

SERMON FOR MAY 7, 2023

TEXT: 1 PETER 2: 2-10

THEME: YOUR GOD GIVEN PURPOSE

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

In the name of Jesus:

Admiral James Stockdale was a United States Naval Vice Admiral. He served our country with distinction in the Vietnam War, earning the Medal of Honor. Later in his career he served as the president of the Citadel. But he is not remembered for any of these things. What he is remembered for is a question that he asked during the 1992 Presidential campaign. Stockdale was a candidate for vice president of the United States, with Ross Perot as his running mate as Perot ran for President as an independent.

During the vice presidential debate, Stockdale, when introducing himself, began his introduction with a couple of questions, "Who am I, and why am I here?" Well, the news media, and the entertainment industry latched onto those questions and soon Stockdale and his comments became fodder for late night comedy. And that is sad, because Stockdale was only

trying to explain who he was and what his purpose was in life to an American public where he was a virtual unknown.

Who are you, and what is your purpose in life? Peter in our text for today answers those questions for we who are believers in Jesus Christ. Peter Writes to the Christians who are dispersed throughout Asia Minor, people who were immigrants and had no homeland to call their own, Peter tells them and us, that we are, as Christians, first and foremost, a chosen people of God. Listen to what he says: “**9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Peter quotes from the OT book Hosea. The prophet Hosea took a prostitute, Gomer, to be his wife. Gomer kept cheating on Hosea and being unfaithful to him. God told Hosea that this is how God' people have treated God, God was faithful to them but they were unfaithful to God. So Hosea's message to God's people was to remind Israel of the Lord's faithfulness and how God gives new life to His people.

Now, Peter, picking up on the imagery of Hosea, proclaims that now you all are God's people, having God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. Just as God

called Israel His chosen people, so God calls the Church, those who believe in Jesus Christ His chosen people. No earthly nation is God's chosen people, no people of a particular language or color are His chosen people. The Bible says that all who believe in Jesus Christ are God's chosen people. This is why we confess that we believe in the holy Christian and Apostolic Church. The Church is now and always has been God's chosen people. You, through faith in Christ, are a member of His Church and are God's chosen people. This is why the Church is called holy.

God here calls us His chosen people in that we are now a people set apart for Him and His purpose. To be holy in this way means that God the Father sent Jesus to pay the price for the forgiveness of all of our sins. You have been bought with a price, the price of Jesus' own precious blood. At one time we were separated from God because of our sins, we were at one time not a part of God's people, but now we have received the mercy of God in Jesus Christ and are now His chosen people, chosen to live lives according to God's will and for His purpose.

This was the calling of the people of Israel. God chose them as His people so that they would be His own possession, and they would then be set apart from all the other nations to live according to His will. In like manner, God has chosen you in Christ to be His own possession so that you and we

together as His Church conduct our lives together according to His will. The Apostle Paul puts it this way: "Do not be conformed to this world."

We are set apart by God and we are to live our lives differently from the society around them. We are called to see situations and events that happen around us differently than other people see them. We are called to live differently, see things in a different way, because we have been forgiven by God in Jesus and we now obey God rather than man.

So now you and I are called to represent Jesus in all we do. You and I are called to be little Christs in our lives, representing and showing Jesus to those around us.

We are living in different times. Some Christians today are even promoting violence. But violence is not and never has been the way of Christ. Take time to read the entire Sermon on the Mount. Even at the end of His life and ministry, when Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden, Peter took up the sword to defend Jesus, but Jesus told Peter to put the sword back in its sheath, for Jesus' kingdom is not of this world.

We are called to follow Christ in peace. While the world rages on, God calls us to love one another even as He has loved us. Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the kingdom of God. The way of Jesus,

the way God has chosen us to live, is to live in peace and in harmony. We are called to model Jesus in what we say and what we do.

We are to have the same attitude as Jesus had, who didn't count equality with God as something to be used to His own advantage, rather He lived His life as a servant, humbling Himself to the point of dying on a cross. This is to be our attitude and our life, as Paul writes to Timothy, "to live peaceful, quiet, and a godly life, dignified in every way. This is what God wants us to do, this is pleasing in His sight, because God wants all people to be saved and to come to know the truth of His love." (2 Tim. 2: 2-4). Elsewhere Paul says, "As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, and patience."

Peter notes in his epistle that people live their lives in one of two ways, a person will either live to serve themselves and make decisions based on their emotions, or they will base their decisions in life on the will of God. Look at how this is playing out in the lives of many Americans today. Sadly, many act immediately on their emotions and feelings. And so angry words are exchanged and things are said that can't be taken back. People act on their emotions and do irrational things without thinking. We have lost our ability to think rationally according to the will of God. Instead of stepping back and considering the consequences, people today will lash out at others in

anger, speaking before they think, and in doing so will cause more harm than good.

Peter exhorts all of us to live no longer for human passions but for the will of God (4:3). So remember who you belong to! You belong to Jesus, who has purchased you from sin with the price of His holy precious shed blood on the cross. Remember your purpose in life, to glorify God! Then seek to do just that by daily repent of your sins, asking God to forgive you all your sin, then commend yourself, and others to Christ your Lord. To commend yourself to the Lord is to place yourself in God's hands, praying for yourself and others, asking God for protection and help in every time of need.

There was a time in David's life when King Saul was pursuing David to kill him. Saul retreated into a cave and David's men saw this as an opportunity for David to kill Saul. What did David do? Nothing. He didn't take matters into his own hands because he knew that to kill the man that the Lord put in place as king of Israel would be to commit a sin. Rather, David placed his trust in the Lord. Knowing God would place him as King, David trusted in God to do it in God's time and place.

You are a child of Christ and your God given purpose is to follow Jesus. Trusting in the Lord and committing your life to Him. As you do that, God will use you to make a difference in the lives of others. For "He has shown you, O

mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly,
and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. “

Amen