

# God's People: Identity & Purpose

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Date: 13 February 2022

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[ 0 : 00 ] It's good to see you all this morning. Will you please go with me to prayer as we ask for the Lord's help? Oh, Lord, we come to you this morning, and we come to your word.

And Lord, I pray this morning that we might tremble at it. Lord, because it is awesome, because it is majestic, because it tells us truths.

It's, Lord, that we need to know and we need to hear. God, I pray for our hearts this morning that we would be open to receive. And Lord, in receiving, Lord, that you would press these truths deep in our hearts.

Lord, I pray for your help this morning. Lord, in my weakness, Lord, will you give strength. Lord, will you enable me to proclaim the word as I ought.

Lord, may we together sit under it. And Lord, in response to it, worship you as truly a great God. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

[ 1 : 11 ] Amen. Amen. Well, it's good to see you all this morning. We are going to continue in our series in 1 Peter. And we come to the end of the first section of the book, chapter 1-1 through verses 2, 11, and 12.

2, 11, and 12 is kind of a hinge chapter. And so we're looking at the passage right before that, verses 4 through 12. And one of the things you see is that this whole section is bracketed by Peter describing the church as exiles.

People who are living as strangers in a land that are not their true home. And I wonder if you've ever experienced that. I had the privilege of doing so for a couple years.

I got to live in China. I remember the first week when we went, Brandy, my late wife, was on bed rest when we had first arrived.

And that was a serious crisis for me because she was one who knew how to speak Chinese. And I didn't. And so two days after we landed, I was sent out to get lunch.

[ 2 : 22 ] And it could have been a movie because I'm sitting there with these transliterated Chinese characters on this piece of paper that my wife gave me trying to say, can I please have eggplant and pork on rice in Chinese and failing.

And they kept saying, Shema, Shema, what are you saying? And I would say it again. They brought me menus that were all in Chinese. I couldn't. That didn't help.

It wasn't. We weren't going to get anywhere doing that. And it was. And I felt so out of place, so alone, so helpless. It was a terror.

Like it was a really hard experience. And I was supposed to be providing for my wife who was at home on bed rest. And this was her food, not just mine. And it was.

I felt like an alien and a stranger in this world. Maybe you've experienced that in cross-cultural situations.

[ 3 : 23 ] Maybe you've experienced it because you follow Christ. Maybe as a high schooler, your friends are full of social media mean tweets and disparaging remarks and comparisons and some of the more destructive ways in which our culture tends to engage while you seek to show grace and kindness to those around you.

Maybe in the workplace, you overhear conversations about politics or social issues and you feel like there's no way to engage in the conversation to express maybe or share your convictions without being seen as an alien.

An alien either as an invading threat to all that is good and decent in the world or a hateful bigot promoting oppression and violence. Maybe you've experienced it in your family.

You came to Christ and you've been seeking to bring redemptive and healthy patterns of relating to deeply ingrained family dynamics that are destructive.

And you've been responded to with exclusion or anger or laughter. There are lots of different ways in which we might feel like aliens, foreigners, outsiders in the places that we live.

[ 4 : 45 ] And I will say this, if you don't feel this way today, I think you will. I think you will in the coming days as our culture continues to move away from some shared values.

We will continue to feel the dislocation between what we are called to be as Christians in the world that we live in unless God intervenes with a massive revival in both the church and the society.

And if you've ever felt this way, you know how hard it is. It's crushing. It's isolating. It's a very hard tension. We don't know where we fit in and we feel like, where do I find my bearings?

We lose our sense of identity and we're disoriented. And often when we feel that tension, we try to resolve it.

One way we try to resolve that tension is we conform. I'm going to become like this culture that I'm living in. We lose our sense of who we are. Sometimes, instead of conforming, we withdraw.

[ 5 : 53 ] This happened, I saw this in China. The expats created their withdrawal community where they didn't want to have anything to do with the local culture and local people. They just wanted to reproduce their own culture in their own little conclave.

Sometimes, I think, we seek to control. To resolve this tension, we want to impose upon others our expectations, our values, our ways of going in a way to enforce it on those around us.

We demand that the world affirm and embrace us for who we are. In light of all of these dynamics, Peter's writing to this church to encourage them and to strengthen them in their Christian faith.

And he has pastoral insight, I believe, to help us think through how do we live as aliens and strangers in this world, as exiles. So, Peter's writing as a pastor to these churches.

And he tells us two things in this passage that we're about to read. He tells us about our identity and he tells us about our purpose. Two places where we can put our feet down and know this is who we are, even as we feel like outsiders.

[ 7 : 10 ] So, let's look at it together. 1 Peter, chapter 2, verses 4 through 10 is a passage. It's 953 in the Pew Bible. And let's read that together.

1 Peter, chapter 2, starting in verse 4. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in 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.

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 his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

[ 8 : 42 ] 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.

Friends, Peter wants to tell us this morning that as we live in this world, our identity in the world is not from this world, but it is from God to be God's people. And our place and purpose in this world is for God, that we would live declaring his greatness in the world.

Structurally, this passage breaks down. Verses 4 and 5 in some ways are kind of a header statement, a summary statement of these two ideas. This is who you are and this is why you're here.

And then he defends it with a whole litany of Old Testament quotes and allusions to fill out our understanding of what this means. So we're going to look at these two ideas, identity and purpose, and try to flesh out what Peter is telling us about them.

And then we're going to talk about how that applies to us. So first of all, God confers to us an identity as God's people based on Christ and distinct in the world.

[ 9 : 57 ] So what does it mean that we have an identity as God's people based on Christ? Well, this is the idea that we see in verse 4. As you come to him, and that is talking about Jesus, you can look back in the context.

Verse 3, having tasted the goodness of the Lord, is referring to Jesus and his salvific work for us. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men.

And then you see as the argument goes on through the passage, he is this cornerstone that God is laying. Now, what is a cornerstone? I'm not an architect nor a builder.

Maybe Antoine could tell you what a cornerstone is. But from my reading, what a cornerstone is, and particularly in the first century, it was the first stone that was laid from which all the lines of the building would be defined.

It defined level. It defined the walls. It defined the vertical plumbness of what was had. It was the one that set all of those directions.

[ 11 : 04 ] And what God says is, here, Peter is saying, God has laid this cornerstone of a new building. A new building which is this holy temple that is a living temple.

He's mixing metaphors, so you have to be creative. But he's saying this is a bunch of living stones being built together into this incredible place.

And he's using, as he explains this idea, there's all this Old Testament richness, right? Verse 6 is a quote from Isaiah 28, 16. Where God says, In the midst of the unfaithfulness of the leaders of Jerusalem as well as the nations around, in the midst of the suffering that the people are experiencing and the threat of the northern exile, he says, I'm laying a stone.

I'm laying something that is going to be an unmovable foundation. So even though you feel so uncertain, hang in there because I have laid a cornerstone in Zion.

And whoever trusts in this will not be put to shame. Whoever is connected to this cornerstone. And he goes on and he says, And this cornerstone is chosen and precious.

[ 12 : 22 ] This has been God's sovereignty. It wasn't like in the first century God was wandering around wondering, Golly, this is a really bad situation. The people are under the oppression of Rome.

They haven't seen the fulfillment of the promises. What am I going to do? Oh, look, here's a guy. He's born in Galilee. Maybe he'd be useful. Just this Jesus guy. I'll try to make him the savior of the world.

No. God chose before the foundation of the world that Jesus would come and to do this work of redemption. And God chose to bring him in at just the right time in the process of human history to be the savior.

And as such, and as God's son, the one who came from heaven to do this, he is precious. And Peter says, and he's not only chosen, he's not only precious, but he is a living stone.

Because remember, Peter had seen Jesus. Raised from the dead. And this was the thing that made him distinct above all others. This is, this is the cornerstone.

[ 13 : 33 ] Peter says, this is the foundation that upon which you, you, God's new people in the church are being built.

But he's not just a chosen and precious stone, but he's also, as you see in verse four, he is rejected by mankind.

He's rejected by humanity. God's doing this work of redemption, and yet in the midst of it, God predicted and expected that there would be this rejection that would come.

Right? As you look down in the verses that follow where he's defending this, you see the turn in verse seven. So the honor is for you who believe, you who are living stones connected to the cornerstone.

But for the ones who do not believe, he is the stone that the builders rejected. And he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who do not believe and who disobey God's word.

[ 14 : 32 ] The quote is from Psalm 118, 22, that Antoine read earlier. And you know, this idea resounds throughout the New Testament.

Jesus himself used these verses to describe himself when he said, you need to recognize this. He's confronting, particularly in that day, the religious leadership of the day that was rejecting him and his claim to be the savior.

He said, you are, I am this stone that is rejected, but I'm going to be a stumbling stone for you as you try to live in this world. You can see that in any of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

And he said this actually at the end of the parable of the wicked tenants. Do you know that parable?

A parable where there was a land and the master left this land in the purview of some people.

And he went away. And then the people said, oh, well, we're going to take this and make it our own. And then he started to send messengers back saying, no, you've got to do this under me.

[ 15 : 40 ] And the master's coming and you have to do this. And they rejected him. They rejected him. Finally, he sent his son. And they killed his son rather than submitting to the master's ownership and leadership.

And it was in the context of this parable that Jesus quoted this verse to say, I am the one who's come from the father.

I am the son. And you are going to reject me and kill me. So this is not a surprise in God's plan that this happened. But it is a strong dynamic that we see throughout this.

In Acts 4, Peter, the apostle who wrote this letter earlier, right after the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension and the beginning of the church, the day of Pentecost, Jesus identifies, or Peter identifies Jesus as this rejected cornerstone.

But he goes on. And I want to read these verses to you because it's a powerful connection to this idea. So in Acts 4, Peter's preaching to the crowd.

[ 16 : 47 ] And he's talking about Jesus whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. By him, this man is standing before you. Well, this Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

And then he goes on and he says, And there is salvation in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

So this cornerstone that God is building this new people on is one who is a dividing stone in the world. There are some who will believe and reject him and believe and be connected to him as living stones.

And there are some who will reject him and who will despise him and who will refuse him. This underlies the way that Jesus is an exclusive savior.

Not in the way where he intentionally is excluding people. I don't believe that's the picture of him. But more that he alone is the one who can do the work necessary for our salvation.

[ 17 : 57 ] He alone, because of his person and his life, death, and resurrection, he alone can be the savior of the world. And he presents all people everywhere with this question.

What will you do with Jesus? Will you accept him? Will you receive him as he has revealed himself? Will you believe in him and trust in him for your salvation?

Or will you reject him? Will you commit yourself instead to another plan of your own self-salvation? Will you commit yourself to some other way that you are going to find your identity and purpose in the world?

Peter is writing to this church that's suffering, that's feeling this dislocation of being an alien in the Roman Empire, being in exile.

This world isn't my home. And he's saying, recognize that's what Jesus experienced, and if you're going to be connected to him, you're going to experience it too.

[ 19 : 06 ] But recognize that when you're connected with him, what a great privilege that is. So Ephesians 2, Paul writes this, so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Church, this is what God says that we are. We are the living stones connecting to him, this cornerstone, chosen by God, but rejected by men.

And so when we experience that rejection, we ought not be surprised, for it's what he experienced for us first. But then there's a second part of this identity. If being connected to the cornerstone is the first part, the second part is that our identity is to be living as distinctly in the world.

And by distinct, I don't mean weird intentionally. I don't mean that we have to dress in a particular, you know, we don't have to wear doilies on our heads or, you know, dresses that, or, you know, suits the whole time or whatever your image might be of what, yeah, what cultic people who identify themselves by dress would do.

[ 20 : 37 ] However you want to fill in that gap. But instead, Peter is saying here, we are called to live distinctly with this close intimacy with Christ.

In verse five, he says, you're being built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. Nick preached on this two weeks ago. You should go back and listen to his sermon. But holy doesn't mean holier than

thou and more pure and self-righteous and therefore looking down on the rest of us for our imperfections and weaknesses.

Holy doesn't mean that. What holy means is set apart. Just like you might have special china in your house that you would set apart for a special occasion but not use commonly every day. Jesus is saying, God is saying, you are set apart from this world for particular purposes and to be a particular people in this world so that you might glorify me.

And he goes on then and he describes it and you see this is picked up in verse nine very strongly. You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation. Let's make sure I get this right.

[ 21 : 45 ] You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. He picks up this cascade of ideas to say that we are the special people in the world, a priesthood that God has set apart.

Now we need to be careful here because priesthood sometimes could indicate that what Peter means here is we are priests mediating between God and the world.

And I don't actually think that's the idea here. I think the idea here is that priests had this immense privilege of serving in the temple in Jerusalem and having access to the inner courts and the presence of God in a way that others didn't.

And what Peter is saying here is we all now have access to intimacy, to the presence of God through the, in the Holy Spirit. And this is what he's calling us to.

Why do I say this? Well, look, this is a quotation. Verse nine is a quotation from Exodus 19. If you remember the story of Exodus, God has just released the people of Israel from slavery after 400 years of oppression in Egypt.

[ 22 : 57 ] And he's brought them through the Red Sea. He saved them from the marauding army of Pharaoh. And he's brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai.

He's about to reveal to them the law. But God comes to Moses and he has this sort of clarifying statement with Moses about, this is what I'm up to.

So in Exodus 19, God tells Moses to then say this to the people, 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 the peoples for all the earth is mine.

And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. In the broader scope of redemptive history, remember it was one man, Abraham, who had the promise, you will be a great nation, you will be a blessing.

[ 24 : 00 ] And through Abraham's descendants, through Isaac and Jacob, and then Jacob's children who moved to Egypt by God's provision and plan, this now family line had become a people.

And God was now bringing this people out of that place of slavery into the promised land, into the place where Jerusalem lay, into the place where God promised they would dwell as a nation to display God's glory in the world.

And Peter is saying, do you see, this is who you are, church in the first century and church in the 21st century. This is who you are, a people distinct.

And the key thing about it, just like in Exodus, this God's presence was with them and he was leading them. So now the distinctiveness that we have is that God's presence is with us.

God chose us to do this. Do you know the power of being chosen? Do you remember being on the playground?

[ 25 : 04 ] I don't know if they do this anymore. It probably doesn't happen anymore, but bear with me in the illustration, right? The power of being chosen to be on the kickball team, right?

And you're standing there in the line and they're the two captains and they're the cool kids and you're like, okay, well, maybe they'll pick me, hopefully not last. And the power of, when they look at you like, I want Brian, I want Brian to be on my team.

It's like, yes, I'm chosen. How awesome is that? Right? Now it feels terrible when you're the last kid, right? So that's part, but part of it is that the idea here is that there's a goodness about being chosen.

There's a preciousness. Here's another example of what it feels like when someone gets down on their knee and says, will you marry me? Among all the people of the world, I choose you.

Will you marry me? And this is what God is saying to his people, his chosen people. I've set my love on you. Will you marry me?

[ 26 : 07 ] Will you be mine? Grounded in his love for us. And we have to see that this is based not on our own worth.

This is where the playground thing breaks down, right? Because you do pick the athletic kids first and it's the less athletic kids who get picked last, right? But God says, I haven't picked you because you're a particularly righteous, attractive, skillful, you have potential, you know, whatever it is. You have a nice personality. You know, whatever it is, God isn't choosing us for any of those reasons. In Deuteronomy 7, it says, not because you were more in number, but because I love you. And this is what we see throughout Scripture. In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul clarifies, God didn't choose the wise things and the rich things and the powerful things of the world, but he chose the weak things and the foolish things and the things that are not to shame the wise so that no one may boast that they were chosen for God for any merit of their own.

So Paul writes to Titus, but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal in the Holy Spirit.

[ 27 : 33 ] So there is this great privilege, but this great privilege doesn't come with arrogance or triumphalism, but it does come with confidence that the God of the universe has chosen his church to be his people.

And Peter wants to say, as you live in this world and you feel disoriented by everything around you, know this is the identity that will never change, that will never be shaken, that will never be undermined.

In fact, more broadly, what you see is that the scriptures are telling us this identity becomes our primary identity under which all of our other identities, our racial and familial and gender and all the other identities that we have, find their place and their purpose where they are enriched and find their proper place in our lives under this purpose that we might be God's people.

that the church would know who we are because we know whose we are. So if you're a college student or a high schooler, recognize that your identity is not based on your friend groups, not based on your awards, your achievements, your GPA, your resume, not on the approval and praise of your professors or your teachers or your coaches or even your parents, for those of us who are adults, we just translate those into different things, don't we?

The success in our workplace, whether it be a homework, work that we do at home or work in, out in the workplace. I think sometimes even our families, our roles as sons and daughters, wives and husbands, fathers, mothers, our roles as lots of things, we look at these things and we want them to give us our identity.

[ 29 : 36 ] Peter says to us, you are a living member of the people of God. This is a greater thing than any of those will ever give you. And when you feel out of step, when you feel like an exile, relax into this truth.

you are a chosen people of God. He has set his love on you and has called you in salvation to be a living stone connected to the cornerstone of Christ who was rejected by the world but chosen and precious by God.

This is the honor that is the churches to hold humbly in this world. I've spent most of the time on identity because I think it's most of what the passage talks about but it's not just identity that Peter says, it's also purpose.

We see this, this is then my main, my big second point if you're taking notes. Here's my big second point which is our purpose is to proclaim the greatness of God in our words and actions.

This is what we see in verse five. Peter says, he's called you as you come to him, you're being built up into this temple in order to present spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus.

[ 30 : 56 ] What in the world does he mean by that? He's not talking about going back to a religious ritual or a sacrificial system. I think actually verse nine clarifies and fills out what he means by that.

Verse nine you see that Peter is saying, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possessions, for a purpose. So that, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

This is the purpose we have in this world, to bear witness to what God has done, has done in our lives individually, in our lives corporately.

He has rescued us from darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light in relationship to this living cornerstone, this new eternal kingdom that he has started.

This is what God is doing in the world. And this is our purpose. And yes, we may do this in our workplaces and in our families and in our studies and in our schooling and in our retirement and in our recreation.

[ 32 : 09 ] And we may do it in lots of different contexts. But this is our purpose. To make much of God in the world.

How do we do this? Well, the first thing is we do this through worship. We do this as we gather in corporate settings to declare the goodness of God.

I don't know if you think about why you come to church. Maybe it's to connect to friends. Maybe it's because you don't want to feel guilty. There could be all sorts of reasons. But Peter is giving us one purpose that will give you a reason to get up every Sunday.

I get to go to church so I can declare that God is great. And sometimes I feel like it and that's really exciting. And sometimes I'm dragging myself out of bed and I'm desperately saying that because I need to remind myself of it and I need to be with other people who are reminding me of it.

But we gather together to declare this is what we do when we sing. This is what we do when we preach. This is what we do when we pray. This is what we do when we share testimonies. It's so that we would remember how great God is.

[ 33 : 20 ] That's why we call this a worship service. So we would lift up the worthiness of God in our midst. It's not only here though.

It's also in our everyday lives. Romans 12, 1 and 2 offer your bodies as living sacrifices to the Lord. Be not conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

So recognize that we are called to live out this calling not just as we gather in the church building but also as we scatter into all the places where we live every day. And this is what Peter is addressing as we live as exiles in this world that we're to live distinctly in a way that points people to the person of God.

He'll say this later in chapter 3. He'll say be ready to give an answer to all who ask you about the hope that's within you. How do you know there's that hope? Well because you live with it. Because you go out in the world and verses 3 through 9 of chapter 1 shape the way that you approach your everyday life.

Though you're encountering various trials you are living with hopeful confidence in what God has done for you and you're able to have joy in the midst of the suffering. And not only that but then we're going to live distinctly in the world as he said in verses 13 and following that we're going to live distinctly living as those who know that they have a heavenly father who will judge the world but who has accepted them in Christ.

[ 34 : 58 ] We're going to live as people who following in chapter 1 verse 22 and following we're going to live as those who love one another. And by this all men will know that you are my disciples because you love one another.

And so all of these are acts of worship spiritual sacrifices that we offer up so that people would know how great God is.

It's not about us building our tribe so that we can be the conquerors. It's not about protecting ourselves from the world by withdrawing away from them.

It's about engaging as the people of God being the lights in the darkness because God has called us out of darkness into light so that we can bear witness to a God who is here to rescue and save sinners like us.

And we will see in the weeks to come what it looks like to live as this special people of God as we relate to things like government and slavery and gender roles in marriage.

[ 36 : 13 ] Buckle your seatbelts. We're ready to go. Two weeks. We're doing it. It's going to be great. God's word is going to speak to us and instruct us and it's going to be wonderful. But recognize that all of this is couched in this broad of how do we live out this life of worship declaring the greatness of God.

But it's not just that. It's not just doing that. It's also specifically in evangelism. It's specifically in making known the work and the character of God in his salvation through Jesus Christ.

Maybe many, some of you have heard the phrase that's quoted, sort of quoted to Francis of Assisi. Preach the gospel and if necessary use words. That's not actually a biblical idea.

It is true that we need to live it out. Our actions need to be consistent with how we live but the Bible is consistently saying that we are to use our mouth and our words to tell of the greatness of God.

To proclaim him to the world. This is what you see this word here proclaim or to declare it's a public speaking thing.

[ 37 : 31 ] It's not a private thing. It's not something that I say to myself. Something that I say out to others. And I know friends, I know it feels weird, doesn't it?

Because we get caught up with feeling this. Aren't you imposing your beliefs on me? Aren't you telling me that I have to agree to this or I have to respect?

Isn't it disrespectful to barge into my life with your religious beliefs? But Peter here is helping us reframe what we are doing so that we can understand what we are doing and hopefully so that it will have a different impact on those around us.

Peter is saying God is so great. He has rescued you from darkness and into light. If God is that great, how can we not tell someone about that?

Okay? If I get a new iPod that has cool gadgets that I've never seen before and I get to start using it and it's awesome, I don't stick it in my pocket and never talk about it.

[ 38 : 46 ] I usually like, hey Nick, check this out. Do you know what this does? This is really cool. That's a very small, very mundane example of what God is saying our purpose in the world is.

Because not that we have found God and that God is trying to sell himself and that we are trying to sell God but what we're saying is we have been called into a relationship with this most amazing being who has called us out of darkness into light and we get to tell you about it.

How awesome is that? Can you imagine what it would be like for you to experience a God who loves you the way that God loves you in Christ? evangelism is not a duty for us nor is it a mission where we are to beat people over the head with a message that they don't want to hear but it is an exuberant response to our salvation.

It is an overflow of the joy and worship that we have where we share with others the amazing things that God has done and the amazing one that we have found in Jesus.

And friends this brings us to the end of our passage because in verse 10 Peter reminds us of this again. He says once you were not a people but you are now God's people.

[ 40 : 12 ] Once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy. This is a paraphrase a significant quotation from the book of Hosea.

If you don't know the story of Hosea Hosea is a prophet. God tells him to go and marry a woman who is going to be unfaithful and wayward. And so he goes and he marries this woman and then this woman wanders off.

And it's this parable of how God has been treated by his people and how God is responding to the waywardness and unfaithfulness of his people with patient persevering pursuing love for her.

And this is a quote where the children of this wayward woman are being given names not a person or not my people my people not receive mercy receiving mercy these names are given and Peter's drawing in this Old Testament story to say don't you see don't you see we are all everyone in this world are like the wayward woman we have all gone astray we all like sheep have gone astray we've gone our own way we've rejected God and chosen our own thing and this is the root of sin and alienation with God but God in his loving kindness has pursued us has pursued us to the point of sending his very own son to die on the cross for our sins to take away the penalty and the offense of our sin so that we might be restored and reconciled to a living relationship with him forever this is

Jesus for us and what Peter says is when we understand that that through that we have become the people of God then declaring the greatness of this God doesn't seem that hard does it it doesn't seem awkward it's going to be counter cultural it's going to be different but it seems right because of the greatness of who God is so Peter is writing to this church and writing to us saying have confidence not in your greatness but in the greatness of what God has done for you and in the calling that he has given to you as living as exiles awaiting our true home with God in heaven but now knowing your identity in Christ and living out this purpose of declaring his greatness in the world this is what he's called us to let's pray

[ 43 : 08 ] Lord Jesus we confess how often Lord our hearts grow cold and the wonder and awe of our salvation is replaced with a lack of enthusiasm Lord disparagement Lord we diminish it in our own hearts and Lord as we do so we lose sight of who we are and why we are here God I pray this morning that this passage would help us Lord restore to us the joy of our salvation that we may know who we are and why we are here we pray this in Jesus name Amen