A People for God's Own Possession

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[0:00] We are in 1 Peter this morning. And the title of my message from 1 Peter chapter 2, A People for God's Own Possession.

Let's read our text together. It's 1 Peter chapter 2, beginning in verse 9. And we'll work our way through verse 12, God willing, this morning.
Peter says, But you are a chosen race. You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
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.
Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may, because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.
[1:38] So Peter speaks clearly and plainly to the reality that he has, God has, made a people for his own possession.

He owns them. They belong to him. Now, just for a moment, think with me. Belonging, belonging, and the idea of that is something most people crave.
I've found, in my experience, most people will even sacrifice a great deal to gain a sense of belonging.
People want to belong. I have found this. Even people who brag about how much they don't care about what people think, and how much they don't need anyone, even those kind of people will generally succumb to the desire to belong.
You even hear the loner who heads out to a life of seclusion. He will betray this when he speaks of, I belong to nature.
[2:46] We all want to belong. Or, I belong to myself. Are there exceptions? Are there oddities to this kind of thing? Yeah, I think so.

I'm reminded, for instance, of a real-life situation from years ago. I don't even remember where I came across this. It's a woman. A woman who married herself.
She had the white dress, the wedding dress. She had the ceremony with the priest. She had the guests. The whole nine yards. It's like you'd see at just about any wedding where it's a big deal.
Well, they interviewed her after the fact, and she said, Well, I couldn't find anyone I loved more than myself, or that I would rather be with for the rest of my life than me, so I asked me to marry me, and I said yes.
And so she had herself a ceremony and got married to her own self. I'm not making this up. I am not making this up.
[3:54] Everyone belongs to someone, even if you just belong to your own self. You know, it's crazy. All right, spiritually, what do we do with this? Spiritually, the Bible tells us the bad news.

We all belong to Satan. He is our spiritual father because we are born in sin. By nature, this is an issue for every human being that comes to life on this planet.
I want to show you a few references to walk you into this with me. We'll start in Psalm 51, a place where most of you, as you heard me say that, your minds probably traveled to this passage.
This is one of the clearest expressions in Scripture of this reality, that we are born in sin, we are conceived in sin, we come forward in sin. Psalm 51, verse 5.
Behold, David says, I was brought forth in sin, in iniquity. And in sin, my mother conceived me.

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[4:57] It doesn't mean that she sinned in the conception of David. It means that he was born in sin. From the womb, he was in sin. Now, we're going to find out why that's so.

If you look at Psalm 58, verse 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb. Notice what he calls them.
From the womb. They're wicked. These who speak lies go astray from birth. You think about an innocent, quote unquote, little baby.
How in the world can we call that wicked? How in the world can we think of that as going astray from birth? Well, the way to understand all of that is explained in Ephesians chapter 2.
The ladies in our Ephesians study, you're wearing this out, aren't you? It's good. This is good to know. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1.
[5:59] And you were speaking in the past tense because he's speaking to believers here, to Christians. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formally walked or lived according to the course of this world.

This world is set up to follow the course of sin and Satan because we live in a fallen world. According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit, that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
That's another characterization of us in sin from the womb. Sons and daughters of disobedience. And then verse 3. Notice. Among them, we too, all, not a few of us, not some of us, not just the poor, all of us, formally lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind.
Notice. And were by nature children of wrath. That is, people who were under the holy anger of God, kept for the day of destruction.
Now, fortunately for these people, Paul begins this section by saying, you too, formally. Right? So this is something that was true of them at one time, but is no longer true.
[7:18] That's what Peter wants to zero in on for our message this morning. We cannot escape the reality that we are people born under the wrath of Almighty God.

And we've talked about the wrath the last couple of weeks, the wrath of God. And everyone is in that condition. Now, that's the bad news. The bad news that we all have to face today.
Peter will give us hope and he will give us encouragement beyond this very bad news about ourselves. He tells us in this passage of a miracle of spiritual reversal.
A miracle of spiritual reversal that people who were once separate from God because of sin. God now remakes into a people of his own possession.
How in the world does God rescue people who are under his holy wrath, born in sin, by nature, children of wrath? How does he take people like that with a list of all those wicked things and turn them into a people of his own possession, given the reality that God is holy and we can't approach him apart from perfect, perfect holiness, perfection?
[8:37] How in the world? Now, you know you and you know your situation in life and your past in life and I know me. And so as I think about that reality for Jeff Jackson, it astounds me.

It astounds me. We all give expression in different ways and at different levels of that nature of sin that works itself out inside of us.
Some of us have pasts that are horrendous. We can look back and think, boy, there's just no question in my mind about the life I was living before Jesus being all about me.
There are some people like my wife who was saved at a very, very early age. And yet even she can look back and think about the life that she lived apart from Jesus being saved at a young age as a young girl.
I wasn't saved till I was in college. And so I have more of a track record of living in sin than she does before the Lord Jesus, that is. And you may have a testimony similar to one of those.
[9:40] Nevertheless, we all need the reality of God's miracle of spiritual reversal in our lives. And Paul wants to help out or Peter wants to help outline some of that for us as we get started.

It is God who remakes into a people a people for his own possession. So we're going to see three life giving characteristics of belonging to God.
And I want you to zero in on that belonging to God, because that is the miracle of spiritual reversal that we should never get over in our Christian lives. We all serve to help bring this glory to Jesus. We live with him day to day. That's the purpose of belonging to him, bringing glory to him and honoring him. And so we'll start this morning with this.

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Your condition as God's own possession. Your condition. Peter begins this way in verse nine, but, but.
[10:47] Now, these are the kind of words you want to learn to pay attention to as you read and study through the scriptures, even as you read on a more devotional or casual level, because these provide for us contrast.

They jump out at us and say, now, hold on. You need to do something with this. You need to recognize what this is saying to you. But contrasts your spiritual life with the spiritual death of the people of verse eight.
Look at verse eight with me. For they stumble because they are disobedient to the word and to this doom.
They were also appointed. So whatever we're talking about here in verse nine, it isn't the same as stumbling because they're disobedient or suffering doom.
That's not for the people of verse nine. That's for the people of verse eight. And so I want you to think like Peter wants you to think here. Peter wants immediately to grab you and cause you to think in contrasts, contrasts with your former life.
[12:03] You were once disobedient. You were once headed for doom. But you are now.

And then he moves into this discussion. Just to put a little finer point on it. These people of verse eight disbelieve.
They remain disobedient. And the result is their doom. This is terrible. And tragic. We can call these people the disbelieving disobedient.
And such were some of you. The disbelieving disobedient. This is what defines them in God's eyes. And that's what matters.
God's view of us is what matters most. Not how we view ourselves. Not how other people view us. How does God see me? What is my standing and relationship to the God who created me?
[13:07] Who made me? Who has assigned purpose for me in life? What does he think of me?
Now I want you to notice too friends. These people from verse eight.

These disbelieving disobedient people. As we were. Right? We're not judging them or looking down our nose and conceit at these folks.
We're just explaining the reality. That Peter's giving us about this contrast between us now. And them. Notice that they stumble over whom?
Who do they stumble over in verse eight? Who did we say? Okay. The words. Who is who is being represented him here?
Christ. Christ. They stumble over Jesus. Jesus is the stone which the builders rejected. Remember that? He is the cornerstone.
[14:08] Look up at verse six. And he who believes in him will not be disappointed. That was before. I'm just reminding you. So they're stumbling over Jesus.

He is the rock of offense. The stumbling stone. They refuse to truly trust in Christ alone. As God's only provision for their salvation from sin.
They remain disobedient to God's word. Preached as good news to them. Walk back up into the context of chapter one with me in verse 25.
But the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which was preached as good news to you. And so to these people who are receiving this word, this letter from Peter, they have responded to this word about Jesus Christ with faith.
And so they have been born again and made new. They now represent God's own possession. God owns these people through faith in the Lord Jesus.
[15:18] But there are these disbelieving disobedience who who do not believe in Christ, who have rejected Jesus. And so they stumble over him.

They stumble over him. Now, listen, stumbling here is fatal. This is not this is what we think of. That's why I need to clarify this. Stumbling here over Jesus Christ isn't just some clumsy mishap. That's what I think of when I stumble. I just trip a little bit, you know, and usually I'll catch myself or whatever. Right. That's not what this is. It doesn't leave these people bruised, but recovering from some kind of a nasty fall.
Nope. Stumbling over Jesus leaves them in the condition they have been in since birth. Spiritually dead and condemned by almighty God.

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Doomed. That's the reality. This is how Peter wants us to reflect on what he says next. This is how he wants to lay the groundwork for us to understand the miracle of our birth in Christ, but also the riches that are lavished and poured on us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
[16:40] And he he wants these suffering people who are being persecuted because of their faith to take joy and encouragement in the reality that God has fixed these riches in relationship to him through Christ in a way where they belong to God.

And nobody can ever take them from God's hand. He wants that to be enough to carry them through the persecution. Knowing this, their circumstances will change.
It might and it will get worse before it gets any better. Many of these people are going to be murdered, martyred. They're going to die for their faith. Peter knows this.
He might not know who, but he knows many of these people will die soon under the persecution that Nero will bring across the Roman Empire.
So he calls them to take encouragement in their relationship to God through Jesus Christ, something that nothing, not even physical death can rob them of.
[17:42] And he says that that'll be enough. That'll be enough. And we need to ask ourselves, is it the tragic result of the ongoing disbelief and disobedience of the people of verse eight?

The consequence of ongoing is the consequence of ongoing spiritual death and permanent separation from God's love and forgiveness offered in Jesus. Now he comes to the punchline.
But verse nine, you are. But you are, he says, a people defined by something entirely other than.
What is defining the disbelieving disobedient? So again, friends, Peter used the negative from verse eight as a backdrop for the positive.
And all of that is contained in the word. But. Right at the beginning of verse nine is the way the New American Standard reads. Peter does this to impress then on his readers, on us, God's amazing, amazing gift of their spiritual transformation.
[18:56] How is it that they have come from being owned by Satan, born into Satan's possession and now brought into being God's possession?

It is through spiritual transformation. A new nature now defines them. This is what we should be preaching.
It's on every page of scripture. God working, God initiating, God loving, God sending, God doing. It's amazing.
Now, how does God see those who believe in Jesus Christ? We've talked about how he sees the disbelieving disobedient before in several sermons prior to this.
How does he see those who believe in Jesus Christ? Well, once again, look at verse nine with me. But you are a chosen race.
[19:57] You are, we could say, a royal priesthood. You are a holy nation. But you are a people for God's own possession.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. This is God's description of their new and permanent spiritual standing with him.
Why wouldn't we preach this? Why wouldn't we call everybody we know to this? This is the greatest news on the planet. It's the greatest news anyone will ever hear or has ever heard.
Right? Do you remember I told you we're getting ready to celebrate the day that Jesus came out of the grave in resurrection glory. And yet we get the privilege of every Sunday celebrating the Lord's resurrection in glory, don't we?
Amen. So why not shout it out today? Let's decide to come in next Sunday and greet everybody with, He is risen. He is risen indeed. Because that's our message every day of our lives.
[20:59] He is risen. He is risen indeed. He is risen in me. And so I am risen with him. This is what I used to be. This is what I am now. I used to belong to the devil.

Now I belong to Jesus. And no power in heaven or earth can change it. Why wouldn't we preach that? Why wouldn't we live that? Why wouldn't that be what defines us every single day?
Defines us as husbands, as wives, as parents, as grandparents, as employees, as managers, as retirees.
Whatever we are. Wherever we find ourselves in life. Peter says, but you are, notice with me, friends, from the text, a chosen race.
This is our favorite word. Because it's Peter's favorite word. We just can't get away from this word. It's the Greek word, eklekton. Eklekton.

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[21:59] It's all the way back to verse 1 of chapter 1. It's the way he started this thing. And he just won't let go of it. What does he say? Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

My translation then ends with, who are chosen. And he just continues to move through his message to these people, reminding them, God chose you.
This is a special, wonderful, incredible privilege of God's grace. And we need to look a little more closely at it. We are God's people.
Fact. Because God elected us for salvation. And we rejoice. God chose us.
He chose us. Isn't that amazing? Now, here's what we want to ask. Here's what we want to deal with.
[23:07] Peter's emphasis on God's electing grace and marking us out for salvation shows us this wonderful reality. God is faithful to do what he promised.

He marked us out for salvation before he ever made the world. He has followed through on that promise. He is faithful. I want to make sure that you understand election doesn't save anyone.
The fact that you were marked out for salvation before the foundation of the world doesn't mean you're saved. That has to happen in a point in time. It has to become personal to you.
You're saved in the mind and heart of God before you're ever born, before you're ever thought about. But now we need to bring that into the real moment of your life.
So that it becomes personal to you. Listen to my language. So that it becomes transformative for you. God already knows.
[24:08] It's fixed in the mind of the Lord. As a reality. You got marked out. You're chosen. But now let's bring you in on the deal. Let's make it personal.

Let's change you. And that's what he does. Here's how we could say it, friends. God marked you out for salvation. He sent Jesus to give himself to save you.
Listen now. And by the Holy Spirit, God brings you to saving faith. It's a matter of the Trinity. This is one of the reasons that Grace Church holds so fastly to the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.
We must have a biblical understanding of the Trinity to understand biblical salvation. Because all of the members of the Trinity are involved in saving God's people.
Hallelujah. And why wouldn't that be the case? If we believe that God is one. Three persons expressed in one. Then why wouldn't we believe that all of the members of the Trinity are part of that reality?
[25:13] Right? So this is not a small thing to believe. This is a big deal. It's a hill to die on. God marked us out. Jesus Christ came to give himself to save you.

This is purposeful. This is efficacious. It's effective. It brings about the purpose that God designed in marking you out.
It brings it to fulfillment. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And then the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. And boy, does that become personal. When the God of the universe decides to come and take up residence in your physical body.
Well, that ought to show. Don't you think? Yeah. Amen. Be encouraged, church. This is the work of a mighty God. A mighty God.
So Peter, now, he begins to use some Old Testament references to Israel to point us to an important conclusion.
[26:16] And I want to help you see this as he makes his point. All right. Here's what we want to ask. What motivated God to choose, to elect, to mark out Israel as his people?

Because that's the kind of comparison that's being made here. And we need to be really careful with it. So I want to slow down and be careful with you. Let's go to Deuteronomy 7.
And let's let the word of God tell us why it is that God marked out Israel to be his people.
What motivated the Lord to do that? Deuteronomy 7, beginning in verse 6. This is Moses giving some warnings to the people of Israel about their relationship with the Lord.
So he comes to verse 6 and says, You now are a holy people to the Lord your God. Now, see, you understand there was a time in the life of these people where that wasn't the case.
[27:26] So God has chosen them out. He has made promises to their forefathers to continue to bless them in very specific ways and to fulfill those blessings as part of him being faithful to his promises.

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Not all of these promises to Israel have yet been fulfilled. They're still in the process. So we have an understanding that at some point in the future, Israel will receive the blessings of God in greater fulfillment.
That's still coming. Now, it's important for you to note that. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has done what?
Chosen you. Chosen you. He's chosen you to be a people for his own possession. Does that sound familiar? And he's done this out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.
Now, what that should make Israel do is just humble them. And not make them all stiff-necked and proud. Notice then what God says or what he says through Moses in verse 7.
[28:38] The Lord did not set his love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples. For you were the fewest of all the peoples.

But because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which he swore to your forefathers. You remember that?
But the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.
And then he goes on to say, know therefore that the Lord your God, he is God. The faithful God who keeps his covenant and his loving kindness to a thousandth generation with those who love him and keep his commandments.
Isn't that great? That's why. Look at Deuteronomy chapter 9. Up in verse 4. He says, So this is the promise that God's going to drive all of these pagan peoples out of the land of Israel to give Israel as an inheritance to the people.
[29:55] The land of Israel to the people of Israel who will become that. All right. And he says, look, do not say in your heart when the Lord your God has driven them out before you because of my righteousness, the Lord has brought me in to possess this land.

But it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them before you.
Now, let me ask you in that verse, who is being given the credit and the glory for dispossessing these people from the land and then handing it over to the people of Israel?
Who? God. It's not the might of the nation. It's the might of almighty God. Look at verse 5. It is not for your righteousness.
Or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land. See that? But it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God is driving them out before you.
In order to confirm, here it is again, the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Japheth. So he's saying, I am standing good on my promise.
[31:07] I'm fulfilling it. I am moving forward in what I've initiated to complete what I promised.
Know then, in verse 6, it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.

And then he says, remember, do not forget how you provoke the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord.
Now, what makes that so incredible is that God continued to love them and bless them. And God has even said, I will bring you back together as a people and completely fulfill everything that I promised to your forefathers.
Isn't that amazing? All right, now let's ask this question, since we've settled that about Israel. What motivated God to choose to elect to mark out us as his people?
Well, in order to see that, we go back to Ephesians again. Because here's where we pick up the good news. The good news that Paul wants to share with us, based on the bad news that we read earlier from Ephesians 2.
[32:27] If you look at chapter 1, verse 4, my Bible begins this way. Just as God chose us in him before the foundation of the world.

That's where I get this from. That we would be what? Choose us for what? That we would be holy and blameless before him. Notice next.
In love, God predestined us to become adopted as sons through Jesus Christ to himself.
Now, notice why? According to the kind intention of his will. What was his motive? According to the kind intention of God's will. To the praise of the glory of his grace.

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Which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved. That is the Lord Jesus. Verse 7. In him, we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses.
[33:31] Notice at the end of verse 7. According to the riches of his grace. Why is it that God moved and was motivated to mark us out for salvation and save us?

He was motivated by the love of his heart. By the kind intention of his will. There is no greater answer, deeper answer, fuller answer as to why God saved you than this.
Because he loved you. He marked you out because he loved you. Because he loved you. According to the kind intention of his will, he saved you. That's it. He didn't see you as greater or better or this or that or the other.
You're just like me and just like everybody else. You're a great sinner in need of great grace from a great savior. And God would give you that in Christ Jesus. All of that.
In love. In love. He predestined you. He marked you out. In love and according to the kind intention of his will. God fulfilled what he marked out and promised in the counsel of the Godhead.
[34:43] Before he laid the foundations of the earth. Then if you look over at chapter 5 of Ephesians. I just couldn't resist this. Chapter 5.

Paul wants to tell us now as a result of what God has put in. You need to work this out. And so notice what he says in verse 1. Therefore, be imitators of God as what kind of kids?
That's it. That's it. That's who you are. Folks, that's who you are. You are the beloved. You are the beloved of God.
The cherished of God. The nurtured of God. And so what does he say? Be imitators of God as beloved children. And walk in love.
Just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for you. An offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Why did Christ sacrifice himself for you?
[35:51] Because he loved you. That is the love of God's heart. And that is the love that the New Testament calls us to as we love one another.

Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Who did what? God humbled himself. Leaving heaven.
Taking on the form of a slave among men. Making himself the servant of all. Even to the point of death. Even death on a cross.
You're not going to get any higher love and sacrifice than that. It's not going to happen. The greatest power in the universe is the love of God.
It's greater than our sin. This is the power of almighty God and the motivation of God in saving his people.
[36:50] So you church. You are a God chosen. God loved people. And in this you are unique from all other people in the world.

In fact, God's electing grace is the foundation of your spiritual transformation into a new humanity. Unlike any other group of people on planet earth. Hear how I say it. We are now citizens of heaven. Which makes us strangers on the earth.
Because as Christians, we now represent this new humanity that God has created. A people unto God.
Being chosen and changed by God sets you apart to God. That's what it means for you to be holy. You have been set apart to God.
[37:57] To be his possession forever. Hey, you are God's forever people. Wow.

The nature then and the function. The nature, who we are, and the function, how we live, of our lives are expressed as, notice the text, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession.
It's taking me this long just to get there. It's so rich and wonderful. Look with me, if you will, to see some of the foundation that Peter's drawing on here in Exodus 19.
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. Exodus 19. Let me show you what Peter's drawing on. 1 through 6. In the third month, after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.
[39:12] When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness. And there Israel camped in front of the mountain, Sinai.

Moses went up to God. That is, he went up on the mountain. And the Lord called to Moses from the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel.

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What does he tell them? You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians. How I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.
Boy, underline that in your Bibles, folks. And brought you to myself. 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.
[40:21] So Moses came and called the elders of the people, set them before before them these words, which the Lord had commanded him. Notice the people's response in verse eight. The people answered together and said, All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.

And Moses brought back those words of the people to the Lord. And so did they do it? No, they didn't. No, they didn't.
Wow. Well, look at verses 18 now. Verse 18 down through 25. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire.
And its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace and the whole mountain quaked violently. Can you get that picture in your mind? This is unreal stuff. If you're a human being and you're witnessing all of this, I don't even know how you find strength to stand.
It would have made, I'm just sure it would have made this old boy's knees crumble. This would have been terrifying. Just terrifying. Verse 19.
[41:32] When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. The Lord came down on Mount Sinai to the top of the mountain.

And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up. Now notice. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the Lord to gaze, and many of them die, perish.
Also, let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves or else the Lord will break out against them.
Moses said to the Lord, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you warned us, saying, Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it. That's true. The Lord said if anyone touched foot on that mountain, they'd die instantaneously.
Then the Lord, in verse 24, Then the Lord, in verse 24, said to him, Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you, but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, or he will break forth upon them.
[42:52] So Moses went down to the people, and he told them. So what's happening? God is making a covenant with the Hebrew people, following on his covenant promise to bless and to love Abraham's descendants.

Now look, the people only have access to God through the mediator priest, Moses, right? Tell Moses, Look, what's repeated in the text over and over?
Come up, go down. Come up, go down. And God said, Right? There's a reason for that. So Moses gets to come up and go down, and come up and go down. What do the people get to do?
Stay down, lest you die. So Moses is the mediator between the people and Almighty God. This is what they're pointing out.
And in verse 22, I want you to take note, Even the priests of the people must consecrate themselves, or they will die when they draw near to God. Now if you go back to 1 Peter, look at chapter 2 with me, and notice what we've covered before in verse 4 and 5.
[44:12] And coming to him. Does that help? And coming to him as to a living stone, which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God.

That choice is our word, eclectone. You also, this is just amazing, as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
This is what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us, secured for us, and lavished on us as his gifts of grace.
We now draw near to this holy God. This fire and smoke and wrath and death.
In love, in mercy, in tenderness, in grace, in gentleness, in a welcoming spirit. Come, draw near to me, taste and see that I am good.

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[45:32] And who is our mediator once for all in a sacrifice of praise and glory to the Father? Who is he? Jesus Christ.

Amen. And so we have entrance and access, a welcoming, pardoned, wonderful invitation to come into the Holy of Holies through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who tore the veil in two, giving us this access forevermore.
What would happen to the priests on the Day of Atonement if they went into the Holy of Holies to worship before the Lord and make atonement for the people on the mercy seat?
What would happen to the priests if they hadn't consecrated themselves correctly and done the things of God? What would happen? Right. So what did they do? She says they had a bell.
What was the bell about? Right. So they tied a little deal around this and they drug him out because God killed him.
[46:48] What does it say in the scriptures for the elders? You will receive a double portion of accountability before the Lord, right? I'm just glad we're not in the Old Testament as priests.

I just don't know that we've been signing up for that bad boy, right? This is hard enough as it is. We've been telling, tying bells around our ankles. This is the God whom we serve.
We come to God because he first came to us in the Lord Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us. So through faith in Jesus, he is our only mediator between us and God.
Folks, look, here's the point. Peter is just relishing in this. We are like no other group of people on planet Earth because we are defined by our new status as God's own possession.
It wasn't because there was anything wonderful and great about us. It was because of God's love and kindness that he chose us in the beloved. And so as a result, we are encouraged by God himself to come near to this wonderful, holy, righteous God in the perfect righteousness of Jesus.
[48:06] Folks, here's what he says. We serve as royal priests because we are commissioned to serve in a royal house where Christ lives and reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

And we are his personal servants. Royal priests in a royal house. Our entire lives are defined by serving the king of kings.
That's who we are. That's what we're commissioned to be. Isn't it incredible? Do you remember in the tabernacle in the desert, wanderings, all these rules and regulations about staying away and not entering in to the boundaries of the tabernacle and then only priests could go into a certain place and then nobody was allowed to go any further than that.
I mean, to go from that to then Solomon building the temple of the Lord in all the years and years and years because David said, who are we as a people to have our God dwelling in a tent?
Let's build him a magnificent temple to dwell in. And that became, God allowed that and blessed that because that became the symbol of God's presence among his people. What is the symbol of God's presence among his people now?
[49:29] You're the temple. You're the spiritual house. It's sitting here in front of me. I'm looking at it. And God lives in you. You are a living stone, every one of you.

Alonzo, you're a stone living and breathing before the Lord, one of many living stones all around you, being built up into a spiritual house as royal priests who've been commissioned and called out to serve the King of Kings for all eternity, not just here.
You're just practicing right now. that God will make you perfect one day so that everything that you bring before him for all eternity will be perfect in Christ. This is your commission.
My friends, we constitute a holy nation. That's what he says. A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation because God made us holy in Jesus Christ.
He made us a set apart to serve God nation. God made us righteous. God imputed Jesus' righteousness to us forever.
[50:42] Imputed means credited to. And so I've said to you, we are God's forever people. We are his forever eternal possession.

The Greek word here for possession means to purchase. It actually means to purchase. So to possess us, God purchased or redeemed us.
How did he do that? Well, Peter's already covered that. He's just, he's just fleshing it out now with these labels. First Peter chapter one, look at verse 18. The question on the table is this, how in the world did God purchase or redeem us away from sin and death to possess us as his people?
In verse 18 of chapter one, knowing that you were not redeemed, purchased away with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers.

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No, but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless. That is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. That's how God did it.
[51:53] So Peter sets the tone in verse nine for helping us to make this wonderful, beautiful, tremendous contrast of what we once were with now what we are because of what he's done for us in Christ.

And then so I hasten to add for a point number two, your calling as God's own possession. your calling, but you are a chosen race.
You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness, called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
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. Folks, this helps us answer the question to what purpose did God choose or elect us so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.
You have heavenly purpose as God's royal priest representing his royal heavenly house here on planet Earth. This is all the stuff you get and have before you ever even get to heaven.
[53:22] You have heavenly purpose. Peter is most likely referencing now Isaiah 43, 21.

In Isaiah 43, 21, he is referring to Israel as God's people. He says this, the people whom I formed for myself will declare my praise.
Once again, the people whom I formed for myself will declare my praise. We already established earlier Israel failed to do this, didn't they? They failed to do this on the whole.
What happened when Messiah showed up in Israel? They murdered him. They rejected him and they murdered him and put him on a cross to torture him to death.
So God raised up a spiritual house called the church. similar but distinct from Israel and certainly not to replace Israel.
[54:29] I don't want to give you the impression from this text that Peter is saying that the church is now the new Israel. We're not. The church in Israel are separate entities receiving separate promises from God so that Israel's promises will be fulfilled in the future.

That's very important. We are not the new Israel. We are the church distinct from Israel similar to Israel in that we're chosen in him and commission in him to proclaim the goodness and power of almighty God.
I want to show you this. Proclaim means to tell forth to declare or to publish. It means to make public. And then the word in my Bible is excellencies.
I don't know what it is in yours. Excellencies. It can be rendered like praises but the point is this. It refers to God's goodness and salvation. That's what we're proclaiming.
That's what we're making public. So he says I've done all of this for you as a chosen people a royal priesthood a holy nation people for my own possession that you might go out and proclaim make public this wonderful good news that I am a saving merciful gentle forgiving God in Christ in Christ Jesus.
[55:57] That's what they're called to. And folks we are privileged to live the life that he purchased and gave to us at the high cost of his son.

So we could say it this way our greatest honor is to honor him through our responses to his goodness. Now do you have that in your heart? That every day you get to get up and breathe God's air in God's universe and as you do that you get to respond to God's outpouring of goodness on your life.
What goodness? Well the goodness that he chose you. That he made you a royal priest. That he called you into a holy nation and that you belong to him forever. That's as far as we need to go I think.
We could add a lot more to that but I think that's enough. Our greatest honor is to honor God through our responses to his goodness on our lives.
Now what does that look like? Well it looks like us living out and proclaiming to our world that God alone has and uses his power to rescue sinners from darkness and transfer them into the light of his son.
[57:18] In other words it's this mercy that he speaks about here. 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.

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God has withheld from you what you deserve and he has lavished on you what you don't deserve. He has given you mercy, shown you mercy and given you grace.
I'm withholding what you deserve in mercy and I'm lavishing on you what you don't deserve in grace. You get both ends of the deal.
Jesus paid with his life to purchase that reality for us. Folks your highest calling your highest purpose and privilege in life the very thing God marked you out for and saved you too is to go and tell of his goodness and grace.
This is our spiritual service of worship that we offer to God from Romans 12 1 and 2. It's not the only thing that we do in worship with our bodies and our minds and our words but we have been saved and made a royal priesthood to shine as lights in a dark world.
[58:33] Do you hear what that's about? That is about you and I testifying that God is a saving God to other people who like we used to be are lost in sin.

They are the disbelieving disobedient who are headed to doom like we were. and now we are the lights pointing the way out of that doom and gloom.
That's who we are. That's the church. That's the church and by God's grace we don't have to fail like Israel failed.
We can be a faithful people. You and I can't save anyone much less the world but we can testify as lights where we live and in our sphere of influence and folks listen we are at a place and time in history where oh my goodness do we need people who are not afraid to get up every day and live for Christ.
To live. To live. And not be terrified and hide away from the world because of whatever. Fill in the blank.
[59:47] And we have really seen that. Verse 10 it's so humbling. This mercy. So humbling. Peter reminds us in his original readers why we should be humbled and awed by God's choice of us.

We're not any better than anybody else that he saved. I'll just show you a couple of references here to encourage you before I move on and close with this third point. Would you go to Romans 11 with me?
There's no way I could preach this without going to Romans 11 so I got to get this. This is probably more for me than you. 11 30 and 31.
For just as you once were. I. Oh for just as he's writing the Roman Christians here just as you once were disobedient to God but now have been shown mercy.
Because of their disobedience. That's Israel. so these also now have been disobedient that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.
[60:55] For God has shut up all in disobedience so that he may show mercy to all. Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are these judgments and unfathomable his ways.

For who has known the mind of the Lord or who became his counselor or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again. For from him and through him and to him are all things to him be glory forever.
Amen. And then notice he moves right into what I just referenced for you in Romans 12 1 and 2 about your worship. Therefore I urge you brothers sisters by the mercies of God that's verse 10 in 1 Peter 2 to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship.
Do not then be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may prove notice this is why we're here you may prove what the will of God is that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
Is that helping you bring this into context? this is what we're commissioned to be and to do as God's people. Let me give you one more here Titus 3 Titus chapter 3 where Paul is writing to this young man ministering as a pastor on the Isle of Crete and Paul wants to rehearse this for him beginning in Titus 3 3 for we also and here's what I'm trying to put forward to you for we also once were you see that past tense we also once were foolish ourselves here it is again disobedient deceived enslaved to various lusts and pleasures spending our life in malice and envy hateful hating one another but alright what do we do when we see a but but we take careful note here's the contrast when the kindness of God our Savior are we back in
[63:07] Ephesians now chapter 1 by the kind intention of his will see but when the kindness of God our Savior and his there it is again love for mankind appeared he saved us not on the basis of

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deeds which we have done in righteousness but according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration and the renewing by the Holy Spirit whom he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that being justified by his grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life isn't that wonderful that's the church that's the church well let me hasten to add this one your conduct then is God's own possession why not what are we supposed to do just sit and get fat spiritually because we've got all this wonderful stuff that God's pouring into us no spiritual fatness oxymoron we are lean in the Lord ready to do his will your conduct as God's possession beloved I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul keep your behavior excellent among the

Gentiles beloved I urge you Peter makes this urgent pastoral plea it's pressing it's serious it's an expression of his heart's loving concern for his readers he wants to strongly encourage them so there is this desperate desire for them to heed his warning abstain from fleshly lusts that sounds like something a preacher would say abstain is to be distant from it's to hold oneself away from or to avoid you and I might say it this way steer completely clear of fleshly lusts refer to all the attitudes and the activities which characterized our former lives of living in spiritual darkness look over at first Peter chapter 1 verses 14 and 15 as obedient children do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance but like the holy one who is called you be holy yourselves also in all your behavior you see how he's returning to these themes very concerned be holy in all your behavior look at chapter 2 verse 1 therefore because you have now this enduring word and this wonderful good news gospel that has been preached to you and transformed your life therefore putting aside all malice deceit hypocrisy envy and slander long for the pure milk of the word this is our calling this is where
God has called us to live folks because you are heavenly citizens and you are no longer citizens of this earthly society and because your former life of living for yourself wages war against your new spiritual nature as God's people he says avoid at all costs everything that doesn't help you reflect who you really are and belong to that's a mouthful but that's what he says in fact look at verse 12 keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles my friends this is Peter's summary or his theme for the remainder of his letter everything he will go on to say will give added weight and direction to his concern that Christians live as heavenly citizens among earthly unbelievers why what's the purpose so that verse 12 in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers they may because of your good deeds as they observe them glorify
God in the day of salvation the purpose is so that as these disbelieving disobedient people observe your good deeds that is your godly behavior you're set apart to God life proclaiming and praising and honoring the Lord they will come to faith themselves and become living believing obedient people who bring honor and glory and praise to almighty God so he says keep your behavior excellent that's a command it's to be obeyed in the world of sinful mankind folks look we are to mix it up with unbelievers and maintain our godly focus of worshiping God through a heart of worship as heavenly citizens we can be heavenly citizens in an unheavenly place
God left us here I want to say this to you we get to do this we don't have to it is our duty but we get to do it as royal priests as a holy nation a chosen people a people for God's own possession we get to do this it's a matter of course for us because it's who we are we are lights don't put the light under a bushel you have not been called to build a fence around everything you own and then go in there and tell everybody else step across this line and you get your head blown off we get to do this we also need to know this now take this to heart we will be slandered people remember Peter realizes that some of these people are going to be martyred folks you will be slandered it's just can you just not accept that the world is not going to love you for loving
[69:40] Jesus it's just not the world hates Christ they're blind and deceived they belong to the devil the only power that can rescue them is the power of the love of God as it's seen in your life but what we hope to see is that God will use those good deeds in our lifestyle over time to bring some of these slanderers to himself isn't that what we want now one of the hardest and harshest realities about living as heavenly citizens is how often and how intensely unheavenly citizens slander us they do and they break our hearts slander is our word from chapter 2 verse 1 do you remember when I brought this up to you remember that they're going to slander us they're going to gnash their teeth at us they're going to bite and kick and poke and shoot they're going to do all kinds of stuff

God is pleased and glorified when we persevere in humility and godliness with the prayerful hope that God will use us to bring some of these people from darkness to light simply by the humble way

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that we live with Christ living in us so let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven Matthew 5 16 that's what we want will you pray with me folks father what a sobering call that you've made to us this morning as your people that we would live out the condition that you have put us in in Christ that we are your people a people of your own possession and so God help us in our sober mindedness to have joy and to rejoice with joy everlasting that we get to get up every morning and see the evidences of how you will work out your truth in our lives help us to have an eager anticipation for how we will be put into situations far above our station far above our ability to see you prove yourself faithful through our lives so that the only explanation for what's happening in our lives is you and so I pray help your people to live in weakness help them to embrace weakness and look to you who is strong and ever more faithful and help us God to give you all the glory and be quick to tell people what you see in me is a who and his name is Jesus and he is the difference in my life help us to live and preach and minister Jesus to a lost and dying world to answer the call that you have given us as your people to be lights in a dark dark place help us to keep our behavior excellent excellent help us run to your throne of grace when we send to become more and more sensitive and confess in the moment and not let any time lag that we would receive that forgiveness from you restore that fellowship with you and the fear of the
Lord and move forward in grace and in confidence that you will use us in this way of showing Jesus to a needy world we thank you for grace church and we thank you for all the ways that we have to rejoice in the goodness of your provision every single day make us strong in the Lord and in his might in Jesus name we pray amen ■ toilets little why soWorld by less other years no ■ wün■■ about seeing stories s tick ~~ ~~ ~~ ~~~ I ~~~

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