

# A Chosen People

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're here to worship God. Let's worship and sing praise to his holy name from Scottish Psalter, Psalm 103. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 103. That's on page 369 of the Psalm books.

Psalm 103 on page 369. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 7 of the Psalm. Psalm 103 verses 1 down to verse 7.

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is. Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless. Bless O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be.

Of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. Psalm 103 verses 1 to 7 to God's praise. Bless God the Lord, and all that in me is.

He stilleth a blessing for thee, dear God, and all that in me is.

[ 1 : 21 ] Bless God the Lord, and all that in me is.

He stilleth a blessing for thee, dear God, and all that in me is. He stilleth a blessing for thee, dear God, and all that in me is. O my heavenly grace is filled up.

You llah, and all that in me is. As the Lord, and all that in me is. What é isso, dear God, and all that in me is.

To God with Him by Thy power Till death is gone for now Till death is found And death is found Till death is found Till death is found Till death is found So I can now see the earth

In the earth is found And death is found I shall turn and save you To God with His love And death is found And death is found And death is found And death is found And death is found And death is found Let's join together Let's join together In a word of prayer Let's pray Lord our God Lord our God Lord our God

[ 4 : 45 ] Lord our God Enjoy your heart God our. He is waiting for you And your ng■■i To come to mouth together to really focus our hearts, focus our very being on what it is we're here to do.

Focus our minds, that our concentration will be based solely on what is taking place here today. We are here meeting with a holy God. We are here meeting with you, the God who has made yourself knowable to us. That if left to our own devices, that if you had not shown yourself to us, that we'd have no idea, no clue. The sin and the darkness of our heart clouding our eyes from your reality. Even more than that, our very creatureliness clouding our eyes from you, the God who is above and beyond all that we begin to know or understand. We come to worship you, the God who you are perfect in all your ways and perfect in all your actions and all that you are and all that you do, that you are holy and you are glorious and you are worthy of eternal worship.

Lord, help us just now as we come for this short time of worship to first and foremost understand that it is you we come to. A God who made us, a God who knows us, a God who made and who sustains the whole of creation. There is not one part of this world or of this universe that is beyond your complete and ongoing sovereign power. There is nothing that we know or have known, nothing that we will see or have seen, nothing that we will experience or that we have experienced in the past that is unknown to you. Lord, all things are known to you. You see the beginning from the end of all the aspects of our life. And as we sung just now from your word, we pray just now for any here today who, Lord, have felt oppressed. Any here today who have suffered perhaps for years under difficult situations. For any here today who have suffered through, Lord, situations that are not of their making. Perhaps some here have suffered, Lord, at the hands of others for, Lord, perhaps years and in various ways. You alone know their stories. We pray for today for those who are oppressed because of illness, physical or mental. Those who are oppressed because of situations outside of our control. You alone, again, know their stories. We pray for any here today who are heavy in heart and heavy in mind. Any here today who are going through situations and perhaps find themselves carrying on going through situations which are difficult, which are perhaps complicated, which perhaps require time and effort and mental energy from them. We ask you to come alongside them. Those who are suffering, those who are in pain, those who find themselves with questions and problems in life that they find no answer for. We ask you to come alongside them. That where we fall so short and being able to support and to help that we find in you there is an unending supply of help. An unending, gracious, glorious supply of love and care for all who come to you. For all who come to you and cry out for that help and for that love that you're the God who listens to the cries of your people. We ask, Lord, you hear those cries this very day. Those who mourn here today. Those who are mourning the loss, perhaps of many months and many years ago, tens of years perhaps, as seasons come and as seasons go and as the dates come and as the dates and times go and as we're reminded perhaps of those who have gone before us. As we find perhaps mourning and grief to, as at times, begin afresh. We ask you to comfort those who are seeking and needing that comfort today. I pray for those who are not here today but who long to be here. Brothers and sisters who would long to worship with your people more often but we know they are kept from doing so because of illness, perhaps age and for other various reasons that you and they alone know about. As we pray for ourselves, we pray again for our friends and our brothers and sisters next door. We pray the same for them today that through your word they would be refreshed and through your word they would be invigorated, Lord, to serve you again this new week in this place.

I ask that the days come and go that as two gatherings of your people, we would seek to serve you with the same mind and the same spirit in this place. Lord, you have placed us here in this village. You have placed us here in this place to serve you well. Help us, we ask, to lay aside the various many obstacles, obstacles that stop us from serving you well, obstacles in our own personal lives, obstacles in our community, obstacles in our walk, obstacles in our congregation, obstacles, Lord, in this world that stop us from serving you well. We ask you would remove these things from us so we would serve you well in our own families. We would serve you well in our own places of work. We would serve you well, perhaps, in our places of study. We would serve you well in this community, in our own homes, of our families, of our friends, of our neighbours. We would be glorious witnesses to our risen saviour. We do pray for our community, especially today. We pray for the many homes, Lord, represented here. We pray more earnestly for the many homes which are not represented here. We pray just now for those who do not and who will not pray for themselves. Lord, we know that there are many who are heavy and close to our hearts just now. We bring them just now before you. The names of our own loved ones, the names of our own dear family and friends, perhaps siblings or parents, children or spouses even, who have as of yet, who have no gospel interest. We ask you would revive them. We ask you would bring the gospel to their understanding, that they would come and know you as their God. Lord, we know that you are sovereign in all that you do, that you and your sovereign wisdom, that you use means and that we are some of the means that you use. Lord, we ask you would use us as your people.

Use us as we seek to witness to our friends and to our family, help our conduct to be reflecting that of our saviour. We confess that we often fall so short. We often feel ourselves falling so flat on our faces, if we are honest at times, as we seek to represent our saviour. But we ask in our conduct, in our words, in private and public, in our actions, in private and in public, in our thoughts, day by day, we would show those around us what it is to be known and to know and to be loved and to love a saviour who has saved his people, who has eternally made provision for his beloved people through his work, his finished work on the cross. Help us to not lose sight as to what it is we're called to be and called to do. We confess that we often get so caught up in the detail of life, perhaps even the detail of serving you, and we lose sight of our first love, we lose sight of our greater role. We're called here not to preserve, we're called here not to maintain, but we're called here to grow and to serve, to seek your name to be spread across this area, to see every home know and love and serve and worship you as Lord and as saviour. Now we know the task is beyond us, but we give you praise for that fact, that you alone are the one who changes hearts and minds, you alone change the souls of those who are around us. That we are here today as living witnesses of that, as living examples. Those here,

[13:07] Lord, who were once perhaps so far away, that some here were once so far and so lost in their rebellion, and yet you have brought them to yourself. You changed their lives, you changed their hearts, you changed their desires, and you brought them to a saving knowledge of who you are.

Lord, we pray the same reality for all our friends here today. We pray the same reality for our friends across and up and down this village, in this district, in this area. Lord, help us to serve you well in strange days and in dark days, in this day of small things. Lord, we pray once more for those leadership over us. We thank you for them. Lord, we thank you that we do live in a country where there is freedom, freedom to worship. We ask you to give us wisdom to make the most of these days whilst you afford them to us. We do pray, Lord, for those who lead and who are over us in government, locally and nationally. We pray once more, Lord, for the new First Minister as he begins his work. We ask, Lord, that for all our leaders, that you would lead them in a way that would, Lord, benefit our country, that would bring, Lord, prosperity to us as a nation, perhaps. But more importantly, we ask today, despite their political decisions, we pray earnestly that those in leadership over us, that they would come and come to you. They would turn and serve you. They would turn and worship you as king and as Lord over their lives. In doing so, they would rule the country, Lord, in a way that is justified, in a way that is good, in a way that is right. We do pray for the salvation of those who lead us. We thank you again for those in government who are your people, those in government who do know you and who do love you locally and nationally. We ask, Lord, for guidance for them and for peace for them and that they would, Lord, give them the wisdom to serve you faithfully, despite the opposition that they may face from their own parties and, Lord, from across the board.

We know it's a difficult job they're doing. We ask, Lord, for wisdom and for strength for them. Lord, help us to pray for our leaders. Help us to pray, Lord, for our country and for our nation. Help us to pray that we see days of revival and days of refreshing and days of renewal, nationally, but also locally. Help us, Lord, to pray for ourselves, our own homes, our own families, our own friends. Help us, Lord, to be people of prayer, to understand that in prayer we have power, power from you. That a congregation, that a people, that an individual Christian without prayer, that we have no hope of anything changing. I give you praise, Lord, that you give us means and the means, one of the means, Lord, is that great gift of prayer. Help us this week to be revived even in our prayer lives, to be revived in our devotion towards you, to seek to serve you afresh this week. We pray just now, Lord, for the boys and the girls as they begin this time of holiday. We pray also, Lord, for our teachers and in the school. We thank you for them. We pray, Lord, to be praised your name for the open access that is given to the children, Lord, in the school and back and in tongue. Lord, we thank you for that. We pray,

Lord, also for the Sunday school teachers. Thank you for them and the work they do, those who are involved in Sunday school, that the hard work they've been in week after week. We pray that they would have a time of refreshing just now too, that they would know that they serve you well in the job they are doing in this place. Lord, we ask you to help us to have our minds and our hearts focused on you this day. We confess we're often so easily and so quickly distracted. Help us to have ears ready to listen and a heart willing to be open as you speak to us from your word. Lord, forgive us our sins. We come begging forgiveness. We also come knowing that for those who know Jesus as our Saviour, our forgiveness has been bought for us with his precious, precious blood. It's called these things in and through and for his own name's sake. Amen. Let's again sing to God's praise. This time from Sing Psalms. Sing Psalms and Psalm 96A. Sing Psalms and Psalm 96A. It's on page 126 of the

Psalm 96A. Psalm 96A. On page 126. Let's sing verses 1 down to verse 9 of the Psalm. Psalm 96A, verses 1 down to verse 9.

[ 17 : 46 ] O sing a new song to the Lord. Sing praises to his name and his salvation day by day. Let all the earth proclaim his glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare. How great and awesome is the Lord, God with him. With him no gods compare. Psalm 96A, verses 1 to 7. 1 to 9, sorry. To God's praise.

O sing a new song to the Lord. Sing lasts to this fortress. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 20 : 46 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Let's turn to reading God's Word.

1 Peter chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2. It's on page 953 of the book of a church, Pew Bibles.

Page 953, 1 Peter. 1 Peter, page 953. And we can read chapter 2 together.

1 Peter chapter 2. Let's hear the Word of God. So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

[ 21 : 57 ] Like newborn infants long with the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation. If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to Him, a living stone, rejected by men, but in a 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, So the honour 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 offence.

They stumble because they disobey the Word as they are destined to do. But you are a chosen race. A royal priesthood. A holy nation.

[ 23 : 10 ] A people for His own possession. That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous 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. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

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

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.

[ 24 : 16 ] But living as servants of God. Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters of all respect.

Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is the gracious thing when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if, when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is the gracious thing in the sight of God.

For to this you have been called. Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example. So you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin.

He committed no sin. Neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten. But continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

[ 25 : 19 ] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. For we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Amen. We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word.

Let's again sing to God's praise. Scottish Psalter and Psalm 67. Scottish Psalter and Psalm 67. It's on page 300 of the Psalm books.

Scottish Psalter, Psalm 67 on page 300. Singing the first version of the Psalm. Psalm 67, the first version.

Lord, bless and pity us. Shine on us with thy face. That the earth, thy way, and nations all may know thy saving grace. Let people praise thee, Lord. Let people all thee praise.

[ 26 : 26 ] Let the nations be glad. And songs their voices raise. Let's sing these verses together. Let's praise. Let's praise. Lord, bless and pity us.

Shine on us with thy grace. Let's sing these verses. Let's sing these verses.

And song About young people. Let's sing these verses. Everywhere, it is our Phew— What young people are able to overcome.

Let's sing these verses. Let's sing calibration. And song's correct. Let's sing these verses. Which way, our lad be we gave.

Let's sing these verses. Happy Easter, praise and pity us for Your witnessing. Thy biscuit, of where you come, usz marx scam, Lord, welcome you to your god, and bless and eat us upon us that people that people that you are doing. Mmm, yeah! Oh, Jezus, und I'm young.

[ 28 : 03 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. 1 Peter 2 verses 9 and verse 10.

Do give a second's thought at least to who Jesus is and what he has done.

[ 30 : 47 ] As we are remembering, as we do every Lord's Day, that we worship our risen Saviour, just spend some time on these verses today. Just a short time on these verses because the reality is these verses need 10 sermons for each phrase to justify them.

But just a short overview of these verses. And as we do so, to look at it from the angle of assurance. Or perhaps lack of assurance.

I'm sure you'll agree. Perhaps those here who have been Christians for many years, despite all the difficulties in life you face, all the burdens, all the worries, all the stresses and strains of your life as a Christian.

That background question, that background worry of assurance comes up again and again and again. For me it certainly does.

I'm sure it does for many here who know the Lord and who love the Lord. It's a short time just looking at assurance today. And we're going to do it from a strange angle perhaps, but an angle that hopefully works for us.

[ 31 : 57 ] Who is the enemy of our souls? Well, we know it's Satan. And as we look before next door in the prayer meeting a few weeks ago, almost a month ago now, so one of his tactics is to fire these fiery arrows into us as Christians.

These questions, these worries which eat us up. These background worries of, does the Lord still care for me? Does the Lord still know me?

Am I still his? And so on and so on and so on. So our goal today is looking at these two verses, verses 9 and verse 10, and seek to answer some of the questions, some of the accusations, some of the lies that Satan often uses and levels against us.

Don't panic, there's five points, but they'll all go together eventually. The first lie of Satan against us is that God has no interest in you.

Christian, God has no more interest in you. This lie often arises when we think and we worry.

[ 33 : 13 ] Those times as Christians where we feel as if, does God really still care for me? You hope that he does. But you look at yourself and you think, wow.

After this week, after this year, after this couple of years, as I said about poor Jonah a few weeks ago, after the mess I have made of things again and again and again, you think, man, does God really still care for me?

I believe his promises. I believe scripture. I love the Lord. I try and serve the Lord. But surely after the mess I have made of things, after the mess I have made of the smallest part of my Christian life, surely he has now given up.

Surely he's now lost interest. He saved me once years ago, yes. But since that first day I was saved until now, I have done nothing but mess things up and sin and backslide and try and serve him but fail to serve him.

Surely now, surely now the Lord has said, that's it. Christian, do you know that lie of Satan? Have you heard that or something close to that lie?

[ 34 : 32 ] For all the lies we look at today, for all the thoughts the evil one gives us, I can only be general. He deals with us all as he knows us all.

He deals with us and he pinpoints our own weaknesses, our own sins, our own failings. But in general, do you know that? Have you heard that?

That worry that God has somehow lost interest in me because of all the things I've said and done and thought. As we come to the first phrase of our verse here, we're reminded in verse 9 that this lie is not true.

Why? Because we are a chosen race. This is the first assurance that Peter gives to this small, struggling congregation he is writing to.

The small congregation of Lord's people who face so many trials and worries and Peter reminds them that first and foremost, they are a chosen race.

[ 35 : 34 ] They are chosen people who are known to God, not just generally, but very specifically chosen and known in a clear and loving way. We'll see that more later on.

Brothers and sisters, as you worry and have that worry in your mind of, does God really have an interest still in me? As you worry after all my nonsense, all the things and the ways I've failed him, does God still care for me?

God's word tells us, dear brother, dear sister, you are part of this chosen race. You are part of this chosen race.

You join alongside the saints of old, the saints who once sat here, the saints who have been serving the Lord since the start of creation. You join in alongside those dear brothers and dear sisters who have gone before you in being known and kept by the creator and sustainer of the universe.

Just as the believers in Israel of old were chosen, of course, by God to serve him, just as they awaited the coming Messiah, we who now know and who serve that risen king, we can say for certainty, if we know him, if we love him, despite our own failures and shortcomings, we can say for certain that we are those who the Lord has called his own.

[ 37 : 11 ] You are part of the chosen race. Brothers and sisters, you can say for certainty, if you know the Lord, if you love the Lord, you're the one he has chosen.

You are part of this chosen race. Now, we are dealing here and dealing very quickly here with great mystery and deep theology, with deep realities we can't even begin to touch on in detail just now, or ever really.

But just to make clear, as we deal here with God choosing his people, we are, of course, touching on the reality of God's election. We've covered this before in various ways, but just to remind ourselves, every time God choosing a people for himself, every time we see God electing a people for himself, calling a people his own, every time we see that in Scripture, it is not there to give us a theological discussion point.

We turn into that, to our shame perhaps at times. And it's not a bad thing to discuss election and predestination. It's not a bad thing. There's a time and place for it.

But every time we see election of God choosing his people, every time we see that being mentioned in Scripture, why is it there? Why is it used?

[ 38 : 32 ] It's always used to encourage God's people. It's not there for a theological discussion. It's there to encourage God's people. As Peter writes to remind these struggling Christians that they are part of a chosen race, he's doing it to encourage them, to remind them that God has known them from the start and from before the start.

We look before in Ephesians 1, that reminder that before time itself, before creation itself, God had set his love on his people. That's there to encourage us in our assurance, not to make us doubt it.

Do you know the Lord just now? Despite your failings and my failings with you, despite our backslidings, despite our times, just absolute failures to serve him.

Can you say just now, you know the Lord, you love the Lord? If you can. Yes, I love him. Take away all the buts just now. But, yes, and but, but, but.

If you know him, if you love him, dear brother or dear sister, you find yourself on good ground in verse 9. You are a chosen race.

[ 39 : 48 ] Chosen not because of our merit, chosen because of his mercy, his love, his care. Brothers and sisters, as we face this first lie of the evil one, this first lie that God has no interest in you.

God had an interest in you before creation itself. Before time itself, God knew you. God set his love on you. And he declared you part of this chosen race.

You were known from before time by the only true and living God. As Satan tells you that God has no interest in you. That God has somehow forgotten you.

That God might just give up on you because of your own disaster of an example of a Christian living. You come back to the word and the word tells you. The Lord had an interest in you.

Had a care for you. Had called you his own long before you were ever born. His interest in you stretches back eternally and stretches forward eternally.

[ 41 : 04 ] Second lie, perhaps, we often face from the evil one. God does not listen to you. God does not listen to you.

Perhaps you're feeling as if your prayers are unanswered. As if the same prayers you've prayed a thousand times aren't even, as it were, leaving the room.

Do you know that feeling? Do you know that sense of, these are the words I'm saying, I know the Lord hears, but I just don't feel like he is listening anymore.

I've prayed these prayers and I can pray this prayer and it's just, it's not leaving the room. I feel like I'm talking to myself. I feel as if, as we say, of course, as if heaven's, as if brass, as if the doors and the windows of heaven have closed against our words.



You begin to feel that doubt creeping, that worry creeping. Maybe God has stopped listening to me.

[ 42 : 10 ] Maybe God has stopped listening to me. Maybe he's heard quite enough of me asking the same prayer again and again. Asking for the same thing to take place again and again.

Asking forgiveness of the same sin, perhaps, again and again. So on and so on. Maybe he's stopped listening. Maybe he's got tired of me pleading and praying.

The next phrase. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood. A royal priesthood. Peter here draws, amongst many other places, he draws currently here from Exodus 19.

I think it's verse 6. Exodus 19, verse 5 or verse 6, where God tells his people. God tells his people. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

A kingdom of priests and a holy nation. We know, of course, the priests had many duties. We covered this in the prayer meetings. We covered this in the prayer meetings. The high priest. What access did the high priest have?

[ 43 : 15 ] What access did the priests have that the people didn't? They offered their sacrifices to the Lord. They had a closeness to the Lord. They lived in God's temple. They spent time close to God's presence, as we've been covering week by week.

And the pinnacle of the priest's service was the access they had. And even then, of course, only the high priest could approach the very presence of God.

And even then, only on that one day. And even then, only in that one way. The high priest having that very small, select access to God.

But that was a pinnacle of our job. Dear friends, we don't go to the temple twice a year or more than that.

We don't come here today burning incense and approaching God, worrying we're going to be consumed by him. We don't come here waiting for a priest to do the work for us.

[ 44 : 18 ] And perhaps sometimes we forget that. And if we're being honest, sometimes in our culture, we have, although we never think it, we have at times made others priests for us.

Your minister is not your priest. I know you know that. But let's say it clearly now. The minister is not the priest. My access to the Lord is not greater than your access to the Lord. My access to the Lord is now in prayer.

It is no greater than your access to the Lord in prayer, dear brother, dear sister. And why do I say that? Because it's important for us. As we look at this next phrase, we are a royal priesthood. Peter reminds these Christians that together, brothers and sisters together, minister and congregation together, elders and deacons and the rest of us all together, we are, as brothers and sisters, part of our royal priesthood.

We, at this very moment, dear brother, dear sister, you and I have greater access to the throne of grace than the high priest ever did.

Than the high priest ever did. For all the incense and all the ceremony and all the glory and all the sacrifice and all the procession that took place on these days. At this very moment, as you sit in this simple building, as you sit at home, as you drive in your car, as you close your eyes at night and as you say your prayer to the Lord, your God, you, dear brother, dear sister, have greater access to him than all the priests before you, all the high priests ever did.

[ 45 : 54 ] Why? Because when we approach our God in prayer, we do it how? Through the finished work of our Saviour. As you pray your prayers to your brother, dear sister, regardless of how you feel it's going, regardless of how closed heaven may feel towards your prayers, you pray those prayers.

Knowing that the Lord, your God, hears the prayers. Why? Because of the intercession of a Saviour, of one who has done the work. One who has become an eternal high priest.

We have access to the throne of God, to the place of grace, not because of any high priest, any human high priest. As we covered before in Psalm 110, we have access to this very moment.

As you pray even just now in your mind, perhaps, you have access to the very throne room of heaven. As your prayer ascends, small and worried and anxious as your prayer might well be, the Lord hears the prayers of his people through the finished work, through the access we have in Jesus.

He makes constant intercession for us. Hebrews 4, we covered that before, that the image of Jesus as high priest standing at the right hand of God.

[ 47 : 19 ] God has no interest in you. He has eternal interest in you. God does not listen to you. You are a royal priesthood with greater access to him than any of the priests ever did because of the finished work of Jesus.

God does hear the prayers of his people. God does not listen to you. God does not listen to you. The third lie is a bit different, but it's one that's common and one that perhaps you might well find yourself falling into.

The lie that God does not care what you do. As a Christian, speaking here just now, just to the brothers and sisters, that God does not care what you do.

You're saved. That's it. You're sorted. You're sorted. You're life now. You're, as I were, with respect. Ticket punched.

Going to heaven. No worries. I will live now as I want to live. God does not care about how we as Christians live our lives.

[ 48 : 23 ] Now you may not think that in these exact words, but our lives sometimes might reflect that. But because I'm a Christian now, I can perhaps live however I want.

Because I'm saved now, I can perhaps do whatever I want to do. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

A holy nation. We read in Exodus 19 that when God promised he would make his people a kingdom of priests, he also said he would make them a holy nation.

Exodus 19, we can see the holy reality of God. Where not a man or a beast could approach the mountain of God at that point. God's presence was there around the mountain and no man nor beast could go near it without being consumed.

We just now approach a holy God. God's holiness has not changed from Exodus 19 to now. We approach a holy God just now. A holy God and there is none other like him.

[ 49 : 30 ] We must never ever lose sight of his holy nature. But he is holy. All that he is and all that he does, he is eternally perfect and holy.

He cannot be near sin. He cannot see sin. He cannot suffer sin. He is justified. All that he does, he is holy. The angels sing around the throne, Holy, holy, holy.

That is the God we come to today. We are called to be a holy nation. Literally the word is set apart. We are called to be a set apart nation.

We are not just called to act like Christians. We are called to be salt and to be light. Called to be salt and light.

Our lives as Christians must reflect our profession as Christians. And again, we will get it wrong. So very wrong at times. Our lives will act.

[ 50 : 30 ] Our lives will show us. And our words and even our thoughts will show us as living lives that are not holy. But are the opposite of holy.

And yet, the Lord is clear. We must live as a holy nation. Holy lives. What's the answer?

As we find our lives as Christians. As we find our lives looking less and less holy. What's the answer? Well, we're tempted perhaps to go to the usual answer we find ourselves going to.

Well, I'll try harder. I'll try harder to live a good life. I'll try harder to look like a good Christian. I'll try harder to read the Bible.

I'll try harder to be more attentive in church. I'll try harder to not sin as much. In theory, not a bad thing. But in practice, usually it's useless.

[ 51 : 31 ] What's the answer to sin in our lives as Christians? What's the answer to desiring to be and to live a holier life? And to live as we should be living?

The answer is never try harder, is it? The answer is always, and it seems so simple. It seems so obvious. But the answer is always, we must go back to Jesus. Again and again.

As we see more of his beauty and more of his glory and more of his wonder. As we remind ourselves of who he is and what he has done for us. As we fill our lives and our minds and our hearts with Jesus, there is less and less room for sin in our lives, in our hearts, in our minds.

We've seen that, don't we, with the old Christians who have gone before us. The old Kayochs who have gone before us. And these dear sisters in the Lord who just seemed so close to the Lord.

Now they themselves would deny it. They themselves would not agree with me just now. But they were so close to the Lord. They loved the Lord. There was something so special about them. Was it because they were extra holy somehow?

[ 52 : 40 ] Was it because they were somehow special? No. These old Kayochs, these old brothers, these old sisters, they spent time with the Lord. They killed sin in their lives by coming to him again and again.

By seeing the beauty of who Jesus was and the glory of who he is. And just by him becoming more and more precious to them, sin became more and more horrific to them.

And by doing that, they lived holier and holier lives. As we leave this point, note, we are to be called a holy nation.

We are saved to serve and live in community. There is no such thing as a Christian doing it alone or going it alone. Even the brothers, just informally the last few weeks, we have been just discussing it in passing as to the reality and the importance.

We must be willing as a congregation. We must be willing as brothers and sisters to share one another's burdens. A holy nation. We can't do it alone.

[ 53 : 49 ] We're saved to serve, saved to love together. It's hard sometimes to see these lies of the evil one. It's hard sometimes to keep fighting against the evil in this world.

It's hard sometimes, isn't it, to face the lies of the devil and to keep on keeping on. That's why we must rely on one another. As brothers and sisters, we are brothers and sisters.

We're here as a family. We're not here just to come and go and go home again and come and go and go home again. We're here to live as community.

As time goes on, we will live more and more, I'm sure, as community. But we must be mindful. We're saved to live and serve together as a church family.

That word church family, we'll cover this more in future weeks. That reality of church family, it's not just that name. It is how it's supposed to be. As we struggle with sin and struggle with serving the Lord well in this world, how good it is to have brothers and sisters come alongside us and to encourage us.

[ 54 : 59 ] And to say to us, yes, it is hard. But let me help you. Let me carry this weight with you. Or yes, my friend, my brother, my sister, you have sinned here. You really have messed this up. But I'll come alongside you.

Let's work through this together. Let's point each other and encourage each other to face the glorious reality of our Saviour once more. God does not care for you.

God does not listen to you. God does not care what you do. God does not love you. God does not love you.

God does not love you.

God does not care too much. I've, like poor Jonah, I've made such a mess of things. I just, my time is done, surely. You are a people for his own possession.

[ 56 : 23 ] A people for his own possession. When God saves anyone. When God saves you, your brother, your sister. When God saved you. It was not just a mechanical process.

It wasn't something that God just did. That he's somehow, with respect, obliged to do. No. God does not just put up with you. God does not just put up with you.

God calls you his own. You are a people. As Christians, we are a people for his own possession.

His own possession. He doesn't just claim you. He doesn't just say, okay, they're mine. The wording here is tender.

It's careful. You're a people he holds onto carefully. You're a people that he has chosen, before time itself, to call his own.

[ 57 : 24 ] And then to call his own possession. To call his own tenderly kept, beloved people. The image here is a father and a child.

He has chosen you, dear brother, dear sister, from all time as his own precious child. We've asked this question before, but I'll ask it again.

As we come to an end of this time together. How much does God love you, dear Christian? I won't go into details because we've covered it before, but in context to this, how much does God love the Christian?

John 17. John 17 and verse 22. We covered this before, but just a reminder. John 17, verse 22 and verse 23, where Jesus, of course, is praying here.

Jesus says to the Father, How much, to what extent, to what level?

[ 58 : 46 ] How do you even ask the question? How do you even ask the question? How much, even the wording just feels so poor, doesn't it? How much does God love the Christian? Dear brother, dear sister, He loves you as He loves His Son.

And how much does God love His Son? It's almost foolish to ask, isn't it? How much does the eternal God love His eternal Son?

How far does that love go? How big is that love? How eternal is that love? It's eternal. I could exhaust every word, every phrase I could think of.

But the truth is, God loves His eternal Son eternally. Of course He does. The Father loves the Son. And Jesus Himself is telling us here, in John, in these verses, 23, He tells us Himself, that you sent me, and loved them as you loved me.

Dear Christian, with confidence, from the mouth and the words of your own Saviour, with confidence today, as the devil puts the lie into your mind, maybe God doesn't quite love me anymore.

[ 60 : 06 ] Maybe His love for me has somehow changed. Maybe I've done something, I've said something, whatever, whatever your situation is, has caused you to think, the Lord no longer loves you, the same way He did. For you to think that, you have to then say, the Lord's love for His Son has somehow changed.

If you say that, we're in deep Hennessy there. Deep, deep Hennessy. The Lord loves His Son eternally. Dear brother, dear sister, we are in the Son.

He has saved us, kept us, keeps us in Himself. He covers us. We are become one with Him. And because we are in the Son, when God tells us He loves us, we must take God at His word.

God is not a liar. God is not a liar. God tells us He loves us. He has chosen us. We are His precious people. And because He tells us that, it is true.

What God calls His own possession, what God calls His own precious people, no one will take from Him. Dear Christian, your ability to sin, your ability and my ability with you, to make a complete mess of things, at times can be quite extensive.

[ 61 : 33 ] We can, we have a sin, I guess, our own abilities, whatever it is. We have an ability to make a mess, on top of a mess, and we know that. But your ability and my ability to sin, does not outweigh God's ability, to use the words very carefully here, and very respectfully, God's ability to love, God's extent of love.

Quite simply, God's love for His people, far, far, eternally outweighs, our ability to sin.

That's the good news, the Christians here today. He keeps His people, His precious possession, and we are His, forever. See, time is gone, so we're going to end with that point, but just end with the fact, that dear brother, dear sister, whatever the lies, of the evil one this day, if we know the promises, God gives us in His word, we can counteract all those lies.

Now, it's obvious, but it must be said, that all it's said today, of course, was to the Christians. The Christians here today, that we have reminded the Christians, that God cares for you, God listens to you, God loves you.

for my dear friends, who, as of yet, you, of course, cannot say, perhaps, that you know the Lord, or that you love the Lord, if as of yet, you can't say that, that you are His, read with me, please, to the, end of, of, of, verse 10, 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, all we've said today, the love of the Lord, the care of the Lord, everything the Christians today, have heard of, of, of, to encourage us, as to the love, and the care of the Lord, for us, all these things, were once not true for us, alongside, you dear friends, we're all once in verse 10, 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, what changed, what separates, the Christians here, from those, who as of yet, are not Christians, is it our, incredible Bible knowledge, is it our holy living, is it our ability, to save right things, to dress the right way, to X, Y and Z, of course it's not, you know it's not, what is the difference, the Christians here, called out, to the Lord, to save us, he heard our calls, and he saved us, the difference is Jesus, it's not us, it is the risen Savior, who has given us mercy, dear friends, do not try, and live a life better, do not try, and prove, how you appear, to the Lord, it won't impress him, it won't impress him,

[ 64 : 54 ] God is not, so small, and so human, to be impressed, by our efforts, you come to the Lord, like every Christian here, you come to the Lord, and you say, yes, I have made a mess of things, I will continue, to make a mess of things, but I want to know you, I want to serve you, I want to have you, as Lord, over my life, I trust that Jesus, and his finished work, has done all that needs, to be done, for my salvation, and I know, I'm a sinner, in need of salvation, if you say that, to the Lord, and you mean that, we have a sure hope, the Lord hears, all who call out to him, the Lord hears, all who cry out to him, for mercy, he is a good, and glorious, and giving father, who ignores, no one who comes to him, and cries out, in mercy, and always said today, of the Christians, that we know God, we love God, that we know, that he knows us, that he loves us, that he listens to us, that he cares for us, that he calls us his own, all these things, can be true for you too, just like that, just in a second, come to Jesus, come to the one, who has given all, for his people, who loves his people, who promises never to leave, nor forsake his people, come today, come and pray that prayer today, come and humble yourself enough, to come to the Lord today, this afternoon, why not, what's keeping you back, come and know the mercy of the Lord, the care of the Lord, the love, of the Lord, let's put our heads in that, a word of prayer,

Lord we ask, as we come around these, few thoughts from your word, Lord once more, we ask you would, help these things to, make the reality to us, help us not just leave this place, having grown in, our knowledge, but having grown in our love, we do once more pray for, your people here today, as the evil one, attacks us on all sides, as he puts his doubts, into our minds often, we ask you would, take us to your word, take us even to the chapter, we read today, take us back to these promises, we find in your word, the hope we find in your word, that despite the attacks, of the evil one, that your word, is enough, and that you have given us, all that we need, to defeat his efforts, that you promise to keep us, and to love us, and to never let us go, we ask that reality, we would be known, by our friends here today, perhaps even friends, who are listening, in the time to come, friends who are seeking, and who are asking, the big questions, and who are wanting, to know Jesus, we ask that you would, make that final leap, and come and ask, that you would save them, you would transform them, that they would know, your mercy, and your love, give you praise Lord, that you're the God, who saves all, who come to you, asking for that salvation, that's all these things, in and through, and for Christ's precious name's sake,

Amen.