

Who Are You?

I Peter 2:9-10

INTRODUCTION:

As humans we have a need to know **who we are** and **why we are here**. Some people try to get those answers from their careers. They define themselves for what they do and how well they do it. Others seek to do it through their families. They may define themselves based upon who they are married to or related to. Or maybe it is the appearance of being successful or popularity that one stakes his identity.

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, 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; ¹⁰ 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.

Prayer

As Christians, who we are and why we are here for should not be defined by worldly things. "**Who we are**" should be defined in who we are in Christ. As we look at verse 9 this morning, Peter tells us who we are in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION:

Remember putting your face above a headless frame painted to represent a muscle man, a clown, a hillbilly, or even a mule with a hat? Many of us have had our pictures taken this way, and the photos are humorous because the head doesn't fit the body. If we could picture Christ as the head of each of us today, would the world laugh at the misfit? Or would they stand in awe of a human body so closely related to a divine head?

What a comfort and encouragement it is for us to be aware of who we are as born again believers in Jesus Christ. Knowing and reflecting upon these blessings motivates us in our daily walk and service to God.

The description of the Church depicted here draws upon the parallels of the Old Testament description of Israel. God has established the Church to be what Israel should have been; people who praise His name. The Church is to be a light to the world and proclaim the Gospel to everyone who will hear.

This morning I would like to look at three aspects of our Christian Life.

1. The Christian's Identity.
2. The Christian's Mission.
3. The Christian's Motivation.

BODY:

I. The Christian's Identity

The world may reject Jesus but we who have received Jesus have been changed by Him.

1 Peter 2:9a (NASB)

⁹ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION,

"But you" marks the contrast between the disobedient unbelievers of verse 8 and the people of God in verse 9. Peter describes our identity as believers in Christ. The "you" in the Greek is plural, stating that Peter is addressing all of those who have a personal relationship with Jesus. It is the same "you" that is used in verse 7 "for you who believe" that Jesus is precious. Let's look at how he describes believers who have founded their life on the eternal rock of Christ Jesus.

A. "You are a Chosen Race".

Those believers who are being united stone by stone as the temple of God are a chosen race, a chosen people. Because Jesus has been chosen by God (v 4,6) we who are in Him are also designated God's chosen people. God did not choose us because we were worthy, but because He chose as His sheep through Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-5 (NASB)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

God's choice has secured those who are in Christ before the foundation of the world. Our human minds cannot even start to understand the mind of God. God desires that all men would be saved, but He knows that some will reject Him. God gave us freewill to accept His Son or reject Him, yet He knew His sheep from the beginning of time.

John 10:24-28 (NASB)

²⁴ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

God knows His sheep and His sheep hear His voice and follow Him! We are a CHOSEN RACE! We should thank God every day that He chose us and allowed us to hear His voice.

B. "You are a Royal Priesthood".

These two words together express the dignity, Excellency, and responsibility that God has given all of us as ministers of His royal Kingdom. We are royal because we have been born again into the family of God. We are of royal lineage with God as our Father.

In Old Testament times, people did not approach God directly. A priest acted as intermediary to reconcile sinful man to God through annual sacrifices.

With Christ's victory on the cross, that pattern changed.

Luke 23:44-45 (NASB)

⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

The temple veil was torn in two to represent the fact that we now have direct access to God. The time of annual sacrifices to push our sins forward for another year is no longer necessary. Christ died on the cross as a perfect, permanent sacrifice for our sins.

Now we can come directly into God's presence without fear.

Hebrews 4:16 (NASB)

¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

C. "You are a Holy Nation".

A nation consists of citizens who reside in a given area, obey rules and regulations, and strive for the well-being of their nation.

Citizens of this Holy Nation have common characteristics because they have been born again through Jesus Christ. Holy means we are dedicated to God and have been "set apart" from the world.

We have been **set apart** to belong exclusively to God.

1 John 2:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Our citizenship is in heaven, so we obey God's commands and seek to please Him.

D. "You are a People Belonging to God".

We are God's own people. We have been purchased by God with the blood of His own Son.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NASB)

¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

We, who have been called out from the darkness of this world, are His prized possession. We belong to God for we have been bought with a price, the very blood of Jesus. Redemption by the life of Jesus is a purchase price beyond our ability to calculate. You have amazing worth to God. No higher price could have been paid, than the price paid at the Cross.

This is our identity as a Christian.

- A Chosen Race
- A Royal Priesthood
- A Holy Nation
- A Possession of God

Next Peter wants us to know why God has given us this identity.

II. The Christian's Mission.

The purpose of our blessings is:

1 Peter 2:9b (NASB)

...so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

The blessings of God are not simply for our own enjoyment. All of these privileges carry with them a divine responsibility. Everyone who has been selected by God has been bought by Christ's blood. We are no longer our own. If we are His sheep, we will hear His voice, and obey His will.

Jesus left the great commission with the disciples before He ascended to heaven. Listen to what He said.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB)

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Jesus told his disciples to preach the Gospel to everyone and tells **them** to baptize the believers. Too many times we stop with the converts, but Christ did not stop there. He also told them to teach them to obey the commandments that Christ had taught them.

Paul described how he lived up to Christ's great commission.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NASB)

⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷ So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Some of us will be used by God to plant the seed for new Christians, some will be used to water the seed or encourage them in their Christian growth to maturity.

We must tell and live the Gospel. Our lives must backup what we say. People should look at us and think that there must be something to what you say because they can see something different in you.

III. The Christian's Motivation.

Verse 10 begins by contrasting the believer's present with their past.

1 Peter 2:9b-10 (NASB)

...so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ 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.

The Bible depicts our world as a place of darkness controlled by "the rulers of the darkness of this age" or Satan. In the midst of this spiritual darkness Christians shine out in sharp contrast.

We are still living in the same environment as we were before we accepted Christ. The change did not occur in the **environment around us**, the change was **inside** us.

In a sense we are light keepers to the world. So many people are lost, fumbling around in the darkness. Our job is to shine the light of Christ so that they can find salvation in Jesus Christ.

We are presently one people, the people of God. We are living in enemy territory, and our enemy is constantly watching us, looking for opportunities to move in and take over. As citizens of heaven, we must be united. We must present to the world a united demonstration of what the grace and mercy of God can do.

When Peter says "**you once were not a people**", he means not useful to God. Previously we were serving a cause and not Jesus Christ. Now it is no longer our agenda, but we follow the Spirit and Word of Jesus Christ. We were just individuals roaming around on earth following our own objectives and of no value to God. Now, we have been chosen by God to be His people. **We are the people of God!**

Verse 10 concludes by describing our forgiveness and transformation.

Were it not for God's mercy we would all be lost and on the way to eternal judgment. Mercy means that we are receiving blessings that we do not deserve.

Peter contrasts the past with the present. "Now you have received mercy" instead of deserved judgment. We have received forgiveness and remission [payment for] of sin and we can rejoice and walk in the love and the grace of God.

God is still building His church. He wants us to plant the seed and water that growth so He can give the increase. My challenge to all of you here this morning is to continue to labor for Christ by reaching out to others. **God promises that our labor will be rewarded!**

CONCLUSION:

Where do you find your identity? If someone would come to you and ask "Who are you?". What would be your immediate response? Would it be "I am someone redeemed by Jesus Christ. I am His child." Or do you identify yourself by something else like your occupation or your family heritage?

People often base their self-image or on their accomplishments. But our relationship with Christ is far more important than our jobs, successes, wealth, or knowledge. We have been chosen by God as His very own, and we have been called to represent Him to others. Remember that your value comes from being one of God's children, not from what you can achieve. You have worth because of who you are to God and your identity in Christ, not because of what you do.

Look us turn to identify ourselves for who we are in Christ Jesus. This is what really matters!

Are you fulfilling the mission that Christ has given you? Do you talk the talk AND walk the walk so that other people can see Christ in you?

If Christ's face was placed in a headless frame of your body, would people believe that His face belongs to your body? Will they see Christ in you?

Does your mind dwell on how God loved us despite our sin and offered His Son on the cross for our sins that we might be Sons and Daughters in His family. Does that **motivate** you in your walk with the Lord?

Are YOU the YOU Peter refers to in this passage of scripture?

This morning we extend an **INVITATION**, it is an invitation for those of you who are not a child of God to become a part of His family. God is calling you to come out of the darkness. If you hear His call, if you are experiencing His gentle tug, come forward this morning and allow Him to lead you into His marvelous light.

He is Lord.

He is Lord. He is Lord.
He has risen from the grave and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord.