give you just one example.

[7 : 19] Because it's going to help us in applying what Peter is about to say next. Here's an example from the United States. That is under the spell of the evil one.

More and more of our country is falling under the belief that one can choose what gender they should be. Or what gender they should be married to. It's becoming an acceptable norm.

It is even being passed in certain states that if you were to oppose a child, you as the parent, and keeping your child from pursuing such transition or changing, that it could be criminal acts.

And you could be arrested for it. We're not fully there yet, but we're on our way. And how does this happen? And how does this become acceptable? This was not forced at gunpoint.

No one was forcing these people to change their hearts and their identities and the way in which they see themselves. It came to them from the pressures that are around them and how it was advertised to them.

[8 : 22] And there was no truth to expose the darkness. And so it became acceptable practice. Trying to fulfill that side of us that wants to be accepted and yet pleased.

Well, I have good news and I have bad news for us this morning. First, this is not the first time this has happened in the world.

That's the bad news. The good news is this. Peter was dealing with the same issues when writing his letter. He has hope for us. He has a purpose and a reason of why it is that we're going to face such kind of opposition.

Because I'm telling you, the moment you start with meekness and gentleness and patience and with true compassion for your neighbor, disagree with them, there will be persecution.

This is exactly what was happening with these churches that Peter is writing to. We're going to go ahead and finish Peter's greeting this morning to the churches in his first letter. Peter is writing in this introduction in a way to help the church have a foundation of an identity.

[9 : 32] Because for the rest of the letter, he just unfolds this identity. He unfolds this way that they are to think about themselves. And so over the last two weeks, we looked at the concept of election and exile, their status in a world that has changed.

And the only part I wish to really remind us of is the spirit of Babylon. If you didn't hear this last week, I really encourage you to go back and listen to last week's sermon because it's going to be referenced for the rest of our time in the book.

But he's writing to encourage these believers who have been set free from the lie. The lie of their past. Of their past passions. And so this morning as we unfold the rest of chapters 1, verses 1 and 2, we're going to look at five identity markers that Peter gives to the church as really the foundation and pillars of how they're going to endure suffering.

As those who proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. And so as a parent provides confidence in building an affirmation to their children, this is what Peter is doing.

He wants to build affirmation. He wants to build confidence in who they are as it relates to the relationship to their father. And so the first point we already covered.

[10 : 48] There you go. See, this sermon's already gotten shorter. We already covered point one last week out of the five. But point one is of these identifying markers of our identity is elect exiles.

You can see in verse one, Peter says, The only thing I want to remind us about this particular situation is that Peter's point of putting the two together is that you belong to God and therefore you will not fit in the world that exists today.

You're not going to fit. Because of the spirit of Babylon that rests on the hearts of every man desiring to fulfill their own pleasures, they are going to by nature oppose you.

And on top of that will be supernatural opposition. This is the warnings we're going to get later from Peter and also from Paul. So continuing on to this marker number two, building off of this idea of elect exiles, this foundation we started with the last two weeks.

Let's read verse two. He says this, 1 Peter chapter one, verse two. According to the foreknowledge of God the Father. So the first identifying marker is elect exiles. The second is we can just put it into one word, that whole phrase, adopted.

[12:03] That's how you are supposed to identify yourself. This is part of who you are, adopted. Now why did I choose this word as the second identity marker?

Because nobody has ever adopted themselves by accident or been adopted by mistake.

Now there's a lot of us who've been born that way. We were not adopted in that way. It requires prior acceptance and action on the part, hear me, on the part of the one being adopted.

That's what he's getting at in this phrase. You don't come to God with your adoption papers that he might sign them. He comes to you in the gutter and gives you his name.

This is what Peter is pointing out to these people in this letter. If you want to mark in your Bible or take down in your notes, Ephesians chapter one, verses four and five.

[13:07] Paul kind of gives an unfolding of this entire word. But the idea that Peter is referencing, just in one phrase, this is the idea that Paul fleshes out a little bit more.

First Peter, I'm sorry, Ephesians chapter one, verse four. Notice here, Paul says chose. Peter uses the word elect. He says this in verse four.

Even as he chose us in him before the foundations of the world. It's a different way of saying it, that Peter, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.

He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose. Listen to this. Of his will. So he chose according to his love to fulfill his will.

Peter is starting this as the way in which you should identify with the Father. It's not that you presented yourself in a position that's acceptable.

[14:05] It's the opposite. It's that he chose you above all other circumstances. So God is not responding to us. He's not, it's just not transactional in our nature.

It is his will because he said, I loved you. And therefore he chose to save us. He chose to adopt us. This becomes important later on in life.

And it might even be for many of you right now. Because your adoption is for one reason and for one reason only. He loved you. It's not that he even had pity upon you.

It's not that he looked upon you as one would watch a commercial of the hungry children who were starving to death and said, oh, there's poor children. He says that the reason he chose you is far more significant than just pity.

He says he loves you. That's not a love we understand. But Peter is going to go on to explain it to us. But in some ways we often want to feel that we earn the seat at the table of the father.

[15:12] This adoption is not the work of God but it's a collaboration. We performed well as an orphan so the father comes to us. And Paul writes, child, before you were born, God signed the papers with the blood of your brother Jesus.

And declared you his own. Turn with me to 1 John. This is so important. It's not just Peter. This is all over the New Testament. It's such a beautiful way to help us identify with our father.

What happens when Christians are under persecution and they feel as if God has abandoned them and they can't feel his presence and everything around. Because the world says you perform well, God blesses you.

You do not perform well, God curses you. And so if you feel the constant weight of pressure and trial and everything is going wrong, the first thought that comes into your mind is, maybe I'm not. This child.

Maybe I'm not. 1 John 4.15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the son of God, God abides in him and he in God.

[16 : 23] So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

By this love perfected with us so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment because as he is so also are we in this world.

And how is it that we're going to stand up in the day of judgment without fear? Verse 18. There is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear for fear has to do with punishment.

And whoever fears has not been perfected in love. And in case you're wondering, we love because he first loved us. How do you stand on the day of judgment?

Without fear. See, there is a constant lie that comes to us over and over again. You are how you perform. And we believe it.

[17 : 20] And we drown in it. And we often actually move the opposite direction away from God and his means. We move away from the preaching of the word. We move away from the church.

Why? Because we aren't performing well and we don't deserve it in some way. Or we're ashamed of it. Or we're afraid of the consequences so we just ignore that.

I got into an argument, an argument, a fun discussion about ignorance is bliss. No, it's not. It's just called prolonged pain. That you probably could avoid it.

Ignorance does not remove the problem. Here, ignorance of God's love and its actual adoption of you provides for you hope in the midst of the worst circumstances in your life.

Child, the moment that you think that God is displeased with you based upon your performance, you have stopped listening to his word and you started listening to the lies.

[18 : 18] And so he says, child, you're adopted because I chose to adopt you and my love should cast out all question, all fear of judgment.

You see, the world mocks weakness and dependence. We who call upon the Father's strength, the world looks at and calls you weak, small-minded, lazy.

Lazy. I love how James says it this way. James 2, 15. Listen, my beloved brothers. Has not God chose those who are poor in the world to be rich?

In faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him. He didn't choose those who are strong, wealthy in the eyes of the world.

Yet that's who the Lord or the world mocks. That means your bank account, your social status have nothing to do with your status before the king.

[19 : 21] He loves you and you are not judged by humans, but by the God of the world. And he says, hey, by the way, my love should remind you there's nothing to fear at the end of your life. There's nothing to fear at the end of your life.

You can live in that freedom, which then leads us to the next identifying marker. Adopted, but how does this happen? Like, how do we become adopted?

This is what he says in the next part of verse 2. He says, in the sanctification of the spirit. And so the next part of our identity is that we're, yes, we're exiles who are adopted, but we are adopted with something that is unbelievable.

It's really hard to comprehend. Spirit empowered. I mean, I love saying it this way. You have a God that lives inside you. It just still feels uncomfortable when you say it.

That's what he means. The sanctification of the spirit happens inside, out of you. And why is this important? Because, in my opinion, we have removed the spirit's power in the life of the believer.

[20 : 34] It is God who lives within us and animates your faith. But that's not what we hear preaching and books being written and podcasts. It's all about how you work harder to gain progress.

And Peter's like, that's not how this works. That's not even your identity. It's the spirit who animates you. It's the spirit who does the work in you. Now, John, you better be careful because that's bad theology. That's let go and let God.

That's just, you're telling people they don't have to obey. Well, you haven't read all of Peter then. There's much to obey. But the question is, how are you going to do it? What are you going to do when you face death?

When you face the loss of a loved one? When you see the worst of humanity? How is it? You're going to have the strength to actually stand up and do what you're supposed to do. You're going to remind yourself of your adoption and that I can't do this in my own strength.

It has to be the strength of the Holy Spirit. And so the Bible points us to a source that can only come from God. And that's good. We want it to, because if it comes from our own emotion, if it comes from our own strength, it will fail.

[21 : 33] What does the psalmist say? My body and my faith, my strength may fail, but who remains forever? Our God. So you don't live in the power of your own strength.

Right? And let me explain what Peter means by this statement of sanctification. So where did we start in this verse, in this flow of our identity?

He says he started with the election, and it flows to the foreknowledge of God, meaning that God chose us before the foundations of the world. And how is it that after he chose us, we who were dead came to life?

This is what he's talking about. He says, in the sanctification of the Spirit. The Spirit comes in, and the word sanctification means a separation of, a dividing of, a pulling out from.

Right? It's moving from one direction to another direction, of worldliness to godliness, and when we talk about progressive sanctification. But that's not what he's talking about here. This is different. He's talking about how you came from death to life, from unbeliever to believer.

[22 : 37] This is what he means, is that the Spirit came and separated you from the category of unbeliever and put you into the category of believer. And so this transition, this pulling, only happened because of the power of the Spirit.

Write this down, Ephesians chapter 2, verse 5. I love how Paul says it this way. Ephesians 2, 5. Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

So you go from dead faith, the unbeliever, to living faith. How does that happen? And he says, he, meaning the power of the Holy Spirit, he did this. Jesus is trying to explain this to Nicodemus.

You remember this? And Nicodemus is like, I'm not sure I understand. What do you mean I have to be born again? I don't, how am I to go back into my mother's womb?

He says, no, you don't understand. I'm talking about something that's supernatural. You're thinking physical. So Jesus tells them this little parable. This is John 3, 8. He says, the wind blows where it wishes.

[23 : 43] And you hear its sound. But you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who was born of the Spirit. He's saying, John, you can't, or Nicodemus, you can't manipulate the power of the Spirit.

But you can see, what? The evidence of his existence. Right? You can observe it in the trees. But you can't control, you want to be able to control Nicodemus.

It doesn't work this way. It's God's gracious sovereignty upon us. You cannot manipulate God's sanctifying Spirit. But this is helpful to us as well.

When we are struggling under the weight of persecution, when we are struggling in doubt, under the weight of our sin and darkness, how do we then have hope and relief from this?

How does this bring us? What actually is connected to the fourth pillar, the fourth part of our identity, is that we are Spirit-powered, which then means we are moving from the category of unbeliever to believer.

[24 : 45] This is how we identify ourselves. Many people like to say this, that I am a believer. Or we tag it as, I'm a Christian. I'm a follower of Jesus. But he words it in this way.

Look at the next phrase in 1 Peter 1, verse 2. He says, For obedience to Jesus Christ. All of this, remember, is flowing down. You're adopted. And how does this adoption work?

He sovereignly chose you. He implants the Spirit inside of you. He sanctifies you. Pulls you from category of unbeliever to believer. And now you are not only Spirit-empowered, but the evidence of your adoption, the evidence of the Spirit living with inside of you is faith.

Well, it sounds like the Reformation. It sounds like the Gospel. The only problem with this context is what Peter is connecting.

And this is important. There's a connection. He uses it twice. And the connection is a conjunction. In Greek, it's called chi. In English, we use and. Adopted. And how is this true?

[25 : 49] Because. Or and. This is true. And this is true. And the Holy Spirit has animated this adoption. And we know that it's true because of your faith.

The Reformers, in our confession, the concept that they used was called obey the Gospel. Now, there's nothing for you to do in the Gospel. As far as, like, works.

But even putting your faith in Christ is something that has to be granted to you because you can't do that on your own. Listen to how the, this is our confession on God's decrees, chapter 3, verse, or point 7.

It says this. The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care so that those heeding the will of God revealed in his word and obeying him may be assured of their eternal election by the certainty of their effectual calling.

So the calling is another way of saying the Holy Spirit drew us, he pulled us out of the unbelief and put us into belief. In this way, this doctrine will give reasons for praise, reverence, and admiration of God, as well as humility, diligent, and rich comfort to all who sincerely obey the Gospel.

[27 : 06] That's another way of saying what Peter is saying is that they obeyed Jesus Christ. The call to put their faith in Christ. And how is it that they did this? They did it by means of the power of the Spirit.

So if you are here this morning and you have the remotest small amount of faith in your Savior, you do understand that it's not the level or the intensity of your faith that brings salvation to your soul.

That capacity is put upon the Savior. If faith exists to whatever level, you have the confidence of knowing you've been adopted, the Spirit lives within you, and you are a believer.

Because of the faith that lives within you. It's so dangerous to start with your works. If you start with your works, how many of them are going to be enough for you to determine, I am a child of God?

We always start with our faith and then move to the foundation of what God is doing in us. But, oh, dear church, pay attention. If people are pointing constantly to how you perform to determine your adoption, Satan will cap you out at the knees.

[28 : 17] And you'll begin to wonder, how is it that I am truly, truly his? And this leads us to our fifth and final identity marker this morning. And really becomes the foundation.

And it's a beautiful phrase, but it's not one we really use a lot. So far we've talked about how we've been elect exiles, this identity of not fitting in the world, adopted, spiritually empowered, believer.

And on top of this new identity, he gives us a new purpose for life. This is what he means by for sprinkling with his blood.

Now, if we're all willing to admit, when you were reading this this week, or the last few weeks, getting ready for the service, how many of you took time to actually contemplate what that was?

It's not a phrase we use because it's an Old Testament concept. Now, we just celebrated something that we all have a really well grasp on, for the most part, Thanksgiving.

[29 : 23] Right? For most of us, we know it's celebrated near the birth of our country and pilgrims. At least we get that far. And there's a debate whether there is even turkeys there or not.

Not a fan of turkeys. If we got rid of turkey on Thanksgiving, I wouldn't complain. So if I were to make a statement to you, for instance, it's like the smell of Thanksgiving dinner.

Everyone in here kind of know what that means? I know some of you do like Mexican and Italian, which is whatever. But the concept of it's related to a holiday that everyone gathers around, and it's significant.

This is what Peter's doing. It's a significant act that everyone who understands the Old Testament would have understood its ramifications. But because often we're not very familiar with the feasts and festivals and the sprinkling of the sacrifices, this doesn't mean anything to us.

I am so excited to share with you. I wanted to turn this into an entire sermon. But the problem is we would never finish Peter. So I'm going to put it in just to a point. But I get to explain it a little bit later because he comes back to it later on in his letter.

[30 : 32] Why is it so important that our identity be that we are sprinkled with his blood? Why is that so important to us? Because it's a picture of how God sees us and how we see God.

Let me read this to you. I found this commentator to really, there's no way for me to improve this. I'm just going to read it to you as a concise explanation of what does it mean to be sprinkled with his blood?

Since all the elect fall short of perfect sanctification and obedience, there is a cleansing from sin provided for them through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

There were only three circumstances in the Old Testament where blood was sprinkled on people. First, at the establishment of a covenant. Number two, at the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests.

And number three, in the purification ceremony for a cleansed leper. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus on us accomplishes the same things.

[31 : 37] First, a covenant is formed. Then we are ordained as priests to him. And finally, we are cleansed from our corruption and sin. Each one of these things are ours through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

First, oh, this is powerful for our hearts and our minds. So let's walk through them for the rest of our time this morning so that we understand this phrase that Peter throws.

It's not just some insignificant picture, but it's powerful to our hearts and our purpose in life. So far, we are presented with the loving choice of the Father according to his will and not our performance.

We've been able to establish that. He now lives inside us and animates us and our faith. And it's confirmed our adoption. Okay. But part of this adoption is the ceremony of the Messiah creating between us and him a covenant that is sealed by blood.

Now, that word is also not a word we use often in our culture. Peter. So the first part of the sprinkling of the blood that Peter is referencing is God's covenant to us.

[32 : 53] This isn't just a pinky promise. Or I promise with an extra intensity like my children. Dad, I promise, I promise, I promise. After I watch this last show, I'll clean my room.

That's not that kind of promise. A covenant is a bond that if broken, demands death. This is the kind of covenant that is being spoken of.

And therefore, God cannot die. And nothing can prevent him from holding his side of the contract. So when Christ paid for our sins and his blood was shed, it was sprinkled on us as a symbol of God's covenant with us saying, You are now mine based upon my covenant I make with you.

You know what's fascinating about this? In the contract of the covenant, do you know whose name? There's one line. Do you know whose name is signed on it? Not yours. God's name.

I have made a covenant with you that I will save you, adopt you, fill you with my spirit. And the guarantee of that is I sprinkle you with my blood. It's a symbol that Israel would have known and the people of God would have understood.

[34 : 06] You were not involved in this covenant. So therefore, when he says you are sprinkled with his blood, child, everything that I just promised to you from the beginning of your election all the way down to that of your new hope, this new purpose you have in your life is all wrapped up in God's covenant towards you, not your covenant towards him.

Man, how many times have we made promises to God? We have all done this, right? We fall again into sin and we say, God, I promise I'll never do that again. It's a good, good, good thing that our salvation is not based upon our covenants with God, but his covenant with us.

And this leads us to the second part of the sprinkling, this image. He says that we become the priests of God, God's priests. So it's God's covenant and now we become the priests of God.

If you turn to chapter 2, verse 9, he even just unfolds this. We're not going to look at it in its depth, but he says it this way. Referencing these churches.

This is 1 Peter 2, 9. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you might proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

[35 : 28] This was the work of a priest. So we know Peter's intentions here because he's using it in this metaphor later on in chapter 9. So he's saying you who are sprinkled with his blood, this is the identity that you're bringing on.

That you now, the priest of God. That's a weird language for us. Like Roman Catholics have priests, but we don't have priests. But no, we actually are supposed to see this as our identification.

But not only our identity, he's giving you your purpose. This is where he begins to explain it in this whole section in chapter 2, which I'm not going to get into this morning. But what did the priest of the Old Testament do?

There's the temple, and inside the temple is God's presence. And the people would be represented, and they would have connection between God and his presence through the priests.

And what are we told by Paul? He says you now are the temple of God.

[36 : 27] And so you become this representation from the world or to the world. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 2. I'm going to read this because Paul gives us a beautiful example of this.

He says those who are sprinkled by his blood, this means you have a new purpose. And that purpose is you actually become the presence of God to the world. That's, I mean, imagine if we actually found, you know, Mr. Indiana Jones actually found the real covenant of the ark.

And you could go and be in the presence of God. Whoa, it's kind of creepy, right? I remember when the whole revival thing was happening in Kentucky, and people wanted to go there because they wanted to feel the presence of God.

I'm like, have you not read your Bible? He lives inside you. What do you mean go and feel the presence of your God? Look at Ephesians chapter 2. Look at verse 19. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens to God, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

God in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Whoa.

[37 : 55] That's overwhelming. This is why Paul gets so angry with the Corinthians. He's like, do you know that your body literally houses the king of kings, the God of gods?

The holy one lives inside of you. Why are you connecting it to these prostitutes? What are you thinking? What comes out of your mouth and comes into your eyes? This belongs to the Lord.

Literally, you have become the representation to the world. The world can experience my love and my freeing gospel and can be in communion with me through you.

You literally are carrying the whole presence of God inside of you. How do we know that? Because you've been sprinkled with his blood. You've been chosen. He made a covenant with you and part of this covenant is you are now his priest.

We're going to speak more of this. Peter goes into this. This is why Jesus says weird things, but it makes sense to us now. Now, if humanity is not our enemy and if humanity is our mission field, when humanity becomes our enemy and attacks us, Jesus is turning the other cheek.

[39 : 06] Why? Because you're a living sacrifice. You lay your life down. Why? So that they might, what? Hear the good news of the gospel from you. This is why Peter says later on in this book, pray for those who persecute you.

Pray for those who are in leadership over you. And when they come to destroy your life and then they ask you why you have not reviled back but continue to show love, be ready to give an answer of the hope that lies within you.

Why? Because you house God. You are now a vessel for him. Church, this is so hard. If you only hear the message of the world, all they do is take any concept that God lives with inside of you and it's giving you a purpose for your life and they tell you your purpose for your life is to please and protect yourself.

When Jesus says you lay yourself down, the whole, this is consumable. This is a usable vessel. We want to preserve it for the purposes of our own.

And God says, no, you belong to me. I bought you at the price. I sprinkled my blood on you. I made a covenant with you and now I live with inside of you and I have set you free from the slavery of the darkness of this world.

[40 : 20] Why are you turning up the volume and actually listening to those who are blind? Because it's that good and it's that powerful.

Peter has to remind us, don't give in. So what happens when we do though? What happens when we do give in? Because I have, you have, we all will. This is what's so great about this last part of the sprinkling of his blood.

This God's covenant, nothing can remove it. We have a new purpose and when we fail in this purpose, which we do, there's a cleansing promise. God cleanses us.

See, the sprinkled blood was given to those who had the killing disease of leprosy. It was often seen as a metaphor for the heart condition under a deadly curse.

And Peter points to our past, our present, and our future failures. And he declares to you, the blood of Christ covers your uncleanness.

[41 : 28] Oh man, this is, this is, this is really, really significant. Forever. Forever. You see, the Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus died once and that was sufficient to cover all of our uncleanness.

Look at Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 19 and following. Hebrews 10, 19 and following. You see, at times we're okay with God forgiving us of our past sins, but it's our future sins that often drag us into despair.

The repeatedness of our sins. Hebrews 10, 19. Therefore, brothers, since we have a confidence to enter the holy place, listen to this.

How is it you have confidence? By the blood of Jesus. Why? Because the sprinkling blood of Jesus was that you are cleansed. Verse 20.

By the new and living way that he opened up for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh. And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

[42 : 46] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for he who promised is faithful. That's another way of describing what Peter just said.

How is it you wake up in the morning and you can look at what you've done yesterday and have the ability with confidence to speak to your God? Because he says, well, child, you're covered in his blood.

And the promise of being covered in his blood is that, I love this, it cleanses you from an evil conscience. Your conscience inside of you barks like a dog and says, how dare you approach the holy king of kings?

How dare you come? And Jesus says, the dog is removed. The gate is opened. And without trepidation, without fear, without having to do some kind of work, you walk home as the prodigal to receive from the Father what?

His faithful promises. And what are his faithful promises? That do not waver. However, his love, his adoption, his spirit's power within you, and his forgiveness.

[44 : 07] There are times, though, when I talk with people and they say this phrase, oh, I just can't forgive myself. I just can't forgive myself for what I've done. Oh, so let me get this straight. You, as little G God, are walking over to the throne and taking big G God off of the throne, and you're putting yourself on the throne and now are defining the terms of how it works with God.

Is this what you're doing? You don't want to do that. You're saying there is a section of God's blood that is not sufficient to cover your actions. You don't get to define what is and is not acceptable for God to forgive.

Only God defines that. Okay. It's your pride that you say this because somehow you think there is a way back to redemption. Somehow you, in your own self-righteousness, can earn this status of holiness back before humanity and God.

And God says there is no earning your way back. For all righteousness that is of the flesh is as filthy rags. But if you want to please me and you want to be effective for my work and do work of the kingdom, you will by faith repent of your sins and come and be reminded of why it is with boldness you can receive the wonderful cleansing of your conscience.

So that you can go out into the world and proclaim to the world, you too can have your sins covered by the sprinkling of his blood. And you too can have a covenant that will not break.

[45 : 33] And you too can have a new heart. And you too can have constant forgiveness. That's how he starts his letter.

That's just two verses. And just in case you don't agree with him, look how he then goes from his introduction to the meat of the word, of his letter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused you to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

Do you know what he says? Your past is cleansed, you have a new status adopted, and anything you think you need to do to earn or add to this relationship with the king, you do not.

Because why? Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for our salvation to be revealed in the last times. You see, church, the moment you finally give up of trying to make this world a pleasing place to live in, some of you don't have to do that.

[46 : 50] The world's already kicked you in the mouth, destroyed you, either through your past or through the suffering of a lost one or a loved one. And this is where this becomes hopeful.

What is the purpose of my life if it's not happiness? And Jesus says, through Peter, freedom. Freedom.

No one, no one can touch you if you believe in my words. And all will be made right. So the rest of our time throughout Peter will be building on this identity, this hope that we have in a world that seems to be in utter chaos.

Let's pray. Father, we are so thankful that we who are weak and poor and completely sinners, you do not leave us without hope.

We have a significant purpose. And it is far, far beyond anything that we can do. So Lord, help us to believe this and respond appropriately by loving you and loving each other and proclaiming the good news of your gospel.

[48 : 08] 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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