

Chosen and Called

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 0 0] A few times before we're tapping tonight with one clear purpose in mind, 1 Peter 2 verses 9 and verse 10. Taking verse 10 through our text this evening, Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people.

Once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. We're carrying on our short series looking at the chain of salvation, of the golden chain, as so many before us have called it.

Last week we tackled with trepidation and fear, but reverential fear, the depths. We saw even just a touch on the depths of God's eternal plan as he elects, foreordains, foreknows his people.

As he saw his people, knew his people and chose his people from before time itself. Of course, the chain then takes us to those who are foreknown and chosen, are then called and justified.

Called and justified are the next, as it were, two links on the chain. As we said last week, the first two links, foreknown and predestined, that happens, as it were, before time.

[1 : 1 7] That happens in eternity past. Then this evening we have called and justified. These are the two links of the chain of our salvation which take place, of course, in time and in space.

These are what we experience when the Lord saves us as his people. We, as we said last week, and as we know ourselves from common sense, we can't touch.

We can study and we can praise God for it. We can take great joy in studying it and in thinking through it. But we can't touch, not truly, what took place and what takes place in eternity.

We know what God tells us and we study and we strive to understand that. But even a lifetime of understanding that, we're still just beyond our level. Because it's dealing in eternity.

Our mortal minds can't think past what we see and touch and know. We are created beings. We're made from the dust. Our minds are made from dust.

[2 : 1 8] Our body is made from physical matter. Yes, we're a soul, of course, but our brains are still our brains. We have our human limits. But here this evening, it's where we can understand, in a real sense, in an individual sense, what it is for the Lord to call his people.

You were known, brothers and sisters. You were known from before time itself. Loved from before time itself. God set you in his plan to save you from before time itself.

We saw all that last week. As we look to ask the question, how does that look like in time and space? We turn to verse 10. Where it's one of the best summaries of the gospel.

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. We add on verse 25 also.

For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. We'll see in a second why verse 25 is important to add on to our thinking.

[3 : 30] First of all, verse 10. Here we see in one simple verse, call and transformation of our lives. In one verse, one short verse, Peter encapsulates the Holy Spirit speaking and working through Peter.

Encapsulates our whole Christian experience, doesn't he? What we once were, what we are now. And implicit in that and intertwined in that, what being said is what took place for us to be where we were once, to where we are now.

Once you were not a people. In one sense, we all were a people. All are a people. We have our day, you don't know.

We have our connections. We have our ties. More so, perhaps, than many people understand. In fact, we know ourselves. When folks move to the island, or folks who are used to our culture and used to our history come here, they're often not quite sure what to make of it.

But we know each other's grandparents and great-grandparents. I remember I was in ETS in the Free Church College, and I was talking to one of my students. He's a man from London, just chatting about life.

[4 : 44] He was coming to the island, hoping to come to the island for a holiday, and just talking about island life. And the conversation got on about peat cutting and peat banks. He was fascinated. Fair enough. And just offhand, I said, yeah, well, that peat bank, of course, belonged to my neighbour's great-grandfather.

He looks at me as if I've said something crazy. He said, how do you know that? How do you know that peat bank next door to yours belonged to your neighbour's great-grandfather?

We have a people. We have a culture. And that stretches right back. We know our people. Some of us, I'm sure some of us here, you can trace your people right back to the first settlers, if you're from Tolstoy originally, who settled in this village way back when.

And Peter's writing to a people who had a people. Not for a second is Peter saying that those he writes to weren't part of a culture and a group.

They certainly were. Some of them are very, very esteemed people. Esteemed groups who had a real, almost royal lineage. But Peter is saying quite simply, for all what your people are, all your history, all you might be in human terms, once you were not a people.

[6 : 01] Once you belonged to nothing and nowhere. Once you had no real roots. Of course, Peter's not touching on the lineage of his listeners.

He is touching, of course, his readers. He is touching, of course, on spiritual lineage. Yes, they might have well, at least many of them being Jews or Jewish converts.

That's a discussion for another day. Yes, they might have been from the Jewish families. Some were Gentiles. Even the Gentiles, they weren't culturalists. They were very cultured. We know about ourselves.

Peter's reminding them, for all your lineage and all your people, all your Daniel, before you were saved, what does it profit you? Your grandfathers and great-grandfathers in the faith, both by blood and by association to your locality, what does it benefit you?

It means nothing. Once you were not a people. Yes, you were part of worldly nations and worldly tribes and worldly lineages, but you were not part of the lineage.

[7 : 06] You had to be part of. Only a lineage that doesn't just carry on for a while. A lineage that traces its inheritance back to the start. But more importantly, that traces its future inheritance, its future possession, all the way forward.

Peter, of course, is reminding these Christians that before they were saved, they were outside in the cold, without hope and without help.

Yes, they had friends and family. Yes, they loved and were loved. Yes, they were close, I'm sure, to many people and had great cultural ties and community ties and everything else. But they didn't know the Lord.

And because they didn't know the Lord, they weren't part of His people. The only people that actually matter in terms of our inheritance, in terms of our salvation. Our families matter.

Our families are important. Our loved ones matter. Our loved ones are important. When it comes to matters of salvation, it's only being part of God's family that saves us. And we know this. And brothers and sisters, we know this.

[8 : 10] It's a worry, it's a real fear. And when you speak to people, even in the last few weeks, speaking to people, even in this area, some who come to church, some who don't, they will happily give me their godly lineage.

They will happily tell me their grandfather and so on, and their uncles and so on. And all the great church connections they have. And you can see them, and they mean well, but you can see them trying to almost prove to the minister of our good people because of our connections.

And they wouldn't say that. They don't mean it like that. They were doing it. Oh yes, my grandfather was involved in the church, and my uncle was involved in the church, and he was an elder in the church, and so on, so on, so on. Good. Great.

But so odd. Eternally so odd. In fact, it's even worse, in a sense, for those of us with godly lineages, those in our community of godly lineages who now have no interest in having Christ for themselves, because they are even more judged than they are.

In fact, they grew up, those who grew up in a good Christian godly home, they grew up hearing the gospel, and yet they still reject it. Once you were not a people, but now, because in time and in space, because God who set his eternal love on you, God who once saw you, and who knew you from time before time, from time eternal, from eternity past, because in his plan, he set his plan to saving you, to brother your sister.

[9 : 42] Once you had not a people, but now we have, you have, I have, a people. A people who are part of, not just across our island, not just here this evening, or in our church on a Sunday.

We are brothers and sisters, and we mean that, and we love that, and we pray we, we look into that more, and consider more, and act perhaps more, on what it is to be, brothers and sisters.

But this evening, as Christians, we are part of a people, even as our brother prayed, we're part of a people, who have gone before us. We don't pray of course, to those who have gone.

We know that, there is no connection, as a way between heaven and earth. There is, a cut off point, we know that, in death. But they are still brothers and sisters. Yes, they're not with us, anymore physically.

But they still, eternally live, with our Father in glory. They are still brothers and sisters. And one day, when we will join them, they are part of our family. We are brothers and sisters, of all the faithful Christians, and then in the Old Testament, all those who faithfully, trusted the promises of God, looking forward to the Messiah, right from the start, we're part of that family.

[10 : 57] Across the cultures, this very day. Across the languages. Yes, we will disagree on many things, but even this room, we disagree, I'm sure, on many things, if we take the time, to ponder them.

But those of us, who know and love Jesus, we agree on that. And in that agreement, we become part of this, not just worldwide, but this, glorified, family.

We are now, part of a glorious people, made glorious, by the one, who has a people. We are part of, the people of the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived that life, who died that death, to have for himself, to secure for himself, a precious people.

And this evening, brother and sister, we, despite how we might feel, and think, we can know, that we are, called precious, by the one, who has a precious, beloved people, for his own.

So precious, he spilt, that blood, out for us. 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.

[12 : 07] Once lost, had no gospel concern. I know some stories, but you don't know, testimony better than I do. Perhaps, you had some interest, many of us here, grew up in the church, and you, you, did what was required of you, to attend every so often, to keep, parents or loved ones happy.

You sat in church, week after week, and you listened to sermons, week after week, and nothing went into your head. Or maybe it did. Maybe it stayed in your head, but nothing then, went into your heart.

You learned each week, you listened each week, perhaps, you survived, and suffered through each sermon, perhaps. You heard the gospel, again, and again, and again. I did nothing, and nothing, and nothing, until one day.

And here's what all our stories, are the same. How it took place, what means God uses, is not the same. But what takes place, is the exact same.

Some of us, myself included, couldn't tell, when God saves us. There's no definite point, but there's a point somewhere. Some of us here, can get a very definite point. But again, regardless, here's where we all come together, and have one shared testimony.

[13 : 23] At one point, some point in our lives, we were once a people, who had not received mercy. We didn't even think, we needed mercy. Perhaps some of us, didn't think we deserved mercy, and we're right in that, but we did nothing about it.

But many of us, if not most of us, thought that, mercy for what? I try my best, I do a good job, I'm a pretty well behaved person, I go to church, I take the boxes, everyone's happy with me.

This minister rabbit's on, week after week, about sin and salvation, it's all just, the same thing, these ministers say, all these years. And then one day, whether in church, in scripture, at home, interaction with someone, whatever your story might be, you then, either gradually or suddenly, you then knew mercy, didn't you?

We then felt, what it was to know mercy, to know that, for some of us, it was gradual, others it was quick, to know that, our sins have truly been forgiven, that lifted from us, is a punishment, and God, as I've touched on before, God goes from being, the judge, who hangs over us, who felt like a merciless judge, a graceless judge, and almost at times with respect, but it's true, a vindictive judge, who's just waiting, just to come and just to, but no, received mercy, didn't we?

And God goes from being someone, always a sense of, hovering over us, to then love, and grace, and peace, and mercy, and help, and love.

[15 : 10] He goes from, eternal judge, hovering over us, to eternal father, who calls us, his own. Once you had not received mercy, but now, you have received, received mercy.

Jumping to verse 25, we move on. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned, to the shepherd, and overseer, overseer, of your soul.

If you were straying like sheep, but have now returned, to the shepherd, and overseer, of your souls. I'm going to make a statement, of which I have no backing up, really, to give you, and theologians, as far as I can see, have no backing up, really, to give you.

We do, but not really. But verse 25, gives us a great reminder, and a great truth, and a great hope this evening. As we remind ourselves, as to what took place, in our lives, from being on our own, to being part of God's people, from being without mercy, to having received mercy.

As we saw last week, as to God's, for ordaining, and his predestining work. We then, perhaps, might be thinking, and we said last week, but we still might think, what's the point, in sharing the gospel?

[16 : 23] How can we say, that God's doing all the work, and yet we say, we must go and share the gospel? We must go and do the work. You know, how come, Donald, you say every week, that we must be ready, to go and share the gospel, from neighbour to neighbour, and house to house, and be ready as a church, to do more, in our congregation, in our community?

Well, verse 25, gives us just, a passing hint. God accomplishes, his work regardless. God accomplishes, his work, his eternal plan, will be completed.

Nothing and no one, will thwart that plan, nothing and no one, will ruin that plan. But God accomplishes, his plan, by a means. God, in his wisdom, in his beauty, in his love, he uses means.

More often than not, the means he uses, dear brothers and sisters, is you and I. He uses you and I, we think, well, some means we are, and yes, some means we are, but he uses us.

And doing that, there is real importance, in the work we do, of sharing the good news. Because, for all of us here, at some point, in our walk, at some point, in our salvation story, a Christian spoke to you, didn't he?

[17 : 40] A Christian came alongside you, a minister preached a sermon, a Christian gave you a Bible, somehow you interacted, with one of God's people, and that was used, to bring you to himself.

I have a reading, preaching, sharing, whatever your story might be. God uses means. And we have returned. You have returned, to the shepherd, and overseer, of your souls.

We can, with one breath, and of one clear, pronouncement, say, God has his eternal plan, and God will accomplish, his eternal plan, that is set, that is clear, that is his hidden will.

Had revealed will, for us, as we'll, hopefully with the Lord's help, on Sunday, be reminded, we're to go out, to the highways, and the byways, and proclaim the gospel. The good news, that you must come, compel them to come in, was the master's, instruction to the servant.

Compel them to come in, we can't force them to come in, but compel them, with tears, if they must be, with tears, and pleading, compel them to come in, there is room for you.

[18 : 56] As we compel them to come in, as we share the gospel, with tears, and with pleading, we do so, knowing that God, will work, in his time, in his way, to bring his people, to himself.

You are straying like sheep, but have never returned, to the shepherd, and overseers of your souls. How does this look then, just briefly, very briefly, how does this look then, for us, and here's a text, we touched before, but just in this context, if we're saying, that we're a called people, a justified people, the next link in the chain, what does that mean for us, to be a called people, what does it mean for us, in practice, here's what we have, verse 9, to take things a bit backwards here, just very briefly, just running over, just a reminder, what it is, to be a called people, what means for our chosen race, we saw this last week, if we're here this evening, we love the Lord, we're one of the Lords, again, the simple answer, the simple answer, to the question, well what have not, one of the Lords elect, what have not truly, one of his, now that question, often comes from, a good place, a worrying place, but the answer is simple, and it's one Spurgeon, again, I know I was talking about, Calvin's letters, but again, it's a copy in a month, two copies actually, one's full of scribbles, one's plain, if you want a copy of,

Calvin's letters, let me know what's there for you, Calvin, dealing somewhere with a question, about someone's question, Calvin, Spurgeon, quoted Calvin actually, in his reply, but anyway, someone asked Calvin, how do I know if I'm the Lords, and they kept asking for Calvin, every letter, they kept asking, how do I know if I'm the Lords, and every letter, Calvin asked him the same question, you can see him, just trying his best, he's saying to them, do you love Jesus, do you care for Jesus, is he Lord and Saviour of life, and the poor woman says, yes, of course he is, yes, of course he is, but how do I know if I'm his, and the next letter, Calvin says the same question, he words it differently, he's very kind to her, but by the end, he says something, along the lines of, look back on the past five letters, you told me five times, you love Jesus, and you care for Jesus, and he's the Lord and Saviour of your life, you are his dear woman, you are his, regardless if you feel like it or not, we are chosen people, if we love him, if we care for him this evening, we can say with confidence, we are his, it's not in our culture to do that, it's not in our culture, to be so confident in our faith, but it's a sin, it's not a sin, it's definitely close to a sin, to lack confidence in our faith, if the word of God says it, and we don't believe it, then we're saying our doubts, are somehow more important, or somehow more effective, than what God tells us, yes it's hard to believe it,

I assure you I know, it's hard to take it on board, it's hard to apply it to ourselves, if God's word says it, we have to take God at his word, you are a chosen race, if you know mercy, if you can call yourself, one of God's people, you're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, if we're those who know the Lord, who love the Lord, this evening, and that's, brothers and sisters, that's you and I this evening, if we know the Lord, if you love the Lord, we are also a nation of priests, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a royal priesthood, a nation of priests, meaning what, well we've heard it before, but just briefly, meaning quite simply, for our application this evening, that you have access, as our brother prayed, you have access to the throne of grace, this very moment, you have access to your father in heaven, this very moment, there's not a second of our lives as Christians, where you somehow don't have access to him, yes at times it feels like we don't, there's times where it feels like, we're talking to ourselves, if we're honest, but yet we still have access, that access is not removed, it's not changed, we are a royal priesthood, because when we pray, and come before our father in heaven, we do so, claiming the finished work of our saviour, and because that finished work, is unchanging, and is fully effective for his people, we can have confidence, when we pray, our prayers will be heard, also our royal priesthood reminds us, that there's no levels in the kingdom,

I know we know this as a congregation, but sometimes perhaps we forget it, the prayers of an elder or a minister, are no more received, or no more heard, or we're not heard any quicker, than the ones of a brand new Christian, the prayers of a struggling Christian, who is just hanging on, to the last thread of faith, is no slower to be heard, than the strongest, and most fully assured Christian, we are a nation of priests, equal access to our God, we create tears to that access, God does not, we are a people for his own possession, finally, a people for his own possession, as we just said, a few moments ago, we are his, Jesus calls us, his own precious, beloved people, he has done the work, to possess us, to purchase us, we know there is no small work, involved in it, there is no small work, in the eternal, second person, of the Godhead, taking on human flesh, being incarnate in human flesh, there is no small thing there, in God, descending, and becoming, like us, and condescending, to become, like his own created creatures, there is no small thing there, the humbling, of our saviour, to become, eternally praised, second person, of the Godhead, to be walking around, in the dust, and grime, of this earth, there is no small thing there, there is no small thing, in the pain, of a life, of constant obedience, there is no small thing, in the death, on the cross, there is no small thing, in a resurrected saviour, there is no small thing, in a constant intercessing saviour, why, to have people, for his own possession, because eternity passed, we saw last week, when father, son and spirit, three persons, and one God, when our Godhead, as aware, planned out, and we say planned out, again, we speak with words, we don't understand, there is no start, to eternity, therefore there is no point, the plan wasn't there, the plan was made, in eternity, we can't even say that, because nothing is made, the plan was in eternity, the plan was in eternity, the son would come, and have a people, for his own possession, dear brother, sister, that's us this evening, people for his, possession, called into, light, from the darkness, and as we touch on, we'll leave it here this evening, for next week, we can look, not from this text, but look how, verse 9 ends, what is the promise, of our people, the people of God, the people of Christ, you're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, you may proclaim, the excellencies of him, who called you, out of darkness, into his marvellous light, with the Lord's help, next week, as we come to the end, of, of the, the chain of salvation, we see that, those who he calls, and justifies, he finally, glorifies, that is our future, because we are chosen in him, and loved by him, the day is coming, and will soon approach us, and we'll be here, before we know it, where we'll be fully glorified, final day, of our life on this earth, we close our eyes here, we open them, we know in glory, and will see him, as aware as he is, be in his presence, for all eternity, no more sin, no more pain, no more tears, that's for next week, let's bear our heads now, a quick word of prayer,

[26 : 59] Lord God, we thank you for the gift, we have with your word, once more, Lord, help us to spend time, Lord, even this evening, going over these verses, once more, and taking these verses, in prayer to you, Lord, you open up our eyes to, Lord, not just to the few thoughts, we heard this evening, but open up our eyes, Lord, to the internal, glorious depths, we find within these words, the eternal beauty, we find within, Lord, these few verses, that we have a saviour, who loves us, who through his love for us, we can be assured, we are part of God's people, and have received, your eternal mercy, Lord, help us to leave this place, this evening, having grown in our, understanding, but also in our love, and worship, of who our great God, truly is, Lord, help us rest this week, to serve you well, give us, we ask gospel opportunities, we ask to also give us, the wisdom, to lay hold, on these gospel opportunities, to praise, your glorious name, we pray, Lord, for those who mourn, even those who mourn, our own community, this evening, Lord, we pray, Lord, especially, Lord, at this time,

Lord, for Angus, we pray for him, and for the family, and for all that must take place tomorrow, Lord, that you be with, the family, and Lord, you bless, them, help us, as a community, Lord, to show that care, and love, to those who are in pain, those who are mourning, those in physical, and mental anguish, those who go through trials, and situations, Lord, use us, we ask alongside, help us this evening, to go home in peace, and to know, that you are building your kingdom, even in this place, ask all these things, in and through, and for Christ's precious name, sake, Amen.

Let's close, by singing in Psalm 116, Psalm 116, Psalm 116, verse 1 to 6, I love the Lord, because my voice, and prayers heeded here, I while live, will call on him, who bowed to me, his ear, Psalm 116, verses 1 to 6, to God's praise.

I love the Lord, because my voice, and prayers heeded here, I while I live, will call on him, who bowed to me, his ear, of death, the cards, and sorrows, whose banks ask him, the sky that a child...

the For the Lord, then did I call and say, Deliver thou my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly
God merciful and righteous is, De gracious is our heart, God saves the meek, I was
brought low,

[31 : 08] He did not be held before. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, for of you now and forevermore. Amen.