

1 Peter 2:9 But You . . . (Part 2)

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Preacher: Rev. Thomas Davis

[0 : 0 0] Last week we began to look at the words of 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 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 and into his marvellous light.

This is a wonderful verse and it's a reminder of the great work that God does in our lives. God's work in us brings an extraordinary transformation in the lives of people and that's captured in the very first two words which in many ways is what we were focusing on.

But you, emphasising that you as a Christian are different because of what Jesus has done in your life, a glorious change has taken place and many, many marvellous things have happened to us. Now there's a lot in this verse and we've spread it over two Sunday evening services. Last week we looked at the first two things that were said. We focused on the fact that but now you are a chosen race.

[1 : 1 5] We are fellow members of God's people stretching across the generations. We're now a common family, a common people we share in this common heritage chosen by God's grace.

And we are also a royal priesthood, emphasising the glorious privileges that we have that we have access to God. We can come to him. All the restrictions of the old covenant have been removed and we can come to God and enter into his presence freely with confidence.

And our very own lives are a living sacrifice of service, of thanksgiving and of worship to him. So that was the first two things.

This week we're going to look at the second two for a week while together. And so the third thing, if you like our third point in our two weeks sermon, if you like your first point tonight, is that Peter says, but you are a holy nation.

Now this race is an interesting contrast with the first thing that Peter said. First of all, Peter said you're a chosen race. Now that phrase chosen race, as I hope we were able to see last week, is emphasising our relationship to one another.

[2 : 3 0] As Christians we have a common heritage. We are one people. We are one family. So as that chosen race, it's emphasising our relationship to one another.

The phrase a holy nation is not emphasising our relationship to one another. It's emphasising our relationship to the rest of the world.

Because the world is full of nations. Ever since the Tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 11, the world has been split into different people groups, different language groups.

And today the whole of global society is still hugely shaped by the conduct and identity of different nations.

Peter is telling us that we as Christians are also a nation. And that simply means that the Christian church is a category of people in the world.

[3 : 3 4] Just as we identify ourselves as Scott, British people, others will identify themselves as Americans. It was so nice. I went in to visit Scott Daly who is serving at the Church of Scotland for a number of weeks here.

He's got four lovely children. We call him, who's the second oldest, we said we came here on a ferry. He says because we're Americans. And it was so nice and so cute.

But that was his identity. He's from America. We're Americans. We're Scottish. And even here tonight we have the privilege of welcoming people from other nations as well.

Peter is saying as the people of God, we too are a nation. And it's interesting to think about that. Because if you look at all the nations across the world, yes, there are many differences.

There's differences in terms of government. You might have what we would call a democratic system or a dictatorship or a monarchy or whatever it may be. You have differences in legislation,

differences in geography, differences in wealth, differences in resources.

[4 : 45] Many differences. But fundamentally, in so many ways, the nations of the world are the same. I remember as a child thinking if you ever went abroad it would seem so different.

And I always thought if you went to America it would be like just, it would be so different. And I remember as a teenager going to America and arrived there I remember thinking it's not that different. In so many ways it was similar.

So many things were the same. And I was surprised at how similar, and I'm always surprised at how similar parts of the world feel. Because every nation has got laws and crime.

Every nation has got rich and poor. Every nation has got weak and powerful. Every nation has media, literature, culture, history. In so many ways the nations of the world are the same.

And the problems in societies in many, many ways are the same the world over. We look at Africa and we see people who are starving.

[5 : 49] Do we have people who are starving in Britain? Yes. Do we have people who need food banks? Yes. We look at people in other parts of the world and they commit atrocities.

Do we have people in Britain who commit atrocities? Yes. And so things are the same in many, many ways.

And with that in mind we see the great point that Peter is trying to make. Peter is saying that amongst all the other nations of the world the Christian church is to stand out as different.

The world is living according to the ways of the world. According to the age of this world as Paul says in Ephesians 2, but you are different.

You are a holy nation. As the great point that Peter is making as God's people we stand out in relationship to the rest of the world because we are different.

[7 : 01] And this immediately should point our minds back to the Old Testament. This is one of these great verses in the New Testament that is kind of like a doorway to the whole storyline of the Bible.

Peter is touching on themes that have been running through all the way from Genesis. And so when we hear this phrase, a holy nation, our minds should immediately be going back to Israel in the Old Testament.

Because I probably shouldn't ask this because it's not very fair. But back in January we looked at a verse in the Old Testament that is very similar to this verse.

I won't ask you if you remember because that's not very fair. I wouldn't have remembered myself.

But we looked at Exodus 19, 6 where we see that God said, you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Now I'm sure and I hope you are all instantly seeing how similar these two verses are. And Peter is very deliberately and very clearly pointing us back to Israel in the Old Testament.

[8 : 10] Israel where a holy nation. Now the word holy as I'm sure you know simply means to be set apart. Something that is holy is consecrated, set apart, separated.

It is special. And in terms of God, holiness is a core characteristic of God. He is holy. And that encapsulates the fact that he is utterly unique and that God is set apart a superior to all else that is. God is above everything. God is God. He is holy. And so it was a core characteristic of God is a core characteristic of God.

But it was also a core characteristic of the nation of Israel because they too were to be unique. They were set apart as a nation that was different to all of the other nations.

What says to Moses, Leviticus 19 to speak to the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, you shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy.

[9 : 20] Now, as I said, Peter is picking up themes that have been running through the whole of the biblical narrative. And I want us just to think for a moment about the history of Israel in the Old Testament.

I've put up a list here of the first one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve books of the Bible.

Please ignore the spelling mistake. These books along with Chronicles, Sant'Anes, Vannehemiah, one or two others highlight the history of Israel. But I've just put these ones in just now because we're just touching on the main points.

I want us to think about the history of Israel because Israel's status as a holy nation is what defines their history. And it explains so many of the things that took place.

You look at all the different things that happened throughout Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It comes down to the fact that Israel are there to be as this holy nation.

[10:21] So let's go to Exodus, first of all. Exodus in many ways sets the scene. Exodus is where it really starts to happen for the nation of Israel. First half of Exodus is 40 chapters long.

It splits pretty neatly into two sections. Chapter one to 19, God is bringing Israel out of Egypt. Now, you should immediately have the word holy ping in your minds because what is holy to be set apart?

What was the Exodus? A setting apart, God removed these people. He drew them out.

They are set apart as God's nation, as God's holy covenant people. Then what happens? Well, Exodus chapter 20, right through to the end of Deuteronomy, well, it can be summed up by one word.

The Hebrew Bible is split into three sections, Genesis to Deuteronomy is one section. Do you know what it's called?

[11:28] The law, the Torah, the law. From Exodus 20 through to Deuteronomy, it's virtually all law, isn't it?

Instructions, the Ten Commandments, instructions about the Tabernacle, instructions about how they to conduct themselves, law after law after law after law after law after law. Why is God giving all these people, giving these people all of these laws?

It's because he is instructing them how to be different from the rest of the world. He's instructing them as to what it is to be a holy nation, to be a nation that has been set apart, to live as he wants them to live.

So God gives Israel all of these laws that are in huge contrast to what the rest of the world is doing because this nation is holy. They're set apart, they're different.

And so we're down at Deuteronomy and everything is being shaped by the fact that there to be this holy nation. What happens in Joshua? What's the word that sums up the book of Joshua?

[12:44] Well, it's the word conquest, isn't it? Joshua's the book, they go into the Promised Land. What's the one thing that they're instructed to do? You're going into the Promised Land, what does God say to do them?

He says, drive out the people who are there. Why did God want to drive out all the people who were there?

Because he did not want them to influence and to corrupt this holy nation. And it all makes perfect sense.

God wants them in this land, he wants them in this land as a holy nation. There's people who are already there who have got absolutely no interest and no desire to serve God or to honour God.

They simply want to rebel against God and to corrupt the people of God.

God says, make sure when you go into that land that you move these people on. Because there's going to be a terrible influence on you. And of course that's what God said, did Israel do that?

[13:42] No, they didn't. And that's what we happen in the book of Judges. Book of Joshua, positive triumphant book, book of Judges, a disaster.

The people were on a downward spiral and everything was getting worse and worse and worse and worse. Why did that happen? The angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim and he said, I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give your father.

I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land. You shall break down their altar. You break down all the corrupting influences, but you've not obeyed my voice.

What is this you've done? So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides and their gods shall be a snare to you.

And so what Israel were meant to be, a pure holy nation living in God's way, was undermined by the fact that this thorn and this snare was there.

[14:55] And in the rest of the Old Testament, you see this tension constantly between the fact that the Israelites are called to be holy by God and yet they are constantly tempted by the world, tempted to be like the world.

Let's go back to our list. We've come to Joshua. We move on to 1st and 2nd Samuel, to 1st and 2nd Kings. I'll mention Ruth in a moment, we'll come back to that.

In 1st Samuel, what's Samuel the start of? It's the start of the monarchy. And at the beginning, near the beginning of that book, the people demand a king. Why did they demand a king?

Verse 8, chapter 8, verse 4 tells us, it said to Samuel, you're old, your sons don't walk in your ways, now appoint but us a king to judge us like all the nations.

Now that phrase there is a direct contradiction of the call to be holy because they're saying, we want to be like everyone else.

[15 : 56] We want to have what the rest of the world has. And of course, God granted their king the appointed Saul. It was a disaster.

But in God's grace, he called a man after his own heart and David established the royal line. Last of all, in this sort of quick historical overview, we come to 1st Kings.

Now, you remember that in 1st Kings, Solomon in many ways is the high point of the monarchy.

The temple is built, the king's palace is built, Israel's borders are at their biggest ever extent.

Everything is as good as it could be. The promised land really, really is there.

And so Solomon is kind of the high point, but before Solomon dies, things start to go wrong. And Solomon himself turns away from the Lord in his later years.

[16 : 56] And where did Solomon's downfall come from? It came from foreign women.

Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, Hittite women from the nation's concern, which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, you shall not enter into marriage with them.

Neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn your heart after their God. God's. Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart.

But when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not holy through to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. Now, this is not about the women.

It's not that these women were awful, and we're not putting the blame on the women. The blame is on Solomon because he was told, don't marry foreign wives because they'll lead you astray.

[18 : 05] It's exactly what happened. And so do you see again what Solomon did? He looked at the rest of the world. He think, I liked what they've got. I like the rest of the world. I'm drawn to that. I'm appealing to that. God said, no, no, be holy, be different, be set apart.

But he was tempted and he was lured in. And do you see the pattern? Do you see how this holy nation status is shaping the events of the Old Testament again and again and again?

The people of Israel were lured away from God by the temptation to be just like the rest of the world. Now is that not exactly what you and I face today?

A temptation to be just like the rest of the world. But whilst the world is going its own way, in all the ways that we can see in our society, whatever they may be, God still says to us in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 15, as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

Since it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy. And it's giving us the vital reminder that in every part of our lives we are called to personal holiness, we are to be like God.

[19 : 28] And of course that simply means to be like Jesus, to follow Jesus as example. And that applies in every area of life. Israel were to be holy in every part of their lives. You and I are to be holy in every part of our lives.

And we have to do that in resistance to the temptations that are around us in the world. The world will say to you, satisfy your passions, whatever they may be, whatever they may be, whether it's for sex or for power or for wealth or for whatever it may be, the world says, satisfy your passions.

But God says, be holy because I am holy. And Peter says, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.

The world says, speak harshly, speak crudely. The world says all sorts of things. And you only have to open a newspaper to see all sorts of terrible things being said.

The world is doing that all the time. But God says to you and to me, be holy because I am holy. Let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking to seat.

[20 : 41] Peter tells us later on. When things go wrong, the world is bitter. The world is resentful. The world is jealous. And people bite back.

And when there's hurt and frustration, people are bitter. But God says, be holy for I am holy.

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. And the world, if it gets hurt, will retaliate, but God says, be holy for I am holy.

Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling. But on the contrary, bless for to this you are called, that you may obtain a blessing.

These are instructions in holiness that we've just taken from 1 Peter. I've just taken four. There are many more, and you can go and read the rest of 1 Peter tonight and ask yourself the question. How is this instructing me and helping me to be holy?

[21 : 41] 1 Peter is full of instructions. The rest of the New Testament is abounding in instructions. And we need to make sure we listen to them all. Because all of this is reminding us of the great truth that Jesus highlights in the Sermon on the Mount.

What does Jesus say in relation to the Gentiles in the Sermon on the Mount? He says, do not be like them.

That's simply another way of saying being holy. Do not be like them. As Christians, our holiness should make us stand out from the rest of the world.

And that raises a vital question for you and for me. What makes us stand out? What makes us stand out in this village?

What makes us stand out in our work? It's a really, really important question. Because sometimes, well, what does make us stand out?

[22 : 48] Is it our appearance? Is it our routine? Is it our activities? Is it our solemnity? Is it our traditions? Is it a certain way of acting or speaking?

What is it? Well, what should make us stand out? Is the fact that we are holy. The fact that we are like Jesus.

Holiness is simply Christlikeness. The two go hand in hand. And that's what should make us stand out. That applies to me personally as an individual and I'm rebuking myself as I say all these words. It's an area I have to work on. And also it applies to us corporately as a body of people, as a holy nation.

We should be defined by our holiness, by our Christlikeness. So let's ask the question, how are we going to stand out in the week ahead? Well, let's stand out as a holy nation.

[23 : 53] And all of this raises another vital point in regard to the Old Testament people of Israel. Because they were called to be a holy nation. Isn't that true?

And they were set apart. Has anybody ever asked you the question or raised the point with you where they've said, isn't it a bit unfair that God just dealt with Israel in the Old Testament?

Has anyone ever asked you that? I'm pretty certain I've had that question raised to me. It's a bit unfair. God just picking this tiny nation in the middle of nowhere. And there's the rest of the whole world.

Why would God, why is it not a bit unfair that he would set apart this one nation? Well, this is where we have to recognize a vital, vital point.

Israel were set apart. They were called to be holy. But the goal of that holiness was not that they would be hidden and isolated from the rest of the world. The goal was the exact opposite.

[24 : 52] Their holiness was to make them a light to the nations. That was Israel's role to be a light to the nations.

That was God's purpose from the very beginning with this covenant with Abraham. Genesis 12, 1 to 3, the Lord said to Abraham, if you like, this is the beginning of the people of Israel in the Old Testament. This is their founding father, Abraham.

God's first dealing with him and says, go from your country and from your kindred, from your father's house to the land that I will show you. Again, that's holiness language set apart, drawn out, separated.

I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless you, those who bless you and him who dishonors you.

I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And so do you see that from the very beginning, God's plan is that this people in the Old Testament are going to be a light and a channel of blessing to the whole world.

[26 : 05] Israel was to be the light to the nations and they were the means through whom salvation came to all people. And that's why if you read through the Old Testament, yes, you read of God driving out the people before Joshua and the Promised Land.

You read of his instruction not to marry foreigners, not to have contact with people who were rebelling against God. But what if a foreigner wanted to join the people of Israel? What if a foreigner said, I want your God to be my God? Did God say, uh-uh. No. The door to foreigners was always wide open. That's why the book of Ruth is there, because Ruth was a foreigner.

There you have a woman, a widow, a beggar, a foreigner. And yet she's at the center of God's purposes, a key link in the chain from Abraham to Jesus.

[27 : 13] Joshua always welcomed in Isaiah 56, verses one to seven. It's seven verses a wee bit long, but as we read this, think about the status as a foreigner. Imagine you were a foreigner wanting to join the people of God.

Would you be encouraged by these words? So let's see what it says. Thus says the Lord, keep justice and do righteousness for soon my salvation will come. And my righteousness will be revealed.

Blessed is the man who does this and the Son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it and keeps his hand from doing any evil. Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, the Lord will surely separate me from his people.

And let not the eunuch say, behold, I am a dry tree. For thus says the Lord, to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbath, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters.

I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. And the foreigner should join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord and to be his servants.

[28 : 18] Everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it and holds fast my covenant. These I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings, their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

So if you are a foreigner and you want to join the people of God, the door is wide open. And people like Ruth and Rahab and other foreigners prove that that is true.

They are key to the history of Israel. Israel is a light to the nations through whom God's blessing comes to all peoples. That's exactly why Jesus said salvation is from the Jews.

Not for the Jews, from the Jews. In the sense, yes, the Jews are included in that and those who come to faith are gloriously, faith in the Messiah are gloriously included.

But salvation is not exclusively for the Jews. Salvation is from the Jews. For all.

[29 : 35] Israel was to be a light to the nations. Peter is saying to you and me, so are you.

Our holiness as God's nation, as God's holy nation is no reason to keep ourselves to ourselves. No reason to isolate ourselves. No reason to shun the world. It is actually part of our great commission to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit and teaching the people of the world everything that Jesus has commanded us and he is with us to the very end of the age as we seek to be a light to the world. We are just like Israel. That's because we are the new Israel, the true Israel. We are to be in the world as saints, as holy ones. We stand out as a light to the nations.

What Isaiah 60 verse 1 said of the people of Israel, still is through of us. Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

[30 : 46] And behold, for behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples. But the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you and nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.

That is raising the unbelievably important point that God wants your holiness to transform the lives of all the ungodly, unholy and unbelieving people that you are going to meet this week and in the rest of your lives.

The world is thick with darkness, but you are the light.

God has placed his glory upon you and his glory will be seen upon you.

That's how important you are to this world. In thick darkness, and I don't need to persuade any of you that this world is in thick darkness, you are the light.

[32 : 01] The world is a sinful place, but you are a holy nation.

Holy Peter tells us you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and then he says a people for his own possession.

I don't know if there are more beautiful words in all of literature. They are telling you that as a Christian you are God's very own, a people for his own possession. That word possession is a beautiful word because it emphasises some wonderful truths. It refers to something that you are preserving for yourself. You know what that's like? Something that's huge and that you're preserving that you're looking after. We've all got things like that, don't we? People are things that they look after, they're preserving for themselves. Maybe it's their house, maybe it's their car, maybe it's something small like a collection of things that you have or photo albums, whatever it may be, something special to you that you're preserving for yourself that you're keeping safe. [33 : 21] The word also refers in Greek and in English to something that you've acquired. Yesterday I had a very exciting day in my household yesterday.

I was given a voucher for auto parts by a friend and it was a 20 pound voucher and I actually spent about £120 but never mind.

I went in with my voucher and I bought a compressor. Some of you may not think that's very exciting but I've wanted a compressor for years and my son Tom has been desperate for a compressor and so now this compressor is our possession.

We've bought it. It's ours and it's brilliant. It's really exciting. Of course that involved a cost. My voucher was only £20 and as I said by the time I spent everything it was way, way over that but anyway that doesn't matter.

Possession is something that we've acquired but of course there's a cost involved. But that of course means that that word possession is referring to something that is now your own property.

[34 : 25] That compressor is now my property and it's great. And of course I'm sure you can see that all of these things are pointing us to key theological truths in terms of our salvation because the fact that we are now Christians, did that come cheap to God?

No. It came at a huge cost to God. It came at the ultimate cost because he did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all.

And so your status as a people for his own possession came at a huge cost to God. Jesus, we have all these costly terms used about him.

He's the ransom that secured our release. He's the lamb, the spotless lamb without blemish who took our place.

He's the substitute that was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities.

[35 : 40] It came at a cost. But of course if something came, if this came at a cost, this reality of cost, it teaches you a glorious truth, teaches you that you are worth something to God.

Now if you have ever felt worthless in life, which I'm sure most of us have felt, then you need to hold on to this doctrine.

Theologically speaking, what are you worth to God? You are worth the ultimate price because to make you a people for his own possession costs the ultimate price.

Always remember that. Sometimes we hear about big transactions in the news. I remember a few years ago, I think Facebook bought WhatsApp. Facebook, as you know, is a big social media site. If anyone doesn't have Facebook, it's just this thing on the internet where you have pictures about what you do and all sorts of stuff like that. Big massive company worth billions. WhatsApp is a thing on your phone where you can send messages.

[36 : 56] Facebook bought WhatsApp for something unbelievable, like 500 million or something. It was something like that. It was unbelievably expensive.

You hear of these huge, massive transactions. Now in my mind, I'm doubting whether it was WhatsApp and Facebook. You know what I mean.

It was some big corporate purchase. Might have been Google buying YouTube or something like that. You know exactly what I mean. Hugely, hugely expensive transactions.

Do you know what the greatest, the most valuable transaction that ever made was when the Son of God paid your ransom?

That's what you're worth to God. And the fact that we are now God's property tells us that we are secure. We are God's own possession and that reminds us of the glorious safety that we have in Jesus.

[38 : 00] There is nothing more wonderful than the feeling of being safe. Isn't that true? When you're in danger, when you're in difficulty and you feel safe. I remember when I was we, I was

growing up in Stornoway and I used to walk up the road from my friend's house at night and sometimes it was pitch black.

And when you're we, I don't know about you, but you get all sorts of silly things into your head. And I used to think that somebody was going to jump out of one of the driveways that I was walking past. And so I used to actually walk home in the middle of the road so that I wouldn't be right beside the drivers.

I know you probably think that was silly, but that's the way I was. Getting home was brilliant because you were safe. You were safe.

And Jesus makes you and I safe for all eternity because God has taken us as his own possession, holding us in his hands.

And of course, just as Jesus said, nothing can snatch us away. We are safe. And as those who are his, his possession, his people, those who have been bought, we have been reminded of the glorious doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, the fact that as God's own possession, we are his and we always will be.

[39 : 13] And that is our ultimate, surely our ultimate motivation to be a holy nation. God has made us his own and therefore our goal, our ambition in life is to live for him and to live in his way.

Now that does not mean that we won't stumble because we all stumble, but as God's own possession, we are reminded, you are reminded, that God will never turn his back on you because you're his very own possession.

And so we've been reminded of all these great truths that lie at the heart of the Gospel, the doctrine of redemption, being bought out of slavery, being redeemed.

It's simply because God wants to make you and I his very own people. And if we stop for a moment and think back, this is really where we are coming to the whole point of the Bible.

I love to stand back and I hope that you feel the same. I love to stand back and look at how the whole Bible fits together because it's such a gloriously perfect plan of God.

[40 : 22] Here we are seeing that faith in Christ is making us everything that we were always meant to be.

Because if you go right back to the very beginning to Genesis, God created us. We are God's creation and we must make sure we grasp that we are his creation.

God made us, we are his. We belong to him. We were made to be his very own. We were designed and planned and formed to be his.

And that applies to the whole of creation, but it applies especially to the human race because the human race has a status that nothing else has. We bear the image of God.

And that's what God meant us to be. That is our God given destiny to be his people in his image. And sin ruined that.

[41 : 30] Sin interfered with that. And in our rebellion, what did we say to God, we said, we don't want to be yours. And in our guilt, we marred the image of God.

And the whole of the rest of the Bible is talking about the restoration of that because the great hope of the Gospel is that God is going to put that right. That is why Jesus came.

That is why the whole of the Bible has been written and all the events took place. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price, paid the penalty for our sin. It broke the power of sin. And through our union with Christ, we are set apart as those who are definitively sanctified and who are now being restored to what we were always meant to be.

We are being progressively sanctified. We have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Do you see what Paul is saying there?

That's from Colossians 3.10. We fell. We were broken. We felt God is bringing us back to what we were always meant to be.

[42 : 38] And God's great goal is that once again, we will be His own people bearing His image. And so to be a people for His own possession is nothing more than simply to be the very thing that you and I were created to be.

And do you know that's why becoming a Christian brings peace? Because everything falls into place, doesn't it?

In terms of what you were meant to be. And we are being reminded here that God is putting things right.

He is making us what we were always intended to be, a people for His own possession. And here we see that the eternal destiny of every single one of us comes down to one question.

Are you His? Sin is basically saying, I don't want to be yours.

[43 : 54] Because sin is a rebellion against God. It's a rejection of God. Unbelief is saying that you do not want to be God's. And tragically, so many people are saying that.

But what about you? Are you His? Can you say, Lord, You are my God and we are Your people? So please, please understand that that is not about feelings or about experiences. Because these things can so often confuse us.

Because we think that person had such and such an experience. They are among the people of God. I have not had that experience. Therefore I am not among that people of God. Not through. We do not understand our status as God's people from other people's experiences. We understand our status as God's people from the Word of God.

[44 : 49] Because that alone is a rule to teach us and guide us. And so the vital question is not what happened to somebody else and whether that happened to you. The vital question is, are you bowing down before God and saying, I am yours?

And it's as simple as that. Believe me, it's as simple as that. It's about who you are worshiping, who you are bowing down before. Because the unbeliever says, I don't want to be God's.

But the believer says, I don't want to be anything. Except God's very own possession.

Peter has taught us four glorious, glorious truths. And although we spent two Sunday evenings on this, and though our time has gone again, we've only scratched the surface.

And so take this verse away and meditate on it yourselves. The world is rejecting Jesus. The world might mock us and our lives might bring a lot of pain and a lot of struggle and a lot of hurt.

[46 : 06] You'd never forget this, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for his own possession.

And in the one minute that I'm going to try and finish this sermon in, I'm going to ask a final question. Why has God made us these things? Well, the answer is in Peter's very next statement, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

That's our goal. That's our destiny in life. And that's why it doesn't matter what your job is. It doesn't matter what you've achieved in life in terms of your career. Because this is what you are really all about and what I am really all about.

There is a world all around us that urgently, urgently desperately needs to hear about the excellencies of him who has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

That's our God given goal. That's why he has made us all of these things. And by God's grace, that is what we are going to do while there is blood in our veins and breath in our lungs because we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people for their own possession.

[47 : 30] Thank God. Let's pray.