



God is spirit, and those who
worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship

with Pastor Steve

Chosen to Proclaim

Have you ever felt the excitement of being chosen for something? I can vividly remember the process of choosing softball or football team for physical education class at school. The two best athletes were chosen as team captains. They would flip a coin to see who chose first. The rest of us would wait anxiously hoping to be chosen in the first round by the better of two athletes. Though sometimes a captain might choose his best friend first, most of the time he would choose the “best of the rest” first in order to obtain the superior team.

To be chosen high in the order meant that you were considered as a good player; it was an honor and made you feel special. Should we not be chosen in the first round or by the better athlete, our next hope is that we would not be chosen last. It was an embarrassment to be chosen last. To our shame, the last person chosen last was always the recipient of our jeers.

Do you remember sitting in the classroom when the teacher would ask the class a question? You, as well as a dozen other students, knew the answer and you frantically waved your hand hoping the teacher would call on you for the answer. Do you remember the excitement when she did call on you and the disappointment when she didn't? Maybe your employer chose you for a promotion or raise. Maybe he asked your assistance on an important project. How did that make you feel?

Have you ever thought about how an orphan feels, when out of all the children in the orphanage, the prospective parents chooses him or her? Well, that is exactly what happened when God chose us. He adopted us to be a member of his family. The Apostle Peter wrote, *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.* (1 Peter 2:9 ESV)

The Greek word for chosen used by Peter in this verse is *eklektos*. *Eklektos* means select,

favorite or elect. So, as Christians, we have been selected or elected by God. Do you understand that this is no small thing? This is bigger than P.E. or math class. This is bigger than a promotion or raise at work. We're talking about the God of the universe; the one who spoke all things into existence. We dare not take this for granted like we are tempted to do with so many other biblical truths. The Apostle Paul made a point to convey this truth to his disciples as did our Lord Jesus.

...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...

Ephesians 1:4

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth...

2 Thessalonians 2:13

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

John 15:16

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious...

1 Peter 2:4

The English Standard Version of the bible says that we are a chosen race. The King James uses the word generation. The Greek word for generation or race is *genos* which means “kin.” We have been selected by God to be kin to him. Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:4 that we were chosen in Christ. How serious was God about choosing his kin folk? He gave his own son. Jesus became our

nearest kinsman by redeeming us with the purchase price of his blood.

The revelation of Jesus as the kinsman-redeemer caused an eruption of praise in heaven. John recorded what he saw and heard. *And they sang a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood, Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...* (Revelation 5:9) If we take lightly our election of God, then we take lightly the means by which we were elected; the blood of Jesus.

God has also chosen us to be a royal priesthood; that is a kingly priestly fraternity. The American Heritage Dictionary defines fraternity as a body of men, such as a religious order or guild, associated for some common purpose or interest. Most of us would probably associate the word fraternity with organizations established on college campuses. However, all Christians male and female are members of God's fraternity just as all Christians are the bride of Christ. Fraternities are usually designated by Greek letters. We will call God's fraternity Alpha/Omega. Our acceptance into this fraternity was not based on our academic achievements or our parent's income or social status. We were accepted based on God's mercy and our fees paid with the blood of Jesus.

We were also chosen by God to be a holy nation. In other words to be a sacred tribe. Peter wrote, *...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* (1 Peter 2:5) God has called us to be physically pure and morally blameless, set aside for a most holy thing.

Peter goes on to say that we are "a people for his own possession." Most of us are familiar with the term "peculiar people" used in the King James Version of the bible. However, the ESV is really a much better interpretation of this verse. The Greek word for peculiar means acquisition, purchased or possession. Do you sense a theme here? We have been purchased by God for God through Jesus to be his. He OWNS us.

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:20

You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

1 Corinthians 7:23

...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 1:18-19

God said this about Israel; *For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.* (Deuteronomy 14:2) The Hebrew word used for special treasure means wealth as closely

shut up. My perception is that this treasure is so valuable that it has been locked away or hidden for safe keeping. God chose neither us nor Israel because we were special. Jesus is the one who is special. Titus wrote, *...who gave*

Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14) We became special only because God chose us in and through Jesus. We remain special only because we are in him. We are his possession. As the Psalmist Asaph aptly wrote, *So we, Your people and the sheep of Your pasture.* (Psalm 79:13)

Why did God grant us to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people for his own possession? There could be several answers to that question, but I like the one Peter gave; *that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

The Greek word for proclaim means to publish and celebrate. To publish means to bring to the attention of the public. We are to publish the excellencies (Gr. valor, virtue, excellent) of him who called us. The word excellencies derives from the word excellence which means the state, quality or condition of excelling; superiority, pre-eminence, something in which a person or thing excels; a surpassing feature or virtue. The word excellencies being plural suggests that God is far more superior and pre-eminent in more ways than one.

Ultimately Peter is telling us that God has chosen us to celebrate and make known to the public that, in more ways than one, he excels them all, he is superior or pre-eminent above all, he surpasses all in virtue. Paul concurred when he wrote, *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible,*

whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:16-17)

Though our celebration services are included in Peter's admonishment, our means of publishing God's pre-eminence goes far beyond what we do on Sunday mornings. It is an act of worship which encompasses not only what we say, sing or write but how we live our lives.

Have you been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light? Does your life proclaim the excellencies of him who called you?

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