

23.4.23 am

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Date: 23 April 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see all of you, and it's good to see some visitors with us as well this morning. If you're able to stay behind, at the end there's tea and there's coffee, there's tray bakes, there's cupcakes.
- Peggy and Julian were on the tea this week, so you'd be well advised to stay behind for tea if you're able. I don't have the notices in front of me, so I'll just flick through the services, the notices as they're on the screen.
- Evening services at 6, 6-7. We continue in the life of Abraham. I'll make sure we're sharp tonight and finish by 7. There was to be a community lunch tomorrow in the church from 12 to 2, but with the passing away of Acca as we knew him.
- The funeral is scheduled for tomorrow at 1, so we're going to put the lunch off tomorrow and postpone it until the following Monday. So the community lunch will be next Monday, not tomorrow, but the next week.
- So if you could bear that in mind and maybe just let people know that that's been postponed for a week, that would be helpful. Ladies' fellowship tomorrow night as usual, and you've got the details there on the screen.
- [1 : 1 8] Little fishes and road to recovery on Tuesday in the morning and the evening, as you would expect. And the prayer meeting on Wednesday in person and on Zoom at half past seven.
- Come in. And the services next Sunday. The morning service I'll take myself, God willing, and the evening service will be a Gaelic service to Reverend Dolan.
- The English fellowship meeting will be taken by Derek Maxwell of the Slavic Gospel Association. So please make an effort to come out to that fellowship.
- It's always good to hear of the ongoing work of the Gospel in these parts. And these are not quite all the intimations.
- The other thing I needed to remember to say is that next Friday, it's a school holiday. There's a long weekend. And so there'll be no jam and there'll be no connect. Is there a route, Joyce?
- [2 : 1 5] There's no route either. So kids clubs will not be on next Friday, but they'll resume, I think, the week after that. So these, I think, are all the intimations. The funeral service, as I said, for the late Angus Morrison will be at one o'clock tomorrow in the Church of Scotland.
- There'll be a wake, a worship tonight at 8pm in the Church of Scotland. So there'll be plenty of time after the evening service to get to that. And let's remember the family in prayer this time.
- Let us now worship God and let's sing to his praise. We sing from Mission Praise 506. Mission Praise 506, that great hymn.
- O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made. And we sing in the chorus, how great thou art. So stand to sing, and we sing to God's praise.
- O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made.

- [3 : 32] I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder. The power throughout the universe displayed.
Then sings my song, my Savior God, to thee. How great thou art, how great thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee. How great thou art, how great thou art.
How great thou art, how great thou art.
Feel the gentle breeze. Feel the gentle breeze. Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee.
- [5 : 01] How great thou art, how great thou art. How great thou art, how great thou art.
How great thou art.
And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art.
- [6 : 15] Then sings my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art.
When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then shall I bow in humble adoration, and then proclaim, my God, how great thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to thee, how great thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour, Lord, to thee, how great thou art.
- [7 : 48] Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray together. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day.
And we thank you for the words of the hymn that we've been singing. That remind us of the fact that you are the God who is great. You are the God who is almighty.
The one who made all things. The one who holds all things together by your word. You're the God who is sovereign.
The one whom Isaiah caught a glimpse of in that vision. And was overcome by his own smallness and sinfulness.
And yet we praise you that we are able to come to you in prayer and call you our Father. And this is not because we are being presumptuous.
- [8 : 58] This is not words that we have taken of our own. But this is how we have been taught to come. Jesus, your Son, our Saviour, said when you pray, pray like this.
Say our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. So we do hallow your name. We confess, Lord, that we do not have a view of you that is exalted enough.
We confess that we are often more taken up with our own glory. And the things of this world. And we are with your majesty. And we pray that you would forgive us for that.
We pray that you would cleanse us in the blood of Jesus. We are those who are sinners. We know that in our nature. And we can see that and others can see that in us.
As they watch our lives. But we thank you that there is a Saviour in Jesus. We thank you that there is a fountain filled with blood.
- [10 : 11] That was drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And sinners like us. When we plunge beneath that flood. Lose all our guilty stains.
And so, Lord, we confess our guilt. We confess our sin. And we pray for that fresh cleansing. In the blood of Jesus. We pray that you would purify us from all unrighteousness.

We pray that you would make us clean. And help us, we pray. Having confessed our sin. To have that assurance. Of the fact that we are clean.

As we look to the cross. As we think again. On all that Jesus did. In his body on the tree for us. Give to us that joy in our hearts.

In knowing that we are cleansed. If we are trusting in Jesus. And help us, we pray. As those who are your people.

[11 : 15] If we are trusting in you. Help us, we pray. To live lives which are holy. We know that it's not how we live that saves us. It's Jesus that saves us.

But if we are saved, we are called to live lives which are conformed. Conformed to the image of the Son. So we ask, Lord, that you would sanctify us.

That you would make us holy. And that you would help us in our actions. And in our reactions. Help us in our thoughts. And in our words. To be less like our old sinful self.

And to be more like Jesus. We pray that people may see something of Jesus. Even in our lives. As we seek to reach out to them. We pray for any who may be here today.

Or any who may be watching. Who are not yet those who are trusting in Jesus. We pray for those who are not yet ready for that day.

[12 : 17] When there will be a shout of acclamation. And Jesus will return to this world. We ask, Lord, that you would be working in their hearts.

That you would be seeking. That you would be saving. That you would be convicting of sin. And converting souls. As they, as we, look to Jesus as our saviour.

So work amongst us, Lord. We pray in this day. We pray for the community that you've put us in the midst of. And we thank you, Lord, for each other.

We pray for those who are in particular need at this time. We're always conscious of those who are sick. Some who are struggling. Who are present with us.

And some who are absent from us. And we ask, Lord, that you would lay your hand of healing upon those who are battling with medical conditions. If that be your will to heal them, Lord, we pray that you would heal them.

[13 : 20] And we ask, Lord, for grace for each day. And for each trial. For them and for all of us. We pray for those who struggle with anxiety and with depression.

With a sense of hopelessness. And we know that these things are real. And we pray for such you have these wrestles. And we ask, Lord, that you would minister to them.

We thank you that we have a friend in Jesus. We thank you that we have a saviour. Who lived in this world. And who experienced all that we experience.

Who is able to sympathise with our grief. And so we pray, Lord Jesus, that you would minister to those who are struggling. And for those who are grieving in particular.

We bring them to you. And we ask, Lord, that you would comfort them. We pray for the Morrison family. As they prepare to come together tonight and tomorrow. We ask, Lord, that you would draw near to them.

[14 : 22] That you would reveal yourself to them. And that you would be very close. As your word is read. In the context of worship, Lord, we pray.

That it would be like a balm for their souls. And we pray that you would grant faith. That they and we would take hold of the promises that we hear in the gospel.

We pray for our nation. We pray, Lord, that you would draw us back to yourself. We pray for those whom you have allowed to be in authority over us.

We ask, Lord, that you would humble them. That they would look to the Lord Jesus. And would point us to the Lord Jesus. It seems like such an unrealistic prayer. And yet you are able to change a heart and indeed a nation.

In just a moment. And we pray for all nations. And those that we're connected with in particular. We think of Romania. Where we've been in the past. And where we perhaps hope to go back to again soon.

[15 : 25] And for the work of Children for Christ. We pray for them, Lord. We pray for the Slavic Gospel Association. And for the work of the gospel that continues through their work and witness.

We pray for Malawi as Nurse Marian goes back and forth there. We pray for the DPRK. As we watch what happens there with interest.

And other places, Lord. And other places, Lord, where we are conscious of your people. Serving you. Some openly and some under the radar.

We ask, Lord, that you would add your blessing. That you would build your church. We pray now that you would continue with us. Help us to be in the spirit. To worship you in spirit.

And in truth. And we ask, Lord, for your blessing upon us in this time. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. And for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

[16 : 27] how are you all today oh that doesn't sound very how are you all today come out a wee bit there I can't see you we'll put it back in a minute something to show you today it's this does anybody know what that is Henry no good guess but no it's not you can't really see does anybody want to come up and see anyone who's good at reading want to come up and and see Henry you're the only brave one today go on then can you see what does it say at the top of that card you've got it on the screen those who are at home certificate certificate of alien alien registration certificate of alien registration registration and then there's a there's a picture and then there's a there's a name

Richard William killer so where is Richard where are you Richard I can't see you just now over there I think he might have been a few years younger when the picture was taken his hair and my hair are going the same way but that's definitely him and the certificate was given out by who can you see that it's not the government here government of Japan the government of Japan and so it's a certificate of alien registration you can sit down thanks for your help what do you think that means do you think that means that Richard over there although he's wearing normal clothes he's actually an alien that landed from another planet what do you think you ever heard of that before pardon is he an alien is he an alien oh there you go you can see it there now see you get a big picture over there on the screen see when you go to a different country some countries what they say is if you're not born in the country they say you're an alien so you're an alien resident so when I was going over to America when I came off the the plane there was one line that you had to queue in if you were from the country and there was another line that you had to queue in if you were an alien so I was an alien so that's sometimes what governments will say it's not about you being from another planet or landing in a spaceship it's just a government's way of saying that this country that you're living in for a while it's not actually your home so the certificate says that the government in Japan were saying to Richard that you're welcome to be here but this isn't your real home now in the chapter that I'm going to read with the older ones you can ask him about this over lunch in 1st Peter chapter 2

Peter he's writing this letter Peter the disciple you know about Peter the disciple yeah yeah you do know about Peter the disciple the fisherman and he's a bit older it's about 30 years after Jesus died and rose again so Peter's an older man he's coming towards the end of his life and not a long time after he writes the letter he'll be killed he's crucified because he was a follower of Jesus but he's writing this letter and he's writing to all these Christians and they've been scattered all over the place because they weren't welcome in their homes because they were following Jesus and Peter says to them that they are aliens and strangers in the world so Peter describes them and he describes us if we're followers of Jesus as aliens and strangers in this world what do you think that means what do you think that means

Jonah does it mean to be an alien and a stranger what do you think Peter's getting at does he think that we landed from spaceships no so what message do you think that God through Peter is trying to get through to us when he says you're aliens and strangers in this world what do you think John Roddy no he's saying to those who are Christians you are aliens and strangers in this world so what do you think he's trying to get through to us he's trying to tell us that this world is not our home we're here for a while we can enjoy all the the great things about this world because there's friendships that we have and we've got family and we can enjoy all the blessings that there are in this world but God reminds us lots of times in the Bible he says this is not your home you're just here for a while there's another verse in Hebrews that says we've got no continuing city here but we seek one to come so this world is not our home for Christians where's home

Michael heaven is home and remember what Jesus said in John 14 he said to the disciples before he went to the cross he said I'm going to prepare a place for you in my father's house and there's not just little rooms in my father's house says Jesus he says there's many mansions and there's no prayers for people who are sick in heaven because nobody's sick and there's no fights in heaven because everybody gets on well and there's no sin in heaven everything is perfect and God says to us in the Bible that that is our home the home that he's preparing for those who are trusting in Jesus so what I want to say to you today is what I say to you every week and that is trust in Jesus and he'll take us by the hand and he'll help us through this world through the good times and the bad times and then he'll take us from this world to a place that's an everlasting wonderful amazing home if we're trusting in him so trust in him and we'll pray heavenly father we thank you for your word and we thank you for this world and for the beauty of it we thank you that in this world you've given us the Bible and you've told us the truth about the world to come and we thank you that although we are sinners who were headed in the wrong direction you sent Jesus your son to be our saviour so that if we believe in him we will get to the place that we call home and we will be forever there with the Lord if we believe so we pray for the young ones that you would help them to believe and for the older ones as well that we would believe in the

[25 : 09] Lord Jesus and that we would know that we have a place in heaven and we ask all this in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to sing now and we're going to sing a paraphrase which is a paraphrase is a long word that means a simple version of John chapter 14 it's another form of words for John chapter 14 so it's paraphrase 42 and it's it's Jesus words to his disciples and we'll stand to sing to God's praise praise let not your hearts with anxious thoughts be troubled or dismayed but trust in providence divine and trust my gracious day

I to my father's house return let him this mansion stand and glory manifold abounds to all the happy land I go your entrance to secure and your report prepared regions and all are safe to you when I your friend land there shall I come when ages close to take your home with me there we shall meet to part no more and still together be

I am the way the truth the life no son of human race but such as I conduct and guide shall see my father's face okay boys and girls if you head to Sunday school remember to pray for them as they go and we'll turn to 1st Peter and chapter 2 1st

Peter chapter 2 and we'll read from verse 9 to the end of the chapter this is God's word but you are a chosen people a royal priesthood a holy nation a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light once you were not a people but now you are the people of God once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy dear friends I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us submit yourselves for the

Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men whether to the king as the supreme authority or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right for it's God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men live as free men but do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil live as servants of God show proper respect to everyone love the brotherhood of believers fear God honour the king slaves submit yourselves to your masters with all respect not only to those who are good and considerate but also to those who are harsh for it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God but how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it but if you suffer for doing good and you endure it this is commendable before

[30 : 59] God to this you were called because Christ suffered for you leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps he committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth when they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate when he suffered he made no threats instead he entrusted himself to him who judges justly he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness by his wounds you have been healed for you were like sheep going astray but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again now to God's praise we'll sing from Psalm 100 and we'll sing the first two stanzas of the

Psalm in Gaelic all people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice and serve with mirth as praise foretells come ye before him and rejoice know that the Lord is God indeed without their aid he did us make we are his flock he doth us feed and for his sheep he doth us take these two verses we remain seated to sing in Gal of SONG PLAYS

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[37 : 09] S Barnes of the chapter, but probably we'll not get all the way to the end.

I think we'll maybe focus on the last section again next Sunday and look at that text where we're told that Jesus, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. The gospel is in that verse, and I think we'll come back to that again next Sunday, but we'll move through at a fairly brisk pace this section.

And Peter in this section, he's writing to believers far from here many years ago, and yet he's also writing to us, and he's writing to us about our identity.

So we don't have to work hard to make a connection between back then and there and here and now because we are always talking today in our culture about our identity.

[38 : 32] There's lots of discussion about our identity. Some would say there's lots of confusion about how we define ourselves, how we identify ourselves.

Many people will seek to use issues of gender and sexuality as the ultimate issues of identity. Others will ground their identity in what they do, their profession, and how much money they make, how they look.

Others still, it's a question of where you were born, who your people are, our ethnicity. These are all kind of issues that are used to try to define who we are.

We can switch on the TV any given day, and there's some kind of low-league celebrity being given a tour through various museums and archive stores as they try to search for their identity.

And yet what Peter says, as God guides them here, is that we find our identity in Christ. This is where we find out who we truly are.

[39 : 53] And Peter, as he thinks through the issues of our identity, he speaks to us about who we are in God's sight.

He says we are chosen people. And then he speaks to us about who we are in the eyes of this world and in the context of this world. He says we are aliens and strangers.

So that's what I want to think through today. Two points. First of all, we are chosen people if we are Christians. And secondly, we're aliens and strangers.

So chosen people. Look at verses 9 and 10. Peter says to us and to them, but you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Once you were not the people, but now you are the people of God. Once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

[41 : 07] So Peter says you are a chosen people. You belong to God. You have belonging in your relationship with God.

And that's a message that we should take if we're Christians and run out the door with. Because people are longing to hear that message.

There is such a sense today of people not belonging. There's so many people that we meet and they don't feel like they belong anywhere.

They can't find a group that they fit into. So they end up either isolated and depressed or they end up compromised, doing demeaning things just to try to fit in to some group.

I won't tell you too many America stories, but when I arrived in Jackson, in Mississippi, I'd never been to America before. And I just wanted to go and explore. So I got dropped off about one o'clock in the morning and I said, I'll go for a run in the morning and then I'll meet you about 11 o'clock and we'll get some breakfast.

[42 : 20] And the guy said, he was from Jackson, he says, you're not going for a run anywhere. I said, why not? I'd like to see the old town. I'd like to see around the place. He said, no, no, you're not going out for a run anywhere.

It's dangerous. The place is overrun with gangs down there. So if you go out, looking the way you do, a bit of a misfit, you know, you're highly vulnerable.

So if you're going to run, run on a treadmill, don't go outside your door. And when I started to speak to him about that whole situation, he was saying most of the killing, and it's apparently the murder capital of the world, most of the killing is done by 13 year olds, 14 year olds.

And they're trying to find their way into gangs. They want a sense of belonging. And so the gang leaders will say, if you want to be in our gang, go and rob that filling station.

Or come back with 2,000 pounds. They're given a gun. They're sent out. And they're told, unless you complete this task, you don't get in our gang. So some poor kid goes out, panics in a petrol station.

[43 : 32] Panics when he's in a confrontation with someone on the street. Pulls the trigger, ends up in prison for 30 years. Because they want to belong.

That's the kind of sad reality of it. They want to belong in some gang, in some group. And Peter says to believers back then, and to us, we have belonging.

We belong to God. And we belong to each other. And that really is a, it's a definition of, of the church.

we belong to God. We belong to God. If we are in Christ. And we also belong to each other. We are bound together, eternally.

If we are in Christ, we are chosen. So let's just step through these two verses. Peter says, first of all, if we, if we just move through this verse slowly in the first instance, he says, we are chosen.

[44 : 47] No one is a mistake. There's no one in this building or in any place who is a mistake. God has chosen to create every one of us.

The way we come into this world may vary wildly, but there's no soul on this earth that God did not determine would be on this earth.

we're chosen. And in the gospel, God calls us to come into relationship with him.

God chooses to seek us. God chooses to save us. God chooses to make us his people, the church, and in the church, everyone belongs.

there should not be cliques in any church. Everyone belongs because God has chosen us.

[45 : 56] We don't choose each other in the church. God chooses us. When I was in the airport, and I'm going to ask this is the last story I'll tell you from America, don't worry.

I had a ticket to fly to London, and it was British Airways. I never fly British Airways. It's posher than I can ever do. But I had this ticket in my hand that said British Airways, and I was thirsty, and I saw British Airways Aspire Lounge.

I thought, well, that must be for me. So I wandered off in Wernessee Airport into this lounge. The door was open. There was no code or anything like that, so I wandered in, and there was free bottles of water, and there was free food and sandwiches, and all.

This is great, I thought. So I grabbed a bottle of water, and I grabbed a bacon sandwich, and a chocolate biscuit, or something. I sat down in one of these big throne-like comfy chairs, was having the time of my life, until this guy came over and said to me, excuse me, sir, can I see your ticket?

It must have looked different to the rest. And so I took my ticket out, and I handed it over to him. Yeah, yeah, it says, here it is, it says British Airways, flight to Heathrow. He said, can I ask you, are you traveling business class?

[47 : 21] I said, no, I'm not traveling business class. He said, are you a gold or silver BA club traveler? I said, not as far as I'm aware, no, no. He said, well, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

Your ticket doesn't qualify you for this, this lounge. And as I looked around, I kind of thought, well, that fits. I don't belong here. But in the church, everyone who has trusted in Jesus belongs.

We are chosen by God. So we must accept and love and bear with one another. Even when sometimes we can annoy each other a little.

We're chosen. It's the first thing. The second thing we see in verse nine is we are a people. We are a chosen people. And that word is a plural word.

It means that we are a people. We are a plural, a gathering of many people. We're not a collection of persons who are all separated from each other.

[48 : 33] But we are a people who are joined together eternally by Jesus. and there's a particular blessing about coming together as God's people.

There's a blessing that we that we're promised in the Bible and that we experience when we come together as God's people. Surely COVID taught us that lesson.

I can remember sitting in this or standing in this in this room just E&Aing; myself. He's got a camera and we're trying to figure out how on earth we do this thing.

My voice is bouncing all around this empty room. It's the strangest experience of my life and there was no sense of blessing. There was no sense of encouragement as I stood in this big empty space.

But when we come together in the name of Jesus there's blessing because we are God's people.

[49 : 42] Martin Lloyd-Jones was one of the most notable teachers of the last few generations and he came under a lot of pressure for a long time to have his sermons recorded.

Just audio recording. And it took him years before he eventually agreed for them to record the services. And his argument his logic was that there was no great worth as far as he was concerned in listening to his sermons on some audio cassette.

He said the blessing is found in coming together as God's people under the word. So he wasn't keen when the sermon has been recorded because he saw so little benefit of a sermon that's recorded as opposed to sitting in a building gathered together with God's people.

We are God's people and even if we apply that to our own context at this point in time Wednesday night Zoom prayer meeting there is some merit in Zoom prayer meetings but it's limited.

There are those who are sick those who are housebound and God will bless them as they come under his word and as we connect in some kind of virtual way but it's we rob ourselves and we deprive each other when we don't take the opportunity that we're given to come physically together as God's people.

[51 : 30] There's great blessing that we should never underestimate when we come together as God's people. We are chosen. We are people.

And the next thing that Peter says is that we are royal. Verse 9 We are children of the King which means that we have access to the throne of God.

We could have sang that hymn at the beginning of the service but I had mercy on the presenters because it goes so high. Before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea because of Jesus.

We are royal. we are children of the King through faith in Christ. Ephesians 1 We are adopted into the family of the sovereign God which means that we can come to the King of Kings.

We can come to the all-powerful God with all our worries and our cares and our struggles and our anxieties. we can ask the one who is all-wise and who cares for us and who knows every situation and every worry.

[52 : 57] We can ask him for his help. Which is an amazing thing. we should never overlook how amazing the privilege we have of being able to take everything to the Lord in prayer and know that he won't push us back.

He won't say that he's too busy. He won't look at our ticket like the BA guy said and said you don't belong here. our heavenly father the sovereign God loves to hear the prayers of his children.

We are chosen. We are a people united by faith in Christ. We are royal. We are children of the king. men. The next thing Peter says is that we are a priesthood.

And we know how priests work. They would serve day and night. Priests were constantly in the temple. They were constantly serving the Lord.

They were sacrificing, offering up sacrifices continually. They were never sitting down. They were always in employment. They were always serving the Lord.

[54 : 17] That was the priesthood. And Peter says that's who we are. We're Christians. We are a royal priesthood.

Which means that we are called into service of the king. I don't know what the unemployment rate is just now in the UK.

but I know that the unemployment rate in the kingdom of God is zero. There is no one who is unemployed in the kingdom of God.

There are, as it says in Ephesians 2.10, isn't it? There are good works which are prepared in advance for us to do if we are God's people.

we're saved by grace. Ephesians 2.8 and 9. That's God's work. It's not a work that we can do for ourselves. We're saved by grace.

[55 : 26] We're saved through Jesus. We're saved by the cross. That work is finished. But if we have believed in Jesus, if we have received his grace, grace, then we are immediately put into service.

We don't have to do four years in a theological college somewhere. We don't have to have a collar or a badge or a title. But every Christian is told that there is good works that are prepared in advance for us to do.

And so every morning we should be praying, Lord, lead me into them. Help me to serve you. help me to pour out my life as a sacrifice, as an offering to you.

We're chosen. We are a people. We are royal, children of the King. We are a priesthood. You are called into service of the King. And finally, and I think this is probably as far as I can get today, we're a holy nation.

So if you think in terms of a passport or one of these cards that we were looking at a wee while ago, an eternal passport, the one that really matters, it doesn't say UK or USA or anywhere else.

[57 : 01] It says that we belong to God. God. That's what our eternal passport says. We are a holy nation. We are those who belong to God.

Our passport, if we use that example, it says that we are those who have been called from darkness and sin and despair and lostness into his wonderful light.

Our passport says that we are those who once had not received mercy and who were condemned, headed for hell. but now we are those who have received mercy, who are saved.

You have a place guaranteed in heaven. And so this is who we are, says Peter. This is our identity.

We are a chosen people. called, chosen by God. We find blessing as we come together in his name.

[58 : 25] You know, those who are royal children of the king, adopted into the family of the king, who have access to the throne of God, God.

We are a priesthood. We are trusted and commissioned to serve the king with our lives as we pour out our lives as a sacrifice for him.

And we are a holy nation who look different to the world. Those who are being taken from darkness and despair and death to light and life and hope.

This is who we are, says Peter. And I want to just finish by asking, is it who we are? Are we one of this community of people that Peter speaks of?

or are we still resisting the Lord? There are likely some here, in fact, I know there will be some here, who say, well, these blessings and these benefits sound lovely, but they're not for me.

[59 : 56] They're for those who are Christians, but they're not for me. There's a kind of note of almost self-pity with some to say, well, this is not for me because God hasn't chosen me.

But that's usually nonsense. It's just an excuse. There are some people who seem to be waiting for a thunderbolt to come to them.

He is choosing to speak to them and call them to come to him. There's some people who seem to be waiting for an angel to drag them to the communion table before they'll ever come.

And until then, we hear this continual line of, well, I can't be chosen. I'm not in the elect. It's just an excuse.

If you pardon my bluntness. If you are here this morning and you see your sin, if you realize that you're not perfect, but you're a sinner, it's because God has chosen to reveal that to you.

[61 : 23] and if you can look to the cross and see what Jesus was doing, that he was dying, that he was laying down his life to take the punishment for the sin of people like us, then that's because God is choosing to reveal that to us.

And so we now have a decision to make. God has given us free will. And we have a decision in our hearts, in our wills to make.

We can either trust him and confess our sin and come to him, or we can turn away and rattle off all the same old tired excuses.

So if you're not a Christian this morning, will you come to Jesus? Will you not come to Jesus?

He's choosing to reach out to you. He's choosing to call you. Will you come to him? And for the Christians here, as we think about who we are, as we think about our identity as Peter defines it, how are we to respond?

[62 : 59] We can't get into this today, but we are to respond, verse 9, by declaring the praises of Jesus. So that's what we do when we come here.

we come here with hearts that are determined and prepared to declare the praises of Jesus.

We enjoy the coffee, we enjoy the cake, we enjoy the conversation, but we're not here primarily for that. We are here, as those who are in Christ, to declare the praises of Jesus.

And then as we leave this place, and do the rest of our weeks, which is much more time than we spend sitting in these chairs, how are we to live?

Well, we're to live in such a way as to declare the praises of Jesus with our lives. We're to live in such a way that the world will see that we are aliens, that we're strangers here, that we're distinct, that we're different.

[64 : 20] as they see that, the question rises within them, what makes them different? And we then have opportunity to speak about and show forth something of the glory of Jesus.

We are chosen people, and we're going to leave it there today. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, we thank you for the encouragement that we receive as we meditate upon it.

Thank you that we are chosen from before the foundation of the world, you determined that we would be in this building, that we would hear the gospel message, and that we would have opportunity to come to Jesus.

And for those who are in Christ, we pray that you would help us to live lives which are different, which are holy. And for those who are not yet in Christ, we pray that this would not be another Sunday where they hear the same call, make the same excuses, and leave in the same way.

We pray that you would seek, Lord, that you would save at the lost, that you would add to the number of those who are your people. we pray this in Jesus' name.

[65 : 51] Amen. We'll sing to conclude from Mission Praise 755 when I survey the wondrous cross.

We never got to the cross in the last part of the section, but let's think about the cross and all that Jesus did as we think about how we are to live in response to that.

When I survey the wondrous cross, we'll stand to sing. when I survey the wondrous cross, on which the prince of glory died, my riches gain I count but lost, and poor contempt on all I pride.

Forbred it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God, God.

Forbred it, Lord, that I love, I sacrifice them to his love.

[67 : 23] God. See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flowing and down.

Did there such love and sorrow be? The, Lord, that I have been blessed, Godtr built the peace of the song.

Forbred it, Lord, that■■ will fire your heart and whet the whole realm of nature mine.

That, iwel, I know, may bear to tarde on investment, Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my own.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.