

“God’s Chosen Generation”

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Open your Bibles with me to the book of first Peter. 1 Peter chapter 2. The title of the message this morning is God's Chosen Generation. That title was taken from verse nine of first Peter chapter 2, where the apostle writes, *“But ye are a chosen generation.”* He’s talking to believers. He's talking to those who know Christ; to whom Christ has been revealed by the power of the Spirit in the preaching of the gospel: the glorious person, the finished work of Christ. *“ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.”* If you have a concordance in your Bible, that word peculiar doesn't mean odd. We may be odd I don't know, but that’s not what that word means. It means purchased, bought and paid for. You’re a purchased people. He says, *“that ye should shew forth the praises (virtues) of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;”* God's chosen generation.

Now I want to just answer two questions this morning.

Number one: What is it to be chosen?

Number two: Who are those who are chosen?

What does it mean to be chosen? Well, the word in the original language (The New Testament Greek) is the *eklektós*. And so you know what we get from that word? We get election. Now election is not a popular subject today. I know when I first really come to see that the Bible taught election, I told I told my mother that if I preach that I'd have to apologize and set up some kind of defense for God, but when the Lord showed me the reality of the glory of his sovereign purpose and way of salvation; I don't have to apologize to you for God. I really don't have to defend God, for he's God. He is his own defense and I make no apologies for what the Scripture says. Whether we like it or not, this is just what the Scripture says. You either believe it or you don't. Now if you reject the Scriptures, you reject the God of the Scriptures. You understand that. But what I've come to see is that God's election of grace, and that's exactly what it is, is one of the most glorious truths that we can understand by the power of the spirit, but also it's our salvation. It is the source of our salvation, if we're saved. What is it to be chosen? Well God's election of grace, and that's important we understand that. It is not that God chose a people. God did choose a people, the Bible teaches that. But it's choosing them in grace, before the foundation of the world. Again, that's what the Scripture teaches. When he marked out by name, the ones he would save by his grace through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what the Bible says that our names were written in the Lamb's book of life. The Lord knoweth them that are his and this is a doctrine that the natural man hates because in his mind it's just unjust. It's unfair. Yet God has determined that that's the way it is. And if you want to deal in issues of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, read the book of Romans chapter 9 and I assure you that's the only answer you're going to get from the Bible. And basically here's what it says: God is God. He doeth what he pleases and we're just creatures, so shut up.

That's basically what it says.

Because our little feeble minds are not able to comprehend the vastness of God's infinite mind and what may seem unjust and unfair to us is not unjust and unfair at all. Who are you to argue with God? Who are you to debate with him? I used to be a debater and arguer until God put me in my place. And I'll say right now, if your religion or your idea of salvation depends upon you figuring all this out about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, you got a task ahead of you that you cannot solve. You're going to be in turmoil the rest of your life. But here's what he said.

Let me just read this to you in Romans chapter 9. This thing is much, much more serious than what we think it to be naturally. He talks about Jacob and Esau. He says Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated. And he says this was the case before the two were ever born. Was God unjust in hating Esau? No, Esau was like all of us, a sinner. If God gave any of us what we deserve or what we've earned, what would it be? Hell, eternal damnation and I'm talking about the best of us and the worst of us. *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*

And when we speak of salvation by God's grace in Christ that's why the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is so important, so valuable, and so necessary. Because salvation is by God's grace through him. It's not based upon what I do or don't do or what God foresaw that I would do. Was God unjust in hating? What is God's hatred? It is not like our hatred. Our hatred is sinful. God's hatred is justice. It's his wrath upon sinners to whom God imputes, charges sin. That's what God's wrath is. That's what his hatred is. It's giving somebody what they deserve and that's justice.

But was God unjust to love Jacob? No. Because he marked out Jacob for salvation not because of Jacob's moral character and conduct. Read about Jacob and you'll see that. It is because of his purpose of grace. Look at Romans 9:13-15. *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."* That's God's prerogative. Does that surprise us? Well, he created this world didn't he? *"So then it is not of him that willeth, (it's not of the will of man) nor of him that runneth, (not of the works of man) but of God that sheweth mercy."* Romans 9:16. That's what the Bible teaches, that's what it reveals.

But God has determined that this is the way it is. Now liberal theologians they say, "well you know that's just Paul's theology, that's Pauline theology." I heard that until I was blue in the face at seminary. "That's Pauline theology, that is just what Paul thought. And you know he was a misogynist and a woman hater anyway and all that stuff." Well Peter thought that too, look back over at our text.

Look at first Peter 1:1. *"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers*

scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge...” and that word foreknowledge in the Bible doesn't mean God's prior knowledge of something. It means foreordination. That's what it means. God's foreknowledge: it's his knowledge in an intimate way. ...”*the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*” The Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.

You know the main reason that unbelievers hate this doctrine is because it leaves all salvation up to the sovereign purpose of God and it removes all human merit from the equation of salvation. Man's version of election: listen to this. God looked down through a telescope of time and he foresaw what you would do, whether you would believe him or not. Now the first question I would ask about that is, is that biblical? And the answer is no. One preacher I heard on television said “here's election: God votes for you, the devil votes against you, and you cast the deciding vote.” You better be registered. That's not what the Bible teaches. In fact, the Bible teaches that if God left the whole human race alone and did not intervene in the new birth and in giving us a new heart, and gathered the whole kit and caboodle of us up into one place and stood before us and asked this question: How many of you choose me and raise your hand? There wouldn't be one of us, according to the Scriptures, that would raise their hand. Not if we knew the true and living God, we wouldn't raise it.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:” 1 Corinthians 2:14 God chose a people to save for his glory and he chose them in Christ.

Over in that passage that brother Jim read, Isaiah 42. Do you know this was a sermon that got Isaiah in trouble? I mean he got in a lot of hot water over this. You know, Isaiah, they say that he was murdered by the unbelieving Israelites in Jerusalem where he preached. Some say he was one of those it was sawed asunder, sawed in two. I don't know if that's the case, but I know he was unpopular. And the reason that this passage got him in trouble is he spoke of the salvation of God's elect among Gentiles. And the Jews said no, there are no elect Gentiles, we are the elect. They were in a temporal way, but not in a spiritual way. In fact, the Bible says (and Isaiah said this too, in the Bible) that among Israel the whole bunch was lost in their sins except for a small remnant, according to the election of Grace. And the Bible teaches Christ is the first one of God's elect. Christ was chosen by the father the son of God in the everlasting covenant of grace before the foundation of the world to be the savior of his people, to be surety for his people. And God chose his people and gave them to Christ. And that's what it says here in Isaiah 42:1. *“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect (that's Christ), in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* Do you know how he brings judgment to the Gentiles? He brings the gospel, the gospel of God's judgment of Christ as the sin bearer and sin offering of his people whom he saves by his grace. And out of that, out of the human race, God has a people out of every tribe kindred tongue and nation. He mentions the isles, that's Gentiles. Israelites didn't live on an island. And that's what he is talking about. God chose

a people.

The Bible teaches that prior to the new birth - remember, Christ said "you must be born again" Now why is that? I was born 67 years ago, why must I be born-again? Because if I'm not born-again, I cannot see in a spiritual way, in a believing way, the kingdom of God. I cannot enter. So the Bible teaches this: that prior to the new birth, prior to God giving me spiritual life from the dead, giving me eyes to see and ears to hear, all of us are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. And that means we are unable and unwilling to believe God, to love God or his word, or obey or please God in any way. Now, we can love our idea of God before that. But that idea is an idol. We worship a God that is like unto our selves. If you're sitting there today and you're thinking that's unjust of God, you know why you think that? Because that's not the way you'd do things. But the way you do things, the way I'd do things, we'd gum it all up. We'd mess it all up. Here's the point: by nature, people will not choose God, they will not choose Christ, they will not bow to him and his righteousness. That's why Christ said in John 6:44 *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:"*

If any of us are saved it's totally the work of God's sovereign mercy. It's not our merit. Listen, salvation is not a matter of what I deserve or what I've earned. It's getting everything that I don't deserve, that I don't earn and don't deserve. It's based on the merits of Christ, his merits, his worthiness, his work as my surety, as my substitute, as my redeemer, as my life giver. It's all based on him. What is it to be chosen? It's to be in Christ.

I was telling the folks this morning in our Bible study that I was reading in the paper this morning, a preacher who writes a weekly column. And his column was all about that. That in order to be saved we must be in Christ. I read the article and up until the last paragraph I agreed with everything he said. To be in Christ is to be washed in his blood, forgiven of all my sins, not because I cried all night or I repented. No, by the blood of Christ. Now cry all night and repent. You don't earn forgiveness. He didn't bring this out but it's to be justified based on Christ's righteousness imputed. He didn't say that. Most people don't preach that today. They don't even know what it means. It means the merits of Christ obedience unto death is laid to my charge and my account. My debt is paid. But he went on; what it is to be in Christ and everything he said was true but when he got the last paragraph he asked this question. How do I get in Christ? You know what he said? The waters of baptism. It's not right. Now, does that mean we don't have to be baptized? No, it doesn't mean that all. We are commanded by God to be baptized, but not in order to get in Christ. We're to be baptized to confess that God's already put us in him. How do I get in Christ? Only thing I can tell you is that God did it before the foundation of the world.

Look back at our text in 1 Peter two and verse nine. You're a chosen what? Generation. To be chosen is to be part of a generation. Now, what is that generation? That is something God created. The root word is Genesis: the

beginning. And God has a generation. Let me read you a passage out of Psalm 22. This is really interesting because Psalm 22 is what we call the Psalm of the cross. It's a prophecy of the suffering Christ. It starts out, "*My God, my God why has thou forsaken me?*" Who said that? Jesus Christ on the cross. And it goes through and describes, in prophetic language, that the Messiah, God's elect who's going to bring judgment to the Gentiles, how he would come, he would live, he would die, he would be buried, he'd be raised again the third day. And at the end of that Psalm in Psalm 22 verse 30, listen to this. "*A seed shall serve him,*" What is that seed? That's his children, that's his offspring. Now, Christ had no physical offspring, but he has a spiritual offspring. Who are they? Well, they're described in the Bible in different ways. They're described as the elect. They're described as the church, which he shed his blood he redeemed with his precious blood. They are described as his sheep. "*My sheep hear my voice*" he said, "*the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.*" His brethren, they're called. We could go on and on. They're called Zion. That's a name for God's elect. But he says, "*a seed shall serve him.*" He doesn't say, a seed will serve him if they take a notion to. No, they're going to serve him and he says, "*it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*" That's his people.

Listen to what he says in verse 31 of Psalm 22. "*They shall come, and shall declare,*" what? "*his righteousness.*" That's what I preach. I don't preach man's righteousness, I preach the righteousness of God in Christ. Man's righteousness will do you no good because you have none. His righteousness is the merits of his obedience unto death as our surety, our substitute and redeemer and he says, "*they shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born*" (and there he's talking about the new birth) "*that he hath done this.*" This is the work of God.

You know, a sinner saved by grace is totally the generation, the work of God. You're not self-made. Ephesians chapter 2 verse eight: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*"

Even faith is the work of God. It is the gift of God. You don't have that naturally. I didn't have it naturally. And he says in Ephesians 2 verse 10, "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, (not because of, but unto - that's the fruit) which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*" Chosen in Christ.

Back over here in our text in 1 Peter chapter 2, what is said here of sinners saved by grace, all the blessings, all the benefits of salvation by grace, is due to the work, the merits, the goodness, and the power of one person: Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. And how do we know this is so? Well, look back up in our text look at 1 Peter 2:6. He says, "*Wherefore (for this reason) also it is contained in the scripture*" and what Peter does here, he quotes from Isaiah - that guy who got in trouble. Isaiah 28 - "*Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone...*" You know what a corner stone is? I'm not a contractor and I don't build

things, but the cornerstone was laid and everything was to be measured by that cornerstone. And that's what Christ is for the church. He's the foundation stone and he's the chief cornerstone. Everything's to be measured by him. Whatever I think, say, do, however I interpret the Scripture, it's got to be measured and determined and judged but the truth of the glorious person and finished work of Christ. So he says, *"I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."*

Look at verse 9 again (1 Peter 2:9). He says, *"ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,"* What does that mean? Does that mean we all need to go buy funny collars? No. That means we individually, as sinners saved by grace, washed in the blood of Christ, clothed in his righteousness; we have free, unhindered access to the holiest of all, the presence of God through the blood of Christ. That's why we don't need any other mediator or intercessor but Christ. He says, you're a holy nation. What does that mean? It means you're separate. It doesn't mean that you're holier than thou or perfect. It means you're separate. You're not of the world. You don't worship with the world. You don't go with the world's value system. You look to Christ. He says you're a peculiar people. That means you're purchased, you're bought and paid for. You're not working to pay your debt to God's justice. Christ already paid it in full.

Hebrews 10:14: *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* All the wisdom I need for me to know God and to understand salvation is in Christ. All the righteousness that I need to be justified before God is in Christ. All the sanctification, separateness, that I need is in Christ. And all the redemption that I need is in Christ. Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe. And so he says, you're a peculiar people. God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, have always been from eternity his chosen people, his covenant people. As such, they were given to Christ and made his people. They were in his care, in his charge, and still are. He saved them by his obedience unto death; he redeemed them to himself, a peculiar people. But before the new birth, before conversion, before God brings us to hear and believe the gospel, we're not a people formed by God for himself, nor Christ willing people, either to be saved by him or to serve him, nor are we, nor can we be truly known to be God's people until he brings us to faith. And that's what he says, but now are the people of God. So now who are the chosen generation?

Look at Matthew chapter 22. Here we have a parable and I'm not going to go through all the whole parable. I've preached on this passage several times in the time that I've been preaching the gospel. But here's a parable that Christ taught of a king who gave a marriage supper for his son. In this parable, the king represents God the father, the son represents the Lord Jesus Christ the son of God. And so the king told his servants to go out and he says in Matthew 22:4, *"Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed,"* (in other words, dinner is prepared, you don't have to bring you're own dishes to this, this is not a potluck). He said you go out and bid them to come to the wedding. And it says

here in verse six, "And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. **7** But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth:"

Now that's historically, Christ coming to his own nation, the Jews, and they rejected him. And so the king said, look at verse nine, he says "*Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. **10** So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: (now that's bad and good in the eyes of men) and the wedding was furnished with guests.*" You see the historical progression there. Christ came to the Jews and they received him not. There was a remnant now. A remnant according to the elect, but the nation as a whole, rejected it. And then he sent men like Paul out to the Gentiles and they were brought in. And the feast was ready. Again, this wasn't bring your own dish. It's already furnished. Christ had already done the work. He did all the cooking you might say. And there it is, just come and eat.

Look at verse 11 (Matthew 22:11) **11** *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: **12** And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. **13** Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Now, what is that wedding garment? The Bible teaches us what the wedding garment is. That's the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. We are his bride, that's another term for God's elect. We wear the wedding garment that Christ put together by his obedience unto death. We didn't contribute one thread to that garment. It's his righteousness alone imputed, charged, accounted to us.

But look at the last line of this parable. Verse 14 (Matthew 22:14) "*For many are called, but few are chosen.*" Many are called. The gospel goes out and we preach to anybody who will listen. Somebody asked a preacher one time, he said, "you believe in election - why don't you just preach to the elect?" I'm not God. God tells me to preach to anybody who will listen. Many are called, but few are chosen. You see, those with the garments did not have any merit in themselves. But the response that they gave to the call revealed that they had already been chosen by God. Now when a person responds to the gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ that doesn't mean that you have any merit or that you work that up in yourself or that you're better than the rest of them who wouldn't choose. As a matter of fact, their response is the evidence that God has already worked in their past and that God has worked in their hearts. It means you've been born-again.

Paul spoke of it in Acts 13:48 when he preached the gospel. He said, "*and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*" So the call goes out to many but few are elect and the evidence of the election is the profession of truth. That's why Peter says in 2 Peter 1:10 "*give diligence to make your calling and election*

sure.” God's election comes first but the first evidence of that in our lives is the calling. Have you answered the calling? Let me just read this and I'll close with this.

Look back to verse six of first Peter two. He says, *“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”* There it is. Do you believe on him? Do you believe in the glorious person and the finished work of Christ? Have you submitted to his righteousness as your only ground of justification? That's the first evidence of God's chosen generation. That's the gift of faith. Do you realize that if you truly believe this gospel and have been brought by God with the gift of faith to repentance of dead works then you're a walking, talking miracle?

He says in verse seven (1 Peter 2:7) *“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.”* Christ is my honor, he's precious to his people. *“but unto them which be disobedient (unbelief), the stone which the builders disallowed (or rejected), the same is made the head of the corner,”* Those who reject him - but he's still the head of the corner. *“And a stone of stumbling (they trip over him) and a rock of offence (they are offended by him) even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”* The Scripture says. I didn't write this. But you are a chosen generation. Think about it. God gives his people life and he brings them to faith in Christ. So, when you think about what Christ accomplished - and that's what his resurrection is about. Did you know that? It's not just about life from the dead. I mean it shouldn't amaze any of us that God can bring life from the dead. We're here. That shouldn't amaze us that God can give life to the dead, but the resurrection of Christ is something special. What does the resurrection of Christ prove? It proves that our surety, our substitute, our Redeemer died under the penalty of our sins. It proves that his death not only paid the penalty of all my sins, for all for whom he died, but it brought forth righteousness. That's what his resurrection means. Why must he be raised from the dead? Because he established righteousness in his death and righteousness demands life. It proves that Jesus Christ is the author and the giver of spiritual and eternal life to everyone for whom he died. And it proves the eternal security of every sinner for whom he lived and died and arose again. Where is he now? He lives. He's with the father in heaven ever living to make intercession for his people. What is he doing? Making intercession. He's pleading his own merits. He doesn't look down here and say look, Bill's preaching the gospel. Aren't you proud? No, you see my preaching is not my righteousness. I preach Christ as my righteousness. And that's why he's risen. That's why he lives today. That's why his people will live forever and ever. Amen.