

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Who Do You Think You Are?

SERIES Matters of the Mind

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KEY SCRIPTURE 1 Peter 2:9-12

SYNOPSIS God thinks very highly of us. We need to understand who we are in Christ and it will shape our attitudes and behaviors.

HIGHLIGHTS Closing with a Music Video



☞ Who Do You Think You Are?

1 Peter 2:9–12

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

☞ **10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.**

☞ **12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.**

There's a lot of confusion and conflict about personal identity these days. Some identity questions are hotly debated. Do you want to be identified with a particular political party or not? Do you want to be known as religious or not? And, which religion? Are you pro-this or anti-that? Really, who are you? So much confusion. Something as simple as understanding whether you are male or female has become questionable in our society. Today, I want to remind you who you are in Christ. I'm not going to get into a political debate, but I will say this. Once you understand who you really are in Christ, it will shape who you are in all those other arenas as well. You need to know who you really are.

Dinglehopper... In The Little Mermaid, Ariel finds this shiny object and asks Scuttle what it is. He replies, "It's a dinglehopper. Humans use these little babies to straighten their hair out. See, just a little twirl here and a yank there and voila, you've got an aesthetically pleasing configuration of hair that humans go nuts over." When you don't understand the real identity of something, it can so easily be misused. It's the same with us. If we don't understand who we really are, we can get caught up in all kinds of misuse and abuse that aren't appropriate for us.

This morning as we ask God what He thinks of our congregation, I think there is a smile that crosses His face as He looks at us with pride. Then He says, "Those are my people, they belong to me, and I am showing them my mercy, and then they in turn will proclaim my mercy to the people around them."

Peter wants us to understand that the church is something unique in the world... a body belonging solely to God, a group that is to be entirely dedicated to God and to His service.

1. Who you are

a chosen people

Eklektos genos – chosen... choice; favorite; something of the best quality

When God looks at you, he says, "These are my peeps. I love these guys. He sees you and thinks, "Oh yeah, you're my favorite. And so are you... and you... and you." You are **God's**

☞ **choice people.** He thinks highly of you and wants you to be part of his plan in this world. It's



not because you've got all this talent and charm, but because God's spirit lives in you. You are a chosen people.

a royal priesthood

Royal... Kingly; regal (used only here)

Priesthood... Order of priests (only 1 Pet. 2:5 & 9)

Cf. Revelation 1:6

and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father

You are of royal descent. You are not just a pauper, you are a prince. You are a princess. You have royal blood flowing through your veins. The kingdom belongs to you; it's your inheritance.

I've had the honor of traveling outside of the US on several occasions. Primarily, my travels have been with missionaries in areas less developed and less prosperous than America. It's moving to see how people survive and even thrive in less than ideal conditions. But, you know what? I always get to come back home to the USA. I can drink the public water. I live in a nice home with carpet and indoor plumbing. I never have to worry about what I will have for lunch. There's a stark contrast between my life and the life of many, many others overseas. But, even America is like a third-world country compared to the Kingdom of God, and that's where we really belong. We are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not only that, but you are **a child of ☞the king**; the kingdom is your inheritance. You are royal.

You are priests. In the OT, priests had access to God close up. They worked right up close to the very presence of God. Everyone else was kept at a distance. As a priest, you have direct **☞access to God**, through Christ. You can approach God's throne with confidence (Heb. 4:16). It is your right to come into his presence and interact with God. You are a priest.

a holy nation

Holy... Pure; sacred; set apart

1 Thessalonians 4:7

God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

God calls to be holy and he says that we are holy. This doesn't mean we are perfect. It means we are set apart, we are sacred to God. It's like the fancy china in your grandma's hutch. It's not for just any old use; it's for special occasions. It's set apart. Devoted fishermen have that one special lure that they don't share with anyone. It's set apart from the rest. It's unique; it's special; **☞it's not just ordinary**. And that describes you as well. You are holy... **unique; special; set apart...**

a people belonging to God

Belonging... Possession (Eph. 1:14); property; preserved



☞ There is ownership involved here. You are **God's prized possession**. This means that he has rights to you that others do not. You can't repaint and remodel my house because it's not yours, but I can because I own it.

This belonging is not just about God's rights; it's about your privilege. Because God has ownership rights, he takes special care of you. I don't feed and house all dogs. I don't pay vet bills for other dogs. But I do for my own dog. On occasion he has gotten out of the yard and run off. That has never ended well for him. He gets worn out and sick and he's even ended up in the pound overnight. But, because he belongs to me, I go and get him and bring him home. You belong to God. He takes care of you and when you wander off, he comes to get you and bring you back home.

Cf. the bride "belongs" to the groom; she takes groom's name, and in a good marriage, he protects and provides for her. This kind of belonging is a good thing. My wife belongs to me and I belong to her, and that's good.

One time I dated a girl and after a few dates, I wrote a note to her that included something to the effect of her being my girl. Well, she didn't like that. "I'm not anybody's girl; I don't belong to you; I'm my own person." We didn't last very long. In a good, godly relationship, belonging is a good thing. Are you a daddy's girl? For most daughters, that's a positive relationship.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.

aliens and strangers in the world

Alien... foreigner; on a stop-over here

Stranger... pilgrims

This is the contrast to what we've talked about so far. We belong to God as his choice people, set apart for his purposes, and heirs of his kingdom. But to this world, we are aliens and strangers. We are only passing through.

*This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue;
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

We are strangers, we are aliens, we are not of this world.

Philippians 3:20-21

☞ our **citizenship is in heaven**. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Chosen, royal, holy, belonging to God.



2. What you do

☞ **Declare his praises**

Announce, affirm, proclaim, and shout his praises. Publicize his valor, his excellence, virtue and goodness. Sing songs about God and how awesome he really is. Testify of his work in your life. Declare his praises. Here's some starting points:

he's called you out of darkness

Imagine being lost in the bottom of an unfamiliar cave when your lantern goes out. How relieved and overjoyed would you be to have a rescuer come with a light to lead you out of that dark cave? That's what God has done for you. He brought you out of darkness and...

brought you into his wonderful light

Ephesians 5:8

you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.

*I can see clearly now the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright, bright sun shiny day
It's gonna be a bright, bright sun shiny day*

He's not only brought you out of the darkness, but he has transformed you into a light. You are not just in the light, you are the light. Declare his praises!

☞ **Abstain from sinful desires**

Though we are choice, royal, holy people, we still live in a fallen world and are hindered daily with the sinful nature.

there is a war against your soul

Your soul is your very life. It's typically understood to mean your mind, will and emotions. There is a war in your mind. We've been talking about matters of the mind recently. You've got to take control of your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ. There's also a war against your will and emotions. You have desires that are not pleasing to God, which must be brought under control. You have emotions that often are in conflict with the truth of God's word. God's word must win the battle. There's a war against your soul and to win we must abstain from those sinful desires.

Romans 8:13-14 talks about the aggressive stance we must take and kill those sinful desires.

Galatians 5:16

live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.



I've said before that when it comes to sin, we must repent, but not just repent. We must replace the sin with godliness. Abstain from sinful desires and live by the Spirit.

☞ **Live good lives among the pagans**

let them see your good deeds so they may glorify God

Matthew 5:16 says, "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

What does a good life look like? Colossians 3:12-14 paints us a picture: "as God's chosen ☞ people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness** and **patience**. 13 **Bear with** each other and **forgive** whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on **love**, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Declare his praises; abstain from sinful desires; live a good life with compassion, kindness, humility gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness and love. Let your light shine!

Conclusion

How many of you have seen the movie Toy Story? The movie is about a bunch of toys that come to life. The lead characters are Woody, a toy cowboy, and Buzz Lightyear, a space ranger. On the surface the movie is about toys, but really it is about identity, understanding who you are. A pivotal scene occurs where Buzz has been captured by a boy who is going to blow him up with some explosives. Woody and Buzz struggle with their identity as they are held captive by Sid. Buzz finds determination when He recognizes that his purpose is to bring joy to his owner, Andy.

This portrays the struggle that we all go through at one time or another. Everyone at some point struggles to know why we are here, what is our purpose on the planet. But it's only when we come to recognize our true purpose that we find the fulfillment and determination to be who we are created to be. That's why God spends so much time giving us images to understand ourselves. He wants us to be who He created us to be, and in 1 Peter 2 He wants us to come to the realization that we are a distinctive people.

God keeps reminding us, over and over again and tells us who we are, and whose we are because He wants us to be "the real deal" so that others can recognize how great He is and come to know His love and grace.

Who do you think you are? Here's the truth: A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God! Declare his praises; abstain from sinful desires; live good lives. **Let ☞ people see Jesus in you!**

☞ **Music Video: Who You Say I Am**