

A People for His Praise - 1 Peter 2:4-10

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Preacher: Dov

[0 : 00] Thank you that we can even address you. You're the king of mercy. But Lord, we thank you that you have made our hearts your throne.!

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please take your seats. For the kids, please make your way to children's ministry. And for the benefit of our guests, my name is Dove Cohen.

I'm one of the pastors here at Providence, and I have the utter privilege of opening up God's word for us. This morning, we're in 1 Peter 2, 4 through 10.

So like I said earlier, we're continuing our series in 1 Peter. And the title for today's message is A People for His Praise. People for His Praise. And the main idea is that God has made us His people by mercy to proclaim His excellencies.

I'll say it again. God has made us His people by mercy to proclaim His excellencies. Now, there were a number of formative events in the history of early Israel.

[1 : 37] You know, think about it. There was the call of Abraham, and the sacrifice of Isaac. There was the Exodus. And there was especially Israel's encounter with the Lord at Mount Sinai.

You know, in Exodus 19, Moses recounts a story when the people met God at Sinai. Not long after the first Passover, you know, a holiday we just recently looped through in our calendar.

And amidst the thick cloud on the mountain, and the thunder, and the lightning, there was a trumpet blast.

A long trumpet blast. Something like this. Grateful that they didn't turn the volume all the way up, because that would have startled y'all.

That was the shofar. That was the shofar. That's what they played at Mount Sinai. It's a ram's horn. It was a blast that was startling. Formative.

[2 : 53] Precursor of the people's meeting with God. In a sense, that blast was a way of saying, God is here.

God is present. Behold your God. So in a sense, it was an auditory blast that declared to the people, you are about to meet God.

The excellent God. But when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave, an even greater formative event happened.

God was introducing a new covenant. A new way to know him, to draw near to him, and to be his people. He was creating a new people, a people that exists to proclaim, to broadcast, to declare, to trumpet the excellencies of God over all.

Providence. we are this people. And today's passage, 1 Peter 2, 4-10, is a declaration, a reminder to Christians of who you are, whose you are, and why you exist.

[4 : 13] You are God's chosen people. And you exist to trumpet, to shofar, the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

And as I mentioned today, it is good news. And it's good news to people who can be forgetful. Or maybe to people who have never even realized the glory of the calling of our identity that God has endowed us as Christians with.

Maybe you don't realize the depth of the riches God has called you into in Christ Jesus. Or, maybe you crave for a title or some kind of significance that will make you great in your eyes.

Or maybe you realize this, but you forget the reason why God has made you his people. It's all about you, your growth, your flourishing, or simply your survival through the daily slog of life.

Well, this morning, get ready. Get ready to be confronted with your identity in Christ. And get ready to lift your eyes to a much greater purpose for your life.

[5 : 34] truly today, Peter's going to tell us why we exist, why we've been saved, why we've been brought into God's family. And truly, it can't be more glorious.

So, where are we going today? What are we going to hear from the Lord? Well, in 1 Peter 2, 4-10, we're going to hear essentially three realities from God's Word. Three realities.

Who is Jesus? Who are we? And why are we God's people? Who is Jesus? Who are we? And why are we God's?

And through these realities, we're going to learn of our distinct calling to ourselves to be a trumpet, a shofar to the Lord, broadcasting the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

So, before we get too far, though, let's read the passage. Let's read the passage. So, 1 Peter 2, 4-10. As you come to him, a living stone, rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, 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.

[6 : 54] For it stands in Scripture, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

So, the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone of the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. 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 marvelous light. 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. Dear God, would you bless the preaching of your word?

[8 : 11] All right, let's start this morning with a brief reminder of the context of 1 Peter. So the context, who was this written to and for what reason? Well, as Chris has covered, as we've seen in previous weeks, 1 Peter is written to Christians dispersed throughout modern-day Turkey, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

These Christians were mainly Gentile believers, though some Jewish Christians were interspersed throughout the congregations. And these people were facing suffering and persecution. They were living in a world that clearly wasn't aligned to Christian values and principles, to the teachings of Christ and of God's word in general.

They're living in the world. And as there's a lot of common grace here in our area, there's also a lot of people, and a lot of the world, the world, which is not aligned to Christian values and principles. So this is very relevant, this passage is very relevant, this book is very relevant to us. So, they were people that could use encouragement and strengthening and refining reminders, of just who they are in Christ and what their calling as Christians is.

So it's into this context that Peter declares some glorious reality-defining truths. Peter first shows us who is Jesus. Then, he helps to see who we are.

[9 : 37] And then finally, why are we gods? So, for the first reality, let's look back to verse 4. Let's look at the text. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious.

And frankly, this one verse is rich with meaning, and we could spend the whole morning with this one verse. We're not going to do that. What I want to call from this verse is that Jesus here, in the words of commentator David Helm, he is stealing all of Israel's strong, poetic, prophetic stone imagery, he's calling it his own.

He's taking all the strong, poetic, prophetic stone imagery and calling it his own. So, who is Jesus? First, he's a living stone rejected by men.

The living stone imagery harkens back to Isaiah 28, 16. So, check out this verse. Isaiah says, Therefore, thus is the Lord God.

Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone of a sure foundation. Whoever believes will not be in haste.

[10 : 52] So, entitling Jesus as the living stone, Peter knew what he was doing. He was saying that Jesus has replaced, has superseded, has assumed all the glory of Israel, and has now been revealed as the true living stone that God is building his temple upon.

Peter is proclaiming that God has honored Jesus as the exalted Lord of heaven and earth, and that all people, Jews included, should bow their knee to this cornerstone.

Now, in addition, who is Jesus? Well, he is chosen and precious to God. Look at verse 4 again. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious. Jesus is chosen and precious to God. Literally in the Greek, God's chosen elected instrument, purposefully, deliberately, selected to carry out God's purposes. And God's precious stone, so he's God's chosen one, and God's precious stone. Just think about it, Jesus is precious to God.

[12:19] God, our Father, the living God, is just amazing. He has certain things that are precious to him. And I can relate. My kids, when we go outside for a walk or play out in the backyard, I don't know if any of your kids do this, but they'll pick up a stone or a leaf, and they'll be like, Dad, this is precious to me.

And then they'll hand it to me, and I'll be like, man, it's not precious to me. It's just a stone or a leaf, but I can't throw out that leaf for like six months.

Like, it's going to sit on my nightstand for quite a while. Because it's precious. To them, well, just think about how Jesus is precious to God.

Is there anything worth more to God than his son, Jesus? Is there anything that his heart cherishes, is drawn to more, that he loves to observe and watch, and even little Yiddish to kvel, or to delight in, than Jesus Christ?

And if God loves Jesus as much, if Jesus is this precious to God, well, then shouldn't Jesus be this precious to us? Shouldn't we treasure him, and love him, and study him, and boast in him, with all of our hearts, and souls, and mind, and strength?

[13:47] So, if you struggle with self-focus, and at times you lack peace or joy, because you're preoccupied with your own failures, or your own successes, and sometimes it's just overwhelming, well, lift your eyes off yourself, and fill your mind with thoughts of Christ.

You can read and meditate on portraits of him in the Gospels, or just look out, beautiful day outside, just look out at the world that he created, and praise him for it.

Get outside yourself, think of Christ. As quoted by C.J. Mahaney, in his *Living the Cross-Centered Life*, he quotes Scottish theologian Sinclair Ferguson, who notes that the evangelical orientation is inward and subjective.

We're far better at looking inward than we are at looking outward. Instead, we need to expend our energies admiring, exploring, expositing, and extolling Jesus Christ.

So our first point, who is Jesus? Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is precious to God. And God shows an instrument of redemption, God's living stone.

[15:08] All right, second reality in this passage, who are we? If that's who Jesus is, who are we? And this passage, it answers it in two ways. Peter shows that this cornerstone will divide humanity into two.

First, in a group this large, I'd be remiss to skip over the fact that some of us here may not be believers. Some of us here may be currently stumbling over God's chosen stone.

Look at the text, verse 7, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. And there may be some people here today who reject Jesus, who disobey Jesus, who do not believe in Jesus.

And you who currently do not accept or obey or believe in Jesus, well, you are stumbling over him.

[16:19] So, have you ever stumbled over something? Now, I've been really fortunate to have some great pets. One of those pets, her name was Jasmine.

We had her back in New Jersey. She was a cat. And Jasmine was sweet and affectionate and had a little bit of a filly attitude. She was a great cat.

Except for the one day I was carrying laundry down the staircase in our Voorhees house. And Jasmine was on one of the steps pretty close to the top of the staircase.

And you guessed it, I stumbled over Jasmine. I couldn't see her. I was carrying a laundry basket. But I stepped down naively and confidently.

And then I felt the furry, squishy cat that was Jasmine. And I stumbled on the steps, down the steps. Bam.

[17:22] Bam. Bam. Bam. And then that hurt, the wind, was knocked out of me. But thank God, I was basically okay.

And a chiropractor a few years later did ask me if I'd ever broken my tailbone. But I was basically okay. That being said, stumbling, stumbling is a serious thing.

And stumbling over Jesus, God's chosen and precious stone, nothing more serious than that.

And yes, while the text does say, those who stumble over Christ were destined to do so, the text also insists on personal responsibility. Responsibility to accept, to obey, to believe in Jesus.

So stumbling over Jesus, well, you will be broken. You will be condemned. And I say this not to push you away, because I want you to run to him.

[18:40] So as you sit here this morning, consider, have you accepted Jesus? Do you obey Jesus? Do you believe in Jesus? So be sober, be real, be sincere.

your eternal fate rests on your response to Christ. Now for those here today who do believe in Christ, I have glorious news for you today.

Let's ground the scriptures. Look at the text, look at verse 5. So 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.

us. 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.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. But first, who are you in Christ?

[19:56] Well, everything glorious, everything grand, everything good about being an Old Testament Jew is now applied, is now true of you. In Providence, these labels, these names, this is who you are in Christ.

It's not who you are becoming. this is who you are. Okay, so who are you? First, you are God's temple.

Look at verse 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.

And what's a temple? A temple is a dwelling place for God. It is where God dwells, what he inhabits. That's who we are in Christ.

We are God's temple. Now, second, you're a holy priesthood. You now have direct access to God.

[21:04] You can draw near to him at any time, and he is there, and he is eager for you to fellowship with him. So that is who we are.

We are a holy priesthood. And third, you are a chosen race. You belong to God's distinctive people. You are personally chosen by the God of the universe to be his own.

And not because of anything you did or will do, but because of his gracious, sovereign choice. that is who we are.

We are God's chosen people. Fourth, you're a people for his own possession. His people, with all the affection of a holy, omnipotent God.

Look at Isaiah 43. It says, for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you, because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you.

[22:19] I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. As God's temple, as God's holy priesthood, as God's chosen race, as God's own possession, what is your fate?

What are you destined for? One word. glory. Consider Revelation 5. Then I looked, and I heard around the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders, the voice of many angels, and were myriads, and myriads, and thousands, and thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb, who was slain to receive power, and wealth, and wisdom, and might, and glory, and honor, and blessing.

And I heard every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying to him, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing, and honor, and glory, and might, forever, and ever.

And the four living creatures said, amen. And the elders fell down, and worshipped. Providence Community Church, your face is in that crowd, worshipping Christ.

Because he has chosen you, he has chosen you, to be in that crowd. And how can we thank God enough? Can our hearts be more full than with those realities?

[23 : 55] We can taste, and we can strive to see, and we can glory in the great privilege it is to be God's people. And we can live into our purpose for being in Christ.

So the third reality from this passage, why are we God's people? Well, zero in verse nine, especially the second half. It says, 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 marvelous light.

So why are we gods? Ultimately, that we ourselves may be trumpets, shofars, both a little louder than we heard this morning.

But ultimately, that we ourselves may be proclaimers into the world, for truly, if Sinai had a trumpet, now God has a people.

I'll say it again. If Sinai had a trumpet, now God has a people. And notice, Peter roots all of this in mercy.

[25 : 23] Once you had not received mercy, now you have this identity, this mission, flows from mercy. And yes, proclaiming this starts with verbal declaration.

We're to speak to the Lord in our homes. I'll say it again, in our homes. In our church, in our neighborhoods, in our workplaces.

And we're also called to be a living picture of God's excellencies through our lives. So first, what are God's excellencies?

Well, favorite reference that we love here at Providence is Edwards, Jonathan Edwards' sermon on the diverse excellencies of Christ. Surely Christ is God made visible.

So, as Edward puts it, in Christ there is infinite highness and infinite condescension, infinite justice and infinite grace, infinite glory and lowest humility, infinite majesty and transcendent meekness, deepest reverence and equality with God, absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation, self-sufficiency and complete trust.

[26 : 57] But truly, Christ is good and true and beautiful in all of his excellencies. So how do we proclaim these excellencies? Well, our lives should proclaim true statements about God.

People should be able to see and perceive what God is like based on how we live. We should reflect his character. So because of Christ's mercy, we can forgive.

Because of Christ's humility, we can serve. Because of Christ's patience, we can endure. Our lives should reflect his lordship.

Because of Christ's lordship, what do we prioritize? What do we sacrifice for? What do we organize our lives around? And we should reflect Christ's salvation.

Because of Christ's salvation, how do you suffer? In hope, in trust, in steadfastness? How do you speak with gratitude and humility and boldness?

[28 : 11] So as the application for today, consider these probing questions. First, where is your life currently reflecting the grace you've been shown by God?

Are you more patient than you've been in the past? Are you a kinder counselor than you've been in the past? Are you drawing near to God and the word and prayer more boldly or consistently than you have before? Are you leading better in the home?

Praise God for that. That's God's grace. Second, one, your life would change if you consistently lived in the good of your identity in Christ.

Whatever that is, repent. Name the sin. Consider the sin's effect upon God, how it displeases, how it grieves God.

Ask for and receive his forgiveness. Someone said, God is more eager to forgive us than we are even to ask for forgiveness.

[29 : 28] And then turn from your sin. And what sin? Start with the one that went through your head as I was talking. Start with that. harness that conviction, confess the disobedience, and repent of that sin, knowing that repentance always leads to freedom.

And repentance, if you want to live for God's glory, be a repenting person. Because it magnifies the grace and mercy and goodness of God.

God. And the third, third question, who in your life needs to hear and see displayed God's excellencies?

They might be inclined to believe in him. Be specific. Begin to pray for them. In your community groups, consider sharing who you're praying for, as you guys are already doing.

Go through the proclaim course. And consider how you might intentionally share Christ with them. Brothers and sisters, your life is not small.

[30 : 42] It's not merely about getting through the slog of the week. God has made us his people by his mercy for his praise.

God that starts with acknowledging the grace of God in our lives. Let's not be falsely humble and not acknowledge that. Let's give glory to God. There's grace in our lives. Let's acknowledge that and be thankful for it.

And then it continues on into repentance and then moves into living lives that are increasingly loving, increasingly bold, increasingly bent toward a world that does not yet know him.

so hear this clearly. At Sinai, a trumpet had announced that God had come.

Now God has made a people to proclaim his glory. Remember who Jesus is. He is God's chosen and precious stone, the cornerstone of his temple.

[31 : 51] remember who you are. Either in Christ as God's temple, God's chosen race, God's royal priesthood, God's holy nation, a people for his own possession, or you're outside of Christ, stumbling over this cornerstone.

And remember why you are, to proclaim his excellency's providence. this is who you are. You are God's people.

And like a shofar, our church, your life exists to declare just how great he is. So go. Go into your homes, go into your neighborhoods, go into your workplaces, and proclaim his excellencies.

because you are his people, and you exist for his praise. who who have who have Thank you.

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