

5-10-20

Sermon- The Mercy Of God

Scripture- 1 Peter 2:1-10, CTW: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

Hymns- 668, 103

Theme- Peter ends this section with the statement "once you weren't a people, but now you are God's people." As such, we are beneficiaries of God's plans for our life eternally. Under His wing of protection, He provides mothers and mother figures to help guide us, protect us, and "train up a child in the way which he or she should go." Seems like Mother's Day is a good time to realize the true nature of His plan for us.

I. How Are We Re-Made into Solid Citizens of the Kingdom?

A. "To be or not to be, that is the question."

Question to ponder: Did you decide at some point in your life what you wanted to be . . . only to have your decision changed by your parents, your marriage relationship, your parental responsibility, or of necessity due to certain circumstances in your life?

At some point in everyone's life - the reality of the consequences of our decisions sets in, and that can cause havoc to any plans you may have made.

Stop for a minute and think of the things you thought you wanted to be, as you grew up...I have a list about a mile long...a farmer, a carpenter, a Navy Pilot, a state policeman, and so on...

Today is Mother's Day, so in honor of that we need to stop and think about the influences God introduced into our lives and what lasting effect they have had.

B. Think About Your Decision to BE a Christian.

Your decision and mine "to follow Jesus, no turning back" no doubt brought changes that we never dreamed of . . . to what

you were going to be and do . . . to where we wanted to go . . . live . . . how we would conduct ourselves through the twists and turns of our lives.

Never in a million years, for example, would I have imagined that I, with my background and experience, (both good and bad), would be called and enabled by God to serve three churches in the last fifteen years. I came to this church in 2010 and as of July 1st I will be entering into my eleventh year!

II. When you gave your heart to Christ, and decided to follow Jesus, did it ever occur to you that something more than just a saved soul was in store?

A. God, by many means, opens doors of Opportunity for Us To Become "Living Stones".

Peter says that we are being built into God's spiritual temple...we are becoming His Holy Priests.

Some people think that if they get to heaven, they will be entering through the back door, but Jesus Christ has no back doors - only open doors of opportunity!

You and I were saved to live for Christ in the here and now and to live with Christ in the hereafter. BUT, what we learned is: to live for Christ means far more than we imagined!

You and I were "wonderfully made...and then remade" to be **somebody**, a child of God . . ."remade to be adopted into the family of God" as a child of the King . . . "remade to make a difference for Christ" as a minister of the New Covenant.

As if being in those three astounding relationships to Father God were not enough, here comes the Apostle Peter with the shocking announcement about a "role of all roles" that is yours and mine because of our uniqueness as children of God, children of the King, ministers of the New Covenant.

You and I were remade to be Rock-solid Representatives of Christ, just as surely as any God-ordained priest ever was or is!

B. Our Response: Stop Behaving as Children and “Grow-Up” into our New Responsibilities!

Sounds familiar..Did your Mom ever just look at you and say “Oh, Grow Up!?”

Peter says, “Therefore”, put away old behavior patterns, and, as newborns, yearn for pure spiritual milk by which to grow in Christ. I know you will do this because you have indeed tasted that the Lord is good.” (I Peter 2:1-3)

From that easily understood “milk” analogy, Peter turned his rhetoric up a notch or two, using analogies that elevated a mature believer’s role to the highest level attainable – **I Peter 2:4-10**, if you read the passage again, you will see that Peter is telling us, **“Oh Grow Up!”**

Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:11: When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought like a child. When I grew up, I put the ways of a child behind me.

Here Peter is telling us to do the same thing.

You have heard it said that “A picture is worth a thousand words”! Do you see the picture painted here by Peter – a word picture of the Temple of which there was no greater structure or edifice in the minds of Peter’s hearers, and no greater representative of God than the priest associated with the temple?

III. Peter depicts the onward Christian movement in terms of three essential components of the Temple: the cornerstone, the building blocks, and the Priest.

A. Jesus spoke of His body as the temple of God which would be destroyed, but raised. Paul asked that searching question, “Don’t you know that you are the temple of God . . . that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?” Thus, Peter

elevates the role of mature believers to the highest level imaginable.

He calls us to visualize Christ as the Chief Cornerstone of a Spiritual Temple being built with living stones into a Spiritual House served by a Holy Priesthood made up of priests (God's representatives) who are individually distinctive! "In Christ, there is no difference!"

What a privilege that we should be called sons of God . . . ministers of the New Covenant . . . priests (rock-solid representatives of Christ)!

By now, you do know that The Church of which you are a part is not a physical building of bricks and mortar standing at a particular geographical location!

If this virus situation does nothing else for us, it needs to convince us of that as a fact for our own faith lives as we get prepared to head into the "new world normal."

The Church of Jesus Christ is Believers who represent Christ in word and in deed as we: go wherever we go . . . do whatever we do . . . say whatever we say!

The One to whom you are connected, attached, fixed, committed - as if you were a stone aligned with the cornerstone of a temple - is the One who has been rejected by others but accepted by you. This is the way it was, is now, and forever will be.

B. A word of caution: Let rejection of the world in no way affect your profession of faith in Him and your testimony for Him. While others deny Him, keep your trust intact, and you will be pleased with the outcome of your faithful representation of Christ. **Sound like good Motherly Advice?**

Let us Represent Christ by humbly accepting our role as priests chosen by God – no bragging, as if we were God's favorites, while others were excluded.

ONLY because we repented of sin and accepted the One chosen by God to be an atoning sacrifice are we now considered to be priests chosen by God. To be His disciple is to be chosen by His Father. You choose Jesus, God chooses you.

Represent Christ by living up to the image conveyed by "royal priesthood". Royalty is supposed to act royally! We want our lives to bring honor, not shame, to the Name of Jesus. Unashamedly we want to let it be known that we are His - connected to, aligned with, and our lives patterned after, Jesus Christ!

Represent Christ by living out our lives in as "holy" a manner as we possibly can without displaying a "holier-than-thou" attitude. If we keep our role as priests in perspective - humbly accepting our "chosen" status - we should never have to worry about coming across as "holier-than-thou" - simply because we won't be!

Represent Christ by a willingness to be "peculiar". When we conduct our lives in keeping with our calling, our profession of faith, our status of having been set aside and dedicated to God, there is no question that some folks will consider us to be "odd" or "unusual".

The word translated "peculiar" actually means "a purchased possession". So, we are "God's special possession purchased by the blood of Jesus"! Now folks: THAT is an honorable position to be in - not to be ashamed of but proud of!

So proud that we let our light shine that others take notice and respond in one of two ways - ridicule us, or, glorify our Father in heaven (hopefully the latter)!

C. Finally: Our priestly status means that we have the privilege of entering the presence of God at any time of our choosing - as we need to and want to.

Hebrews 4:14-16 reminds us that In Christ, we all (each of us who bear the name of Christ) may unhesitatingly and

unreservedly approach the throne of God). Jesus made access to God possible by His atoning sacrifice on the Cross.

“And when Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit (he died). At that moment, the veil (curtain) in the temple was rent (torn) in two from top to bottom.”

In the Old Testament, only designated priests could enter the Holy of Holies to encounter the presence of God which was separated from the people by a curtain.

In the New Testament, due to our connection to the great high priest, Jesus, we are made priests; thus, we need no intervener; we have direct access to God.

And who represents us when we go straight to God in prayer? None other than the One who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

God gave us mothers to help lead us to that light...and with their guidance we are truly blessed. Even if your Mother has gone on to reside with the Father in heaven, I'll bet that her words of guidance still resonate in your heart!

The One we represent as we go about our daily lives represents us as we go about living the plan the Father has for our lives, and it's a beautiful thing, Amen?

Let Us Pray...