

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!

1 Peter 2:4-10

Intro: Our society does a lot to make people feel like nobodies--like they are of little importance or worth. We live in a world where great emphasis is placed on intelligence, wealth, and looks. These are the elements of success and accomplishment. And that makes a lot of ordinary people feel rather worthless.

And that's the reason why so many young people get caught up in going along with the crowd. They want to feel like somebody; they want to be accepted. And they feel they must do as others do to be accepted. And we adults also face the same challenge. Peter understood that--that when we know who we are, and when we feel good about what we are, we will have greater strength to stand against those who want us become like them!

Do you remember what it was that made Peter fail the Lord the night of His betrayal? It was a reluctance, an unwillingness to admit to who he was! Peter didn't want us to make that mistake! And so in 1 Peter tells us what we have and that keeps us from exchanging our blessings for what the world values. In 1 Pet. 2 Peter tells us who we are as Christians, so that we can not only be happy with what we are; but also so that we can develop the strength to overcome the pressures of the world to become like them! (1 Pet. 2:4-10)

Did you realize that Christians are the most unique and special group of people on earth? Let's take a look at how special a Christians is!

Christians are a spiritual house or temple.

If you had asked a Jew in ancient times to point out the most special building in his world, there is no doubt as to what his answer would be!

The tabernacle or the temple!

The tabernacle and temple symbolized the dwelling place of God. It indicated that God lived among his people. It was the place where worshippers met God in worship.

The church is the temple of God!

The church is the fulfillment of that to which the tabernacle and temple pointed. We are the spiritual temple of God.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

(Ephesians 2:19-22)

Every Christian is a living stone in the house of God.

We are God's dwelling place. The NT does not talk about holy buildings; it does not call meeting places of the church "God's house".

Instead in keeping with the spiritual nature of the gospel, it calls the people “God’s house”.

What this calls attention to is a powerful idea! We are God’s temple. God is living in us as His nature dwells in us! What an incentive to love and protect one another!

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

If only we could just keep remembering who we are!

Christians are a spiritual priesthood

If you would have asked the ancient Jew who is closest to God. They would have answered the priests; for they alone can enter the holy place and offer worship to God.

We are God's priests!

Story about college friend in practice room—“I’m a priest”.

It was this truth—the priesthood of all believers-- that was lost to the religious world for many centuries. Even today Roman Catholicism separates the “priests” from the “people”. What a precious truth it is that every Christian has access to God through Christ without the aid of or need of any mediator other than Christ.

We offer spiritual sacrifices to God.

They are not sacrifices of atonement, Jesus has offered that once for all; but they are sacrifices of thanksgiving and total commitment.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1)

But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. (Philippians 4:18)

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13:15-16)

If only we could keep remembering who we are!

Christians are the “new Israel” of God.

Anyone who reads Peter’s description of the church cannot help but think of the words of God to Israel when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.

When God called the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, He told them that he had chosen them to be his people.

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own 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.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.” (Exodus 19:5-6)

“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 7:6)

In just the same way, by accepting the new covenant of Christ we become the new Israel of God, His chosen people. These verses abound with the language of God’s covenant call to OT Israel.

A chosen generation

Here in this section the emphasis is probably on the adjective rather than the collective noun (though the noun is not without significance). *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, ...who are chosen (1 Peter 1:1)*

A royal priesthood

No priest of the OT Levitical system ever served as king. Priests were not associated with the royal family.

But the church is a royal priesthood. We are children of the king! God has a kingdom made up of His sons and daughters.

As God’s children we sit in heavenly places.

and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 2:6)

We reign in life through Jesus.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)

A holy nation

As we discovered in our study of chapter 1. We are separated or consecrated to God.

We live holy lives!

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; (1 Peter 1:15)

A peculiar people

Not weird or strange, but uniquely God's

The Greek term conveys the idea of what is possessed as one’s own.

This possession came through the ransom of Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

All these statements in toto tell us about how special the church is to God. We are the new Israel called out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of His truth! If only we could keep remembering who we are!

Recipients of God’s new covenant grace.

The first covenant was a covenant of law requiring complete and continuous obedience to maintain righteousness. Israel became unfaithful to the covenant and forfeited the covenant blessings. But later Hosea spoke of a new day to come when God would make a new covenant of grace with His people.

*Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; And it will come about that, in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." (Hosea 1:10)
"But I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen." (Hosea 1:7)*

What we receive from God!

Hoseas's prophecy has its fulfillment in us. We have received the mercy of God in forgiveness and have become His people through grace!

for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:10)

These are our covenant blessings; but we have a covenant responsibility.

What we do for God!

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9)

We are unique in our mission. We exist not to brag to the world that we are God's and nobody else is, but rather to proclaim His excellencies so that others will become God's people. We are the means God has chosen to bring people to himself! We are unique because God uses us.

Conclusion: When Peter failed the Lord harmless servants intimidated him into denying who he was! Peter had learned his lesson and he didn't want any of us to make that mistake. Never be ashamed of who you are in Christ!

What a privilege to be a Christian! You can't get anymore special than that!

How do we become a part of these people of God?

First we must recognize the precious value of Jesus

Second we must come to Him!

If you are not a Christian, you can be a part of God's special people. He want you to be included. "He that believes in Him shall never be disappointed!"