**Chosen and Highly Favored**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Peter 2:9-17**

**Wednesday Evening**

**June 2, 2021**

**1 Peter 2:9-17**

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,

14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

**9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

Saints, believers are a chosen people, a distinct group from the rest of the world, unified by the Holy Spirit. Just as the nation of Israel had been God’s chosen people, Christians have become God’s people, not by physical birth into a certain race but by spiritual rebirth into God’s family through Jesus Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29**

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Believers also are a kingdom of priests, God’s holy nation (Exodus 19:6). Being part of a “priesthood” is a high honor for believers. Christians speak of “the priesthood of all believers.”

**Exodus 19:5-6**

5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Saints, in Old Testament times, people did not approach God directly. Instead, a priest would act as an intermediary between God and sinful human beings.

With Christ’s victory on the cross, that pattern changed. Now believers can come directly into God’s presence without fear (Hebrews 4:16). Also, they have been given the responsibility of bringing others to him (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

**Hebrews 4:15-16**

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**2 Corinthians 5:18-21**

18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Saints, united with Christ as members of his body, believers join in his priestly work of reconciling God and people. “Holy nation” refers to Christians as a people who are distinct from all the others because of their devotion to God.

Believers are God’s very own possession. Similar language is found in Malachi 3:17

**Malachi 3:17-18**

17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." 18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.

Saints, God’s people are those who are faithful to him; thus this refers to Christians. God’s special people are to show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Christians were redeemed with a special purpose—to glorify and praise the one who has called them out of the darkness of sin and of their hostile surroundings into the light of eternal life.

**10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.**

Saints, this verse is an adaptation of Hosea 1:9-10 and 2:23. Hosea, God’s prophet, was describing God’s rejection of Israel, followed by future restoration.

**Hosea 2:19-23**

19 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy; 20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the LORD. 21 "It shall come to pass in that day That I will answer," says the LORD; "I will answer the heavens, And they shall answer the earth.

22 The earth shall answer With grain, With new wine, And with oil; They shall answer Jezreel. 23 Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!' "

Saints, Paul used these same verses from Hosea and applied them to the Gentile believers (Romans 9:25-26). Peter applied these verses to the New Testament church as a whole.

**Romans 9:25-26**

25 As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

Saints, just as Israel had been, at one time, rejected by God without any hope of forgiveness for their sins, so Christians had been, at one time, rejected by God without any hope of mercy.

But believers are now the people of God because they have been chosen by him and have received his mercy. “Mercy” means God’s compassionate treatment of us even though we deserve the full measure of his justice.

God had no obligation to gather a people together to whom he would show mercy; not one of us deserves his slightest concern. God drawing a people unto himself and lavishing mercy on them gives overwhelming evidence of his great love.

This mercy ought to affect the way every believer lives, as Peter will point out in the following verses.

**11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,**

Saints, Peter warned the believers to remember their status as foreigners and aliens in the world. These words are also used together in Genesis 23:4 and Psalms39:12.

**Psalm 39:12**

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, And give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears; For I am a stranger with You, A sojourner, as all my fathers were.

Saints, the world is not the Christian’s true home; our real home is with Christ. We are passing through this world on the way to our home in heaven’s glory; therefore, we ought to remain as untouched as possible by this world’s rampant sin, keeping away from evil desires.

Because we will not escape our sinful surroundings until Christ returns, and because we still have a sinful nature that wants us to act on its desires, we will not be able to remain completely free of sin and its effects. But we can keep away by controlling the desires right from the start.

Why must believers keep away from sinful desires? Because those desires fight against our very souls. Once we become believers, a battle has begun, for Satan is the enemy of Christ and his followers.

**12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

Saints, the believers were to have their inner selves under control so that their outer lives would be honoring to God. Believers are called to honor God by living honorably and morally upright in and in spite of an unholy world so that unbelieving neighbors will glorify God.

Peter’s advice sounds like Jesus’ advice recorded in:

**Matthew 5:16**

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”

Saints, if believers’ actions are honorable, even hostile people might end up praising God. Peter’s readers were scattered among unbelieving Gentiles who were inclined to believe and spread vicious lies about Christians, accusing them of wrongdoing, blaming them without cause.

Saints, Attractive, gracious, and upright behavior on the part of Christians could show these rumors to be false and could even win some of the unsaved critics to the Lord’s side. Peter urged the believers not to be surprised when persecution and false accusations arose, and to live above reproach so that the accusations would have to be dropped.

**13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.**

Saints, Peter commanded believers to accept all authority, meaning to submit.

God is honored when we accept and respect those in authority over us. We do this for the Lord’s sake, so that he is glorified by our orderly submission.

In telling his readers to accept the authority of the king, Peter was speaking of Emperor Nero, a notoriously cruel tyrant who ruled from A.D. 54–68. The emperor was the supreme ruler over all Roman provinces—including the areas to which Peter addressed this letter.

The emperor Nero was considered the supreme authority by his subjects, even worshiped by them. The Christians should never worship the emperor, but they should obey his laws because he was an authority put in place by God (Romans 13:1-2).

**Romans 13:1-2**

1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

**15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—**

Saints, Peter exhorted the believers to live good lives so that those who make foolish accusations against the believers would be silenced. The word silence is more literally “to muzzle”—in other words, to shut them up.. These unbelievers should finally have to admit that they could hold nothing against Christians except their faith.

**16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.**

Saints, here Peter was outlining a paradox of the Christian life. Christians are free yet they are slaves. They can live as free people but must use their freedom to glorify God. We glorify God when we serve him faithfully.

Believers are not free to do whatever they want or to use their freedom as an excuse to do evil. We cannot use freedom and forgiveness as a cloaking device for self-indulgence, adultery, or poor spending habits. Christ is our leader, and serving him provides our limits.

**17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.**

Saints, these four short sentences summarize how believers can live peacefully in the world. First, show respect for everyone. The word “respect” means to honor, value, or esteem. Believers should be especially conscious that God made all people in his image, whether or not they believe in Christ.

While believers are to “respect” everyone, they have an extra obligation to their Christian brothers and sisters. They are called to love them. The word for “love” is agapao, referring to volitional, self-sacrificial love. The believers of Peter’s day needed to stand together as a unified force against coming persecution. They needed to maintain the bond of love.

To fear God means to show deep respect, reverence, and awe. While believers are to respect and love God as well, they are also to fear him. Proper fear leads to obedience.

They should show respect for the king, but they should “fear” God. When we honor the king, we should give the government its rights, what it owns, what it controls; but we may not give to the government those rights that belong to God alone.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**