

God's Chosen People

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Date: 17 May 2026

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[0 : 00] On the third new moon, after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, and on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, while Moses went up to God.

The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself.

Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine.

And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. The second reading is being taken from 1 Peter 2, verses 1 to 10.

[1 : 22] And that can be located in the Bibles on page 1014. So put away all malice and all deceit, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation. If indeed you have tasted the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, within 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.

For it stands in Scripture, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone. A cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

[2 : 41] They stumble because they disobeyed the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness 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.

This ends the reading of the word. Thank you very much, Cleo. But after a 10-week break, we are resuming our sermon series in the letter of 1 Peter.

We have come to a section in Peter's letter in which he shares the glorious and humbling truth that those who believe in Jesus are God's chosen people.

And if you follow the two scripture readings closely as we read them this morning, you would have noticed that there's similar language in both passages referring to God's people, even though they were addressed to two different groups of people at two different periods of time.

[4 : 18] The first scripture reading from Exodus 19, the Lord commanded Moses to speak these words to the children of Israel.

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

And then the passage we are considering primarily from 1 Peter 2 this morning. The Apostle Peter writes these words to New Testament believers in verses 9-12.

The Apostle Peter writes these words to New Testament believers So how are we to understand these two passages of scripture?

The first one directed to the people of Israel under the Old Testament, and the second directed to God's people in the New Testament.

[5 : 57] Some 1,500 years later, bearing in mind that both passages of scripture are addressed to two groups, each of whom is referred to as God's chosen people.

Some people say it means that God has two groups of people, the nation of Israel and New Testament believers, and that they are two distinct and separate groups of people.

But that's not the case. And this morning, I hope to show, as we consider primarily 1 Peter, but also as we reference the passage in Exodus 19, I hope that we would all see that God has always and will always have one people over all generations whom he redeemed by sending his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to give his life as a ransom for all those who find themselves among the people of God.

But first, let me pray for us before we look in more detail at God's Word. Heavenly Father, would you draw near to us?

Lord, you have already drawn near to us in the person of your Son. And you, the Holy God, has condescended to sinners like us. And more than that, Lord, you have had mercy on us and you have saved us, all of us who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[7 : 54] I ask, O Lord, that you would draw near to us as your Word is proclaimed this morning, to me as I proclaim it, and to all of us as we hear it.

Would you grant much grace, O Lord, as we consider your infallible and holy Word that you've watched over and preserved over the ages.

Would you grant us all ears to hear? Would you enable us to posture our hearts even now to respond to your Word as we should? We pray and ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Since we've had such a long break for, in this sermon series, 10 weeks, I think it would be helpful just to briefly recap and remind ourselves of the context in which this letter was written.

The Apostle Peter, one of the 12 apostles, wrote this letter, 1 Peter, some 33 years after Jesus ascended back to heaven.

[9 : 06] And he wrote it from Rome, which he symbolically calls Babylon, later in the letter, in chapter 5, verse 13. And Peter wrote this letter to believers who were living in what is now modern-day Turkey, which then was a part of the Roman Empire.

And at that time, the ruthless Roman Emperor Nero ruled the Roman Empire. Nero was hostile to Christians, and historical accounts tell us that the Apostle Peter himself would soon be put to death at the hands of Nero.

But even though these recipients of Peter's letter were far removed from Rome, they were still in the Roman Empire, and they experienced persecution and pressure to conform to the world around them as they sought to be faithful to Christ and serve him in a world that was not their home.

And Peter's aware of these scattered saints, and he's mindful of the hostile world in which they live, and so he writes to them to encourage them and to remind them of who they were and how they were to live.

Peter opens his letter in verse 1, and he refers to them as God's elect exiles. And here in these verses that we are considering this morning, he calls them God's chosen people.

[10 : 52] But living in a hostile world where we are persecuted and marginalized, it's easy to forget this precious truth that we are in this world as God's exiles and we're God's chosen people if we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So in these verses that we are considering this morning, as we return to 1 Peter, here's how I would summarize what Peter is saying.

This is the encouragement. This is the reminder that Peter gives to the scattered saints. And indeed, he gives this reminder to all of God's people everywhere, wherever they live.

He says to them, you are God's people, chosen by his mercy and for his purpose.

Again, these words, this truth that Peter is sharing is easy to forget when we are bombarded in this world that is not our home, where we live as foreigners, where we live as sojourners.

[12 : 15] It's easy to forget that we are God's people. God has chosen us by his mercy. He's chosen us for his purpose.

Peter is a wise pastor, and Peter is aware of how easily God's people can forget this, and so he writes that they would be reminded.

And in fact, he reiterates this truth several times throughout this letter. And what we're considering this morning is only one of them. This morning, I have two simple points.

And the first one is this. We who belong to God were chosen by God's mercy. Now, as we were singing this morning, we were singing songs that reminded us of how holy God is. It is a marvelous thing that a holy God would take sinful people like you and me and make us his people and put his name upon us.

[13 : 23] I was thinking about how I'm sure all of us at one point in time or another has been ashamed of someone close to us.

Ashamed of something they may have done, something they may have said, and we felt some kind of shame where we wanted to kind of bring distance between us and them because we did not want how we viewed them and how others may have viewed them to be associated with us. Think about that. Sinners like you and me can sometimes feel ashamed of fellow sinners. But the thrice holy God has come down in the person of his son and has reconciled to himself sinners like you and me who still sin even after he has saved us and he's not ashamed to call us his people.

He's got to call us all kinds of things. He's got to call us distant, whatever. But no, he calls us his people where we are his children and he is our heavenly father.

[14 : 56] Brothers and sisters, we are considering this morning a glorious and a humbling truth. but this will not be glorious and this is not humbling if when you think of your salvation you think about a prayer you prayed or a decision you made that one day you decided to make Jesus your choice, that one day you decided to follow Jesus, that one day you decided to change your life.

if that's the way that you think of the salvation that has come to you it is not glorious it will not be glorious and it certainly will not be humbling because you're very mindful of what you have done. But when we see what scripture says about what our condition was and what God did in spite of our condition then we marvel that we can be called the people of God.

In this passage that we're considering this morning the apostle Peter helps us to see how we became the people of God. He explains it in verses four to six.

Now although we read verses one to three as well you may recall that we considered those verses the last time when we were in first Peter in the previous sermon.

[16 : 34] So we begin this morning in verse six. Peter begins with these words in verse four as you come to him.

As you come to him. And the pronoun him is referring back to verse three and in particular referring to the Lord Jesus. Peter says as you come to him.

Now remember that the people that Peter is writing to had already come to Jesus. They were believers. Peter was writing to them and he's saying as you come to him.

And there's a sense that what Peter is talking about here is that when we come to Jesus we continue to come to Jesus. We come to Jesus in an ongoing way.

He says as you come to him. As you come to Jesus. A living stone. See this is the practical outworking of our salvation.

[17 : 39] In our salvation we come to Jesus yes in that initial sense but we continue to come to Jesus among all those whom Jesus saves.

And what God does what Peter is telling us that God does is God takes us as living stones and he builds us together into Jesus the living stone.

Jesus is a living stone and he is saying to us that we are like living stones and we are being built up together as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

But in verse 14 sorry in verse 6 Peter shows that there's a huge distinction between Christ a living stone and his people who come to him as living stones like living stones.

In verse 6 he quotes from Isaiah chapter 28 verse 16 and what the apostle Peter does is he interprets this reference in Isaiah 28 16 as Jesus Christ this reference to a cornerstone that is chosen and precious he is referring to Jesus Christ he says this is a reference to Jesus Christ he is the him so verses 4 and 6 Peter connects a living stone Jesus and the reason he's referred to as a living stone is because he rose from the dead he's no longer dead but Peter in verse 6 also says that he is a cornerstone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame in

[19 : 50] Peter's day in constructing a building a cornerstone was the most important part of building any structure it was a large stone that was placed at a corner of the building where two

walls joined and that stone was important because it gave stability to the building and it also determined the shape of the building and also determined the direction that the building would go in with that stone everything else fell into place everything was joined into that stone and Peter's trying to give us a picture now of course the original audience that Peter wrote to they understood this well they were able to draw on construction that they understood in their day and how the spiritual building that's now taking place of those whom God saves they come to Jesus and God is building them into a spiritual house Jesus being the cornerstone!

But notice! In verses 7 and 8 we see Peter referring to Jesus in another way first he refers to him in verse 6 as a cornerstone chosen and precious those who believe in him will not be disappointed not be put to shame and then he refers now to Jesus as the stone that the builders rejected who became the cornerstone and that's a quotation from Psalm 118 verse 22 and it's a psalm that was typically sung at the time of Passover when God promised his provision of salvation through the coming

Messiah Peter tells us that Christ is this rejected cornerstone who has become the rejected stone who has become the cornerstone and then in verse 8 he quotes yet another Old Testament passage Isaiah 8:14 and he says that Jesus is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense he's saying to unbelievers that Christ the cornerstone to them has become a stumbling stone over which they fall now notice what Peter is doing between verses 7 and 8 he is contrasting Jesus as a cornerstone to those who believe and as a stumbling stone and a rock of offense to those who do not believe in verse 8 Peter tells us something that we should not quickly read over he tells us those who stumble stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do so why is Christ a stumbling stone to unbelievers well Peter tells us two reasons he gives us two reasons why this is the case in verse 8 first they disobey the word and they were destined to do so they disobey the word and they were destined to do so by God himself so what we see in verse 8 is what scripture teaches elsewhere what theologians refer to as human responsibility unbelievers disobey the word and stumble over Christ because they choose to and divine sovereignty because God in a blameless way has destined or ordained that unbelievers would choose to disobey the word and stumble over Christ now this is not an easy truth to understand because it does contain an element of mystery and God does not explain himself he does not try to well he's not obviously bothered and troubled by his sovereignty that he displays in salvation what scripture teaches is what we're responsible to accept even when we do not understand what we might be reading now let's be clear about this here's what

Peter is not saying Peter is not saying that the reason people are unbelievers! is they want to believe and God makes them not believe Peter is not saying that at all Peter says they stumble because they disobey the word that's one part as they were destined to do all unbelievers are responsible for their own unbelief for their own disobedience for their own rejection of God's word and the savior that it proclaims but I think one of the things I would say at this point is that not all unbelief that we see is permanent we do not know where unbelief leads so a person who's unbelieving in this moment that is no guarantee that that person will permanently be an unbeliever many future brothers and sisters that we will have currently do not believe but this is not the primary point that Peter is making this is not his primary point he really makes this point only in passing and I know it may be a distracting point but it's not his primary point the primary point that [26 : 37] Peter is seeking to make has to do with believers and Peter is seeking to show believers the amazing mercy that has come to them notice the contrast between the way verse 8 ends and the way verse 9 starts look again at what he says starting in verse 9 but you are a chosen race notice in verse 8 the latter part they stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do but you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for God's own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness 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 Peter alerts us to this contrast to help us to see that God chose to give us mercy anyone who believes we believe only because God has shown us mercy now when we are disbelieving we are disbelieving and that disbelief is all on us the disobedience is all on us and God is right if he allowed the entire mass of humanity all of Adam's fallen race to go to hell and indeed that's where we were all headed every single person who is descended from Adam's race rightly on their own responsibility was headed to hell but God has shown mercy by choosing some for salvation and this is the point that

Peter began to make from the very outset when he called them elect exiles and now when he says in verse 9 but you are a chosen race God has chosen to give us mercy we who left to ourselves would disobey would not believe and would stumble over Christ God in mercy has enabled us to believe and to see Jesus as the cornerstone to come to Jesus and to be built into Jesus and we now are his chosen race his royal priesthood his holy nation a people of his own possession one of the reasons that this I think is difficult sometimes for us to hear is because we are so misguided about what the Bible teaches about how men and women are saved you see the idea that sinners like you and me who the

Bible refers to as being dead and trespasses and sins have any ability to go to God and not even ability desire to go to God to be saved is contrary to what the Bible teaches salvation is of the Lord salvation is of the Lord from start to finish any desire that we have for God is what God has done in our hearts and in our lives and this is the point that Peter is making we become God's people not because we go to him and say God save me and make me one of your people no it is because God has had mercy and for his own reasons which he does not disclose to us other than to tell us it's not by any works of righteousness that we have done it's not by any goodness in us that he's chosen us God gave us mercy because he chose to give mercy the apostle

Paul says in Romans 9 quoting the Lord I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy I will pardon whom I will pardon and so this is a profound contrast that the apostle Peter is making to help God's people to see that apart from God's mercy separate and apart from God's mercy they would be lost they would be stumbling over Christ in unbelief and in disobedience brothers and sisters the only difference between those who do not believe and we who believe is God's mercy God's mercy but for God's mercy there go you there go me there go all of us in unbelief and disobedience on our way to hell but God has made a people to be his people by his great mercy and God has shown mercy not in a vacuum

[32 : 42] God has shown mercy by sending his son by sending his son to die on the cross as a substitute for his people so that they may be reconciled to him God chooses the ungodly God chooses the unrighteous in his mercy and he makes them his people through the atoning work of his son that's the first point that Peter makes we are God's people chosen by his mercy and the second point that Peter makes second and final point that I have this morning Peter tells us that we are God's chosen people for God's purpose there are many people today who have very individualistic views about what it means to be saved about what it means to be a

Christian they believe we come to Jesus to get our broken lives fixed so that we can go on our way living living our best life now fulfilling our dreams and maximizing our potential that is the understanding of certainly the mass of the world who take any interest in spiritual things that that's why you come to Jesus if you have problems you fix your life and then you go on your way and live your life how you choose but sadly some of the church believe that as well they believe that Jesus is there God is there to serve them to give them a better life give them a better marriage give them a better job give them whatever they want if you serve Jesus then your life will go well and see scripture does not be a witness to that as a matter of fact we come to this letter of first Peter and what we see is God's people are suffering God's people are enjoying hardships and what the Bible actually teaches is that coming to

Jesus if we live godly lives we will be persecuted we will suffer in different ways it is impossible to come to Jesus and to serve him for any reasonable period of time and not experience some degree of suffering here in this passage Peter tells us the reason that God chooses and saves people is for a corporate purpose yes we come to him individually but what he does is he builds us into a people he builds us into the Lord Jesus Christ the cornerstone he builds us into a spiritual house notice in this passage that the apostle Peter references this corporate purpose of God's people in four different ways in verse five

God's people are referred to as a spiritual house or a temple of sorts and the idea is that God lives in his people then in verses five and nine God's people are referred to as a priesthood and then in verse nine they're referred to as a race and then in verse nine again they're referred to as a nation this is God's purpose for whom he has redeemed that there would be a spiritual house where he chooses to dwell there would be a royal or holy priesthood whose lives are lived in service to him but there would be a chosen race a people who are not defined by their biological race or ethnicity but by their spiritual race and that there would be a holy nation a people who are separate from all the other nations and whatever their nationality is it is secondary to this spiritual nationality that he

has given to them

I think it's worthwhile for us to contemplate and just meditate on these four corporate descriptions that the apostle Peter gives a place about God's people and all he's doing is trying to give us different angles of the same people spiritual house or temple priesthood a race and a nation now in verses four to ten Peter is talking about the church in a universal sense this is what God is doing God is building his church universally into the Lord Jesus Christ Christ but the way we experience that we don't experience it on the universal level God is doing that on the universal level but the way we experience it is on the local level we experience in the local church an expression of this universal thing that God is doing and building his people into

[38 : 34] Christ in the local church God has brought us together from different backgrounds different circumstances even different nations and he's building us into a spiritual house among whom he dwells and he's building us to be a priesthood a priesthood who lived their lives in service to him priests under the Old Testament were called into lifelong service unto God on behalf of the people and what they did was they offered up animals and they offered sacrifices and ongoing rain that's all they did that was their responsibility yeah Peter is drawing on that but he's telling us that we are a holy priesthood we are a royal priesthood and he says that we are to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through

Jesus Christ in Romans chapter 12 verse 1 the apostle Paul writes these words I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship the point that Peter is making the point that Paul is making is that unlike in the Old Testament where the priests offered the bodies of animals and sacrifice what he's saying to us is we under the new covenant we ourselves are the sacrifice we ourselves live our lives as priests before the Lord letting our whole lives all that we are and all that we do be offered up to

God as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God that's God's new people that's God's people whom he has shown mercy and he saved them for this purpose that they would be a kingdom of priests unto him living their lives not for themselves but for God and that's what it means to live our lives offering them up as a spiritual worship or as a spiritual sacrifice unto God we don't bring animals we bring ourselves we die to our will we die to our plans and we submit to God's will we submit to God's plans and we seek to let all of our lives be this sacrifice to

God we live our lives in sacrifice to him but notice what Peter tells us in verse five that we must not overlook no amount of obedience that I do or you do no amount of self denial that I do and that you do in and of itself is acceptable to God we must be aware of this as we serve the Lord as we seek to live out what he has called us to as priests a holy priesthood a royal priesthood as we do that we have to be mindful of Jesus Christ it is only through Jesus Christ that's what he says in verse five that we are to live this way offering up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to

God through Jesus Christ Jesus is our mediator brothers and sisters our best prayers our best repentance any act that we do in and of itself is not acceptable to God going from us to him it is only acceptable as it goes from us through Christ to God and we have to live this way we have to live mindful of how feeble our efforts are and they are only acceptable to God through Jesus Christ this is why we have to be mindful that we are being built into Jesus Christ we have to be mindful that away from Jesus Christ we have nothing we have nothing when we walk away from Christ we walk away with absolutely nothing and so

[43 : 57] Peter says that God is building us into this priesthood we live our lives in service to him but then he also tells us that our lives are not defined by our individual race or ethnicity he says that we are defined as God's chosen race and see brothers and sisters this is why we have an opportunity in a local church to live this out in a practical and a real way to allow ourselves to be defined as this chosen race that we are part of and let that trump every other race biological or ethnic and then he tells us that we are a holy nation meaning that we are to be living our lives separate and apart from the world around us we ought not get uncomfortable when they see us as strange when they call us names when they marginalize us that is who we are we are different we are

God's holy nation we live in this world not embracing their values we live in this world not embracing their conduct their ungodliness their sin their values that betray God's word we live distinct from that we are called as God's holy nation his separate nation that's what it means first and foremost when we talk about holiness it is to be separated we live with that separation that awareness that we're

not of this world we're in it but we're not of it but it's not just to have the name that we are!
holy nation we brothers and sisters are called to live this way we're called to live as holy people
scripture says be holy as I am holy that is what God calls us to there are two activities so although
we we described in four different ways there are two particular activities that God calls us to and I've
already alluded to both of them but I want us to hear them afresh as we are concluding this morning
the first is spiritual sacrifices and again that's what priests do that's what priests are called to do we
offer these spiritual sacrifices and then the second is we are called to proclaim

God's excellencies notice again how Peter says that in verse nine but you are a chosen race a royal
priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of
him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light all of us are called to this proclamation
all of us are called to proclaim the excellencies of God who called us out of darkness into this
marvelous light notice how the first activity of offering spiritual sacrifices that is up to God but the
second activity of proclaiming God's excellencies that is to a lost world that is to lost people who are
around us

God has saved us and built us into Christ that we would be his people in a dark world who can
testify to his excellencies to the greatness of his mercy that has come to us when he called us out of
the darkness into his marvelous light at the heart of this is to proclaim the good news of the gospel
to them and certainly what is also in view is us sharing our own testimonies to them and sharing the
mercy that God has shown to us by saving us calling us out of darkness and into his marvelous light
brothers and sisters this is God's purpose for saving us and for making us his people and it's a
marvelous thing because he did it by his mercy and by mercy it simply means there's nothing we
could have done to deserve it or earn it

[49 : 21] God did this because he is merciful now the outset of this sermon I pointed out the
similarity between the two passages that we read in Exodus 19 5 and 6 and 1 Peter 2 and 9 both of
which call two different groups of people God's people and I pointed out that God has always had
and will always have one people over all ages and not two people and here's the simplest way that I
can explain this one people that God has always had and will always have in the interest of time the
apostle Peter be mindful that Peter is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we see him
taking this passage in Psalm 118 and then these two other passages in

Isaiah and Peter is interpreting them to be references to Jesus Christ as the cornerstone as the
stumbling stone he says these are references to Jesus Christ and Peter is at the same time
interpreting for us that God's chosen people are those who believe and it's not based on biological
race or ethnicity that's what Peter does when he says but you are a chosen people so the way we
have to think about this is that Peter is interpreting what Moses uttered to the children of Israel
when they had come out of Egypt and they stood at Mount Sinai and notice that the promise that
God gave to Israel on that day that they stood before him was not unconditional he said to them if
indeed you will obey my voice then you will be my people and the fact is that not all who heard
believed but all those who believed they are counted among God's people and there are believers
between Jews and Gentiles and all of them are God's people Paul in Galatians 6 verse 16 he refers
to them as the Israel of God the Israel of God is comprised not based on ethnicity based on God's
choosing it's based on God's mercy that he has given to Jews and to

Gentiles God's and Jesus Christ died on the cross Jesus died for all of God's people believing Jews
and unbelieving Jews and he died for those who lived and died even before he came and died and
think about that if it were possible for people before Jesus Christ to be saved away from Jesus
Christ then Jesus didn't have to come because the rest of us could be saved the same way those
other people were saved but Jesus is the savior of all people the Bible tells us that there is no other
name given under heaven whereby we must be saved Jesus is the only way the truth and the life
he's the only way to the father there is no other way and so under the old covenant when
God forgave sins in a sense he forgave it on credit he forgave it because one day he was going to
send his son to pay the price to make just and legitimate the forgiveness that people received under
the old covenant Jesus came as the one who would bring all of God's people together be they Jews
or be they Gentiles he is the only way to God and there is no other way to God he is the one
through whom God makes his people his people and so when we hear this passage in 1 Peter
chapter 2 it is a glorious wonderful truth to all of God's people over all the ages

[54 : 43] God makes his people to be a royal priesthood a holy nation a treasured possession to
himself and he does it through his son the Lord Jesus Christ I pray if you know the Lord this

morning I pray that this is glorious in your heart I pray that your heart is rejoicing I pray that your heart at the same time is humbled because God has given you grace and mercy that you don't deserve but if you hear this morning and you are conscious that you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ and perhaps some of what I said this morning to you may even be troubling I pray it's troubling in a good way I pray!

it helps you to see where you stand that you stand outside of Christ and I say to you this morning that if there's any desire in your heart to want to serve the Lord to want to be to be to be counted among his people rest assured that is the work of God in your heart because left to yourself you would have no desire for that and I say to you this morning respond to the work of God in your heart and come to the merciful God and you will find grace and pardon for all of your sins scripture says that all who come to Jesus he will never turn away let's pray Father we thank you that you've been merciful to sinners like us to your son Lord thank you that you have saved us and made us to be a people who formerly were not a people you have made us oh

Lord to be a royal priesthood and a holy nation and it's all by your own doing Lord nothing that we have done to deserve it or earn it and for that we are grateful Lord once again I pray that you speak to hearts this morning who do not know Christ have mercy on them oh Lord in Jesus name amen