

1 Peter Chapter 2C

Last year as we were studying through the Book of Hebrews, we spent some time considering the “Already / Not Yet” reality of the Kingdom of God.

We learned that there is a sense in which God’s kingdom is already in force even though we don’t yet experience IT in all of its fullness. The author of Heb. alludes to this when he writes: Heb 2:8–9 says, “**At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death**”.

- In this passage, we have a “now” (We see Jesus crowned with glory)
- We also have a “not yet” (we recognize that in God’s sovereignty He has not yet brought everything in subjection to Christ).

In 1 John 3:2, we read, “**Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.**”

- Again, we have a “now” (By the grace of God through faith in Christ right now we who believe are the children of God)
- And we also have a “not yet” (We can’t begin to comprehend what we will be in the future). “**What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.**” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Add to these things the fact that Rom. 8:30 says we are “glorified” and Eph. 2:6 says we are seated with Christ “**in the heavenly realms,**”

- I don’t know about you, but most days, I don’t feel very glorified, and my surroundings certainly seem much more earthly than “heavenly.”
- Friends, our present spiritual reality does not yet match up with the future, physical reality that God has promised; But, one day, one glorious day by the grace of God, the two will be in perfect sync.
- To which I say, “*Come quickly Lord Jesus.*”

Why did I remind you of the Already / Not Yet realities of the Kingdom today?

Last week, in our study of 1 Peter we began to wrestle with our identity in Christ. As believers we are NO LONGER what we once were, (*New Creatures in Christ*)

- BUT we are not yet what we will one day be. Right? Paul said:
- Php 3:12 *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.*
- This morning we are going to take a deeper look at verses 9 – 10 and see the “Now and Later” the already, not yet realities of who we are in Christ.
- Let’s recap, for a moment:

- In the second chapter of his First Epistle Peter tells us:

2:4, “As you come to Him a living stone”

- As YOU (plural – If we were down south it would be “as y’all come”)
- As we all come corporately, as we continually draw near to Christ in an intimacy of fellowship and sincere worship, we ourselves are transformed.

5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house,

- We who believe are continually being transformed from glory to glory into the image of Christ. He is a living stone and we “LIKE living stones” joined to Christ are being built up into a spiritual house.
- Here and NOW, on the earth God the Holy Spirit dwells in a tabernacle of living stones. HE is the treasure that abides within these vessels of clay. (2 Cor 4:7)
- Peter tells us that the continual building up of this spiritual house is for the Purpose of Worship.

2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- Coming to Christ together, in humble worship we are being built up; even now we have become a spiritual house, offering spiritual sacrifices.
- And, this building project, this ongoing construction will one day be completed in that Holy City, the New Jerusalem, where we will dwell with God.
- Let’s move on and Read Verses 9-10 and study more of our identity in Christ.

1 Peter 2: 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Because our time is limited, we will focus our attention on these 4 identifying descriptions of the Church.

1. Chosen Race
2. God’s Unique People
3. Recipients of God’s Mercy
4. Royal Priesthood

1 You are a chosen race.

In 1 Peter 1:1 we saw that individually, all believers regardless of where they make their home, possess what we might call “A Heavenly Green Card.”

Peter identifies believers as Elect Exiles, Chosen by God, citizens of heaven living as pilgrims here on the earth.

Here in Chapter 2 the Body of Christ is identified corporately as a Chosen Race.

- Being a chosen race has nothing to do with our ethnic heritage, it has nothing to do with being black or white, red, yellow or brown. The words “chosen race” describe a unique people who are born of God from among every language, tribe and nation.
- Our identity does not come from our color or our culture, it is not based upon our family line but on the fact that God in His immeasurable grace chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)

1 Peter 2:10a **Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people;**

- When we studied this topic in Chapter 1 we discovered that our election, like that of the nation Israel described in Deuteronomy 7, was not based upon any personal attributes or foreseen faith but solely on the sovereign grace, the lovingkindness and mercy of God ALONE.

So friends, Right NOW, today, if you are “In Christ,” if you have been born again by the Spirit of God you are part of a chosen race. Uniquely loved by God.

John gives us a glimpse into the Future, where we see this chosen race gathered together around the throne of God, doing there what we are called to do here: Worshipping the Lord and declaring his great salvation:

Revelation 7:9 **After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"**

- Friends, the same grace whereby we were chosen before the foundation of the world, The same grace whereby we were justified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross will one day usher us into the presence of God where we will forever be known as the people of God.

2 You are God’s People (Our Identity)

As Peter says in Vs 10 **Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people;**

These words would have special meaning to the Jews of Peter’s day, to those who knew the writings of the O.T. Prophets. They are words of reconciliation, words of redemption and healing.

- They are words which harken back to the writing of the prophet Hosea as God declared both his judgment and redemption to the ten northern tribes of Israel.

(Background) These 10 tribes had given themselves over to the immoral worship of the false gods Baal and Ashtoreth and were living like the Pagan peoples around them.

It was in those days that God called the prophet Hosea to take a wife from among the prostitutes in the land. (*Yes you heard me correctly, from among the prostitutes*) Hosea's marriage to Gomer and the children that she bore powerfully illustrated the depth of Israel's sin and the longsuffering heart of God.

- God himself gave names to all of the children born by Hosea's wife as a revelation of His judgment on the idolatrous tribes of Israel. Lets look at Hosea chapter 1.

Hosea 1: 6 *She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, "Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. 7 But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen." 8 When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. 9 And the LORD said, "Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God."*

- Imagine Hosea's humiliation, everyone knew that Gomer was an immoral woman and now Hosea introduces his newborn son saying, He is "Not Mine."
 - To see the depth from which Israel had fallen we need to remember their blessed beginnings
- God set his love on them, He chose them from among all of the Nations of the Earth to be his very own people, He entered into a covenant with them and gave them a land that flowed with milk and honey. BUT they rejected Him and went whoring after strange gods.
- In accord with the covenant that He established with them on Mount Sinai He was just and right to judge them without mercy and send them away into captivity.
- And just when it seems that all hope is gone, the Prophet of God speaks of a Second Covenant that God will make with his people. It is a covenant of restoration and peace a covenant by which He will change their name.

Hosea 2: 20 *I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD. 21 "And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, 22 and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, 23 and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'"*

- Stop for a moment and reflect on the incredible mercy of our great God who washes us from all of our immorality, sending our sins as far as the east is from the west, giving us a new name and a new identity. We who were not a people, by the grace of God in Christ alone are now become a people of His own possession.

Friends, right now we who believe are the people of God, but there is a glorious day coming, when the fullness of our redemption will be complete and we will dwell eternally with God as His people.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

- Peter would have us remember that every aspect of our redemption, from the Sovereign Election of the Father to the effectual call of the Spirit, right down to our glorification, when this mortality takes on immortality, every aspect of our redemption is a demonstration of God's abundant mercy.

3 WE are the beneficiaries of God's Mercy.

1 Peter 2:10b, **once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

- As you can see from our earlier reading this too comes from Peter's recollection of the writing of Hosea.

At one time in our lives we were living in blatant, unrepentant immorality like the pagan world around us, giving no thought to the will or ways of our creator, suppressing the truth of God in unrighteousness neglecting the knowledge of God that came through the God given means of conscience and creation.

- At that time, we were Dead in transgressions and sins. But that is not the end of the story.

Ephesians 2: 4 **But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

- Through the abundance of his mercy, God made us alive together with Christ.
- His death served as the payment for our sins, His resurrection destroyed death forever and imparted to us the glorious gift of eternal life.
- Paul wrote of this mercy to his friend Titus:

Titus 3:3 **For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,**

- Charles Hodge defines mercy in this way: "Mercy is kindness exercised toward the miserable, and includes pity, compassion, forbearance, and gentleness, which the Scriptures so abundantly ascribe to God."

- Friends, we are the recipients of abundant divine mercy
- And we live in the hope of future mercy, a mercy that will lead us past the grave, through the veil of death into eternal life.
- Jude the half-brother of the Lord speaks of this future mercy.

Jude 1:20 **But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.**

What have we learned? Now and forever by the sovereign grace of God we are a chosen race, a unique people of God's own possession who have received an abundance of mercy that will accompany us through the veil into eternal life where we will forever be a Royal Priesthood.

4 Royal Priesthood

Martin Luther wrote: "Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments."

- Of course Luther was standing against the R.C.C. which taught that only the Priests had access to God and only the Priests could understand the Scripture.
- Luther was used of God to restore the Biblical doctrine of the Priesthood of all believers.
- As Royal Priests, Through Christ, WE ALL have the privilege of coming into the very throne room of God. We need to be reminded what a great privilege this is!

Word of God teaches that the vast world of unredeemed people have no hope and no access to the true and living God. When Adam fell into sin, He and his wife were driven out of the garden and an angelic being with a flaming sword barred them from any possible return.

Because of original sin, God has no fellowship with fallen men; they are alienated from God and hostile in their minds against Him. (Colossians 1:21)

BUT those whom God graciously regenerates, those who receive His gift of faith and repentance, those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ become new creatures in Christ, They are a Chosen Race.

- Now, through the Work of Jesus Christ this Chosen race has been given access to the Father through Jesus Christ the Son.
- The Apostle Paul Writes of our privileged access

Ephesians 2: 17 **And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

- The Gospel was proclaimed to both Jew and Gentile alike and from these two groups of people God has created ONE Holy Priesthood.
- This is not the same as the Levitical Priesthood of the O.T. BUT the Levites present a pattern for this Royal Priesthood.

The books of Exodus and Leviticus tell us that the Levitical Priests were:

1. Chosen by God, 2. Cleansed by God 3. Clothed by God. (Let's look quickly)

Chosen – In Exodus 28 God sovereignly chose Aaron and his sons to serve as priests in the nation of Israel. Although the tribe of Levi was one of the least respected of the 12 tribes because of their violent history, God chose them anyway.

- Isn't that just like our God. WHO were you before you were chosen?

1 Corinthians 1:26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Cleansed – The Levitical priests underwent ritual washings, offerings and consecrations before they were able to serve in the Temple. Leviticus 8:6-36.

- Every part of the Levitical cleansing graphically illustrates the work of Christ for his redeemed people.

Titus 2:14, By his own work, Christ purified for himself a people for his own possession.

1 John 1:7, But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Clothed – Exodus 28 provides a detailed description of the priestly garments without which they were forbidden to enter the presence of the Lord.

- These garments symbolized the virtue, purity and godliness to which these priests were called. Sadly, for them all too often these garments were merely external wrappings that covered up a filthy heart.

All of us who have been cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, have been robed in His perfect righteousness. God has removed our filthy garments and wrapped us in the beautiful white robes of Christ's righteousness.

- The Prophet Isaiah writes:

Isaiah 61: 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of

righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

- These Robes are an identifying mark of our Royal Priesthood.
- Jesus Christ has removed the Veil to the Holy of Holies and NOW we who are Chosen by God, Washed in the Blood of the Lamb, Robed in His perfect righteousness, as Priests join the chorus of Heaven bringing true spiritual worship to the throne of God and of the Lamb.

And that which we see through a glass dimly we will one day see with perfect clarity. Revelation 20: 6 **Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.**

As we close I need to ask:

Where do YOU find your identity? Your vocation? Your position in your family?

- I am a Mom, Dad, Just a Kid..... (Not bad things, but we need to know what the Bible says we are)

Do you find you identity in:

Your ethnic heritage? (I'm a dumb Pollock)

Your financial resources? (401K – IRA – Possessions) (I am rich)

MAYBE your lack of financial resources. (I am Poor)

As believers Our identity is wholly bound to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- We are a chosen people because He chose us.
- We who were NOT a People are the People of God, We who had not received mercy have now received mercy.
- We are a Royal Priesthood because He chose, cleansed and clothed us.