

The Identity and Mission of the Church

1 Peter 2:9-10

Someone has said that the church in the world is like a boat in the sea.

It was made to be in the ocean;

the problem comes when the ocean gets in the boat.

Today's message is about our identity and our mission as believers.

- 9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

Peter begins this chapter with the exhortation to new believers to put off the evil behaviors from the past and take in the pure word of God. He uses an illustration of a newborn that longs for milk with the craving or longing a new believer will have for the Word of God. He says that it is the word of God that brings growth and maturity to every believer.

Then Peter speaks of the importance of the church in the lives of every believer. He speaks of the church that Christ is building. Christ is called the Living Stone. Believers are the living stones He is building into His church.

- 5 you also, as **living stones**, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The great potential of the church is from each individual's involvement in the process.

Jesus is in the church-building business.

He grows individual that He then builds into His church.

One individual can only do so much.

Several growing healthy Christians can do so much more.

Before Peter comes to a final point concerning the identity of believers, he shows by way of contrast the difference between believers and unbelievers.

The picture given is of the stone that was rejected by the builders of Solomon's Temple. In this a stone didn't seem to fit and was laid aside and lost. At the end of

the construction project they were missing a key stone upon which everything else was dependent. The quarries wrote back in answer to the builders' request for a re-order that they had already sent it. Digging through the rubble they found the stone, which the builders had rejected.

This became the example of Christ whom unbelieving Jews had rejected. Peter spoke of them,

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,

“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,”

8 and, “A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”;
for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

The contrast shows that believers who accept Jesus as the Messiah are now living stones, who are being built into Christ's Temple, the church; while non-believers, those who reject Christ, and stumble over Him, are disobedient to God's Word, and are doomed to their appointed end, as a result.

Peter completes the total contrast with the great blessings of believers.

This point ties together; the believer's identity and mission

I. The Believers' Identity

This is who you are individually, and corporately as the church!

Each of these descriptions declares our marvelous identity.

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

- A Chosen Race –electos- election

In verse 1 of this letter Peter says, ***to those who reside as aliens who are chosen.***

- A Royal Priesthood

Priests were those who ministered to God. A royal priest ministered to the king.

The Latin word for priest is a “bridge builder,” between God and man.

The priest offered sacrifices for his sin and then for the sins of the people.

The connotation also indicates the element of royalty as ruling.

Grant Osborne explains that, in Revelation,
 “the concept of saints participating in God’s rule occurs frequently,
 (2:26 ‘authority over the nations’;
 3:21, ‘sit with me on my throne’;
 5:10, ‘reign on the earth’;
 20:4, ‘authority to judge’;
 20:6 ‘reign with him;’). (Revelation, Page 27)¹

We are the King’s priests who will share in his rule.

God is using the church to glorify Himself through the salvation of the lost, and then by building them into his eternal temple-building project.

- **A Holy Nation**

Holy is the primary focus of God’s people – to be like Himself.

God chooses an imperfect people to display His kingdom here on earth.

God’s people, Israel were to display God’s rule to the surrounding nations.

The church is the ‘new Israel’ restored on the basis of the new covenant.

But the church is not an earthly nation-state as Israel was.

Instead is part of the heavenly kingdom

- **A people for God’s own possession - God’s treasure**

Titus 2:11-14 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

Peter declares:

“You are members of a new race,
 royal servants of the supreme King,
 citizens of a divine kingdom
 and residents of a heavenly city”

Quoting from Hosea about Israel’s severe discipline, he writes,

¹ Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter For You*, (The Good Book company, 2017), p. 88.

10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

“Hosea was writing about you... who are included in the New Covenant.”

II. The Believers’ Mission

Woven into our identity as believers is our incredible mission.

...so that...

Peter speaks of the purpose of gathering as God’s people:

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

Believers are **proclaimers of Christ** to a lost world.

The assignment of being verbal proclaimers of God’s glorious deeds – the gospel.

Jesus said, *“I will build My church”*

The church is really a gathering of the people of God for the purpose of worship, celebration, preaching, teaching - equipping, serving, rejoicing, and most of all: preparation for heaven.

“You are these things... [Identity]

and as the community of saints, we do these things. [Mission]

Sanchez writes,

“...whenever and why-ever we adopt a consumer mindset, it reveals and reinforces a view of the church that is too small.”²

He continues with rich insight,

“Now he identifies the church as nothing less than the new Israel, restored and renewed on the basis of the new covenant and called to be a display community that points the world to the glory of God and the joy of his kingdom, with both our lives and our lips. In other words, the church is not incidental to God’s plans – it is central to them. He has not given you the church to fit your plans and priorities; he has given you to the church to serve His plans and priorities.”³

² Sanchez, p. 85.

³ Sanchez, Pp. 85-86.

Just think what Christ could do if the church was a priority in our lives.

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Eph. 3:20-21)