

SERMON FOR JUNE 18, 2023

TEXT: EXODUS 19: 5

THEME: A TREASURED POSSESSION

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

In the name of Jesus:

Everyone has something in their life that they treasure, an item that they believe is one of the most important items in one's life. These things run the gamut, from a family heirloom to something that was purchased for a great price, such as a new car or truck. One of my most treasured possessions was given to me when I was a baby. Today it doesn't look like much, but it is special to me nevertheless (show the teddy bear). It is the teddy bear that I received from my mom and dad when I was under a year old. Yes it has seen its better days, but in its heyday, this was my most treasured possession. I went to bed with it, it was by my side at all of my meals, when I was upset it gave me comfort. When it was in need of repair and had lost all of its stuffing, my sainted mom repaired it by filling the teddy with nylon stockings. When the teddy was mistakenly thrown out with the trash, my sainted father went dumpster diving in order to retrieve it. When I was reunited with it, the story goes that I cried tears of joy. At one time this teddy was my most treasured

possession, and seeing as I still have it, I guess you could say that it still is one of my more treasured possessions.

In our text for today, our Lord says to Israel that, “You will be my treasured possession . . . you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Out of all of the nations of the world God chose Israel to be His treasured possession. He did it by calling Abraham from a life of idolatry to a living relationship with the one true God. God did this by grace. It wasn't that Abraham was some special type of person who had certain qualities that God was looking for. Listen to how Moses speaks of Abraham in Moses' final instructions to the people before he died. Moses said: 'A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. **6** And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor.'

But the Lord rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, showing mighty and awesome displays of power in the ten plagues including the Passover, and seeing them safely through the Red Sea on dry ground. While in the desert, the Lord provided for His people by leading them to water and feeding them with bread from heaven. And now at the foot of Mt. Sinai, the Lord descends

to speak to His people, telling them that they are His most treasured possession before giving them the Ten Commandments.

YOU ARE THE LORD'S MOST TREASURED POSSESSION, and this is not because of anything that you have done. Jesus, God's only Son, has secured your place in God's family by paying the necessary price for your salvation. For as the Scripture declares: you have been saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, this is not of your own doing, for Jesus has purchased you from sin, Satan, and death, taking your life from the garbage of dump of your sins not with silver or gold but with His holy and precious blood, His innocent suffering and death, all so that you could be his own and serve Him all the days of your life.

All who believe in Jesus are the Lord's most prized and treasured possession. Even as the Lord fed His people in the wilderness with water and bread from heaven, so too He feeds and sustains you with His Word and with the true Body and Blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. And now, as Peter further explains: "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."

But what does that even mean? Well, just as the Lord called the people of Israel out of slavery to be His most treasured possession, they responded by

following the Lord in their lives. The Lord gave them the Ten Commandments as the revelation of His will, showing them what type of lives they were to live. Their lives would be directed by the Lord and shaped by obedience to the Lord in keeping the Ten Commandments. And as the people would follow the Ten Commandments, their lives would witness to others not only who they were but whose they were. They belonged to the Lord and they were made holy by the Lord, set apart by the Lord to show all of the other nations that there was only one God and that God was the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They would be a light to the Gentiles, proclaiming the excellencies of the Lord by living their lives by conforming to the will of the Lord as revealed in the Ten Commandments.

You too are the Lord's MOST TREASURED POSSESSION. He has called you out of darkness, you are His chosen people, His royal priesthood, His holy nation, declaring the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light. You have been set apart by the Lord from the rest of the world, given faith in Jesus by the power of the Spirit, and now, empowered by that same Spirit, to show and share the love God has for all in Jesus. This is your calling and my calling, for Jesus says: ""You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

As the Lord’s MOST TREASURED POSSESSION, your purpose and calling in life is now to share the mercy that you have received from the Lord to others. Your focus in life is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving your neighbor as yourself.

The Lord has transformed you so that you can powerfully show love and mercy to your neighbor. Showing honor to those in authority, helping and supporting someone in need, befriending one who is lonely, loving your family, helping someone improve his or her possessions and income, explaining things in a kind and generous way, being a good listener and helper to those around you. The ways are endless, but in showing love and mercy to those around you, you share the love and mercy God has for you and for all. You demonstrate that everyone is important to God, and they are. For Jesus died for all, to make you and everyone GOD’S MOST TREASURED POSSESSION. To the glory of God and in Jesus’ name. Amen