

The Fundamental Importance of Our Identity in Christ Part 2

By Ty Blackburn

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Bible Text: 1 Peter 1:1-2
Preached on: Sunday, November 6, 2022

Providence Church
2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Peter 1. First chapter of the epistle, the first epistle of Peter. And as you turn there, I just want to remind many of you may have seen the email that went out this week from Johnny Gravino, interesting timing in God's providence that we announced today Operation Christmas Child. Franklin Graham's ministry, Samaritan's Purse, and something we've done a number of times in the past, but it had dropped off the last couple of years and glad to resume that to spread the gospel. But if you saw the email, Johnny Gravino is one of our missionaries in Italy. He is with the Master's Academy International, a graduate of John MacArthur's Seminary, the Master's Seminary and then with that mission agency, training pastors in Italy, and Johnny has been a missionary of our church for over 15 years and we are just delighted to have that partnership. I've been able to, Patti and I have been able to be with them a couple of times in Italy, actually got to preach on Reformation Day, 500th anniversary, 2017, I was in Italy in Sicily preaching the gospel. And Johnny's a wonderful brother but if you received the email this week, he actually was the translator for Franklin Graham's evangelistic crusade in Italy this past week and Johnny was the one translating Franklin as he's preaching the gospel, translating into Italian. I can testify to what a wonderful job he does in translating because preaching in another language like that, I preach in English, of course, because that's the only language I know, after all, I'm an American. We just know one language. You've heard that joke, you know, what do you call a, what person that knows two languages? Bilingual. What do you call a person who knows three languages? Trilingual. What do you call a person who knows one language? American. Anyway, so but Johnny in his translation, I would say you know, something like, you know, we're justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ, and he would go on for about 30 seconds in Italian just waving his arms and stuff and I'm like, "Man, he is preaching a great sermon over there, much better than what I'm preaching." But he preached for Franklin Graham. I mean, he translated for Franklin Graham and the thousands of folks expressed faith in Christ, and one of the things I really am grateful, Franklin even seems to have a clear, firmer grasp of the gospel than even his dad did, and we praise God for what the good work that God did through his dad, but especially he's walking in faithfulness to the gospel and what a neat connection that our missionary, that was something God opened a door for him to do and he took advantage of it and was excited what the Lord is doing. So pray for those seeds that were sown and for the faith these

new believers in Italy that they'll find sound churches that Johnny has been training pastors for the last 15 years to shepherd the flocks of believers in Italy.

Now 1 Peter 1. The title of the message is the same as it was last week, "The Fundamental Importance of Our Identity in Christ." So this is part 2 because that's the theme really of these first two verses. The fundamental importance of our identity in Christ. So that's the title. In thinking about reminding you of why I chose 1 Peter, I was thinking about the title of a book that came out a few years back in the last four or five years by Al Mohler called "The Gathering Storm" in which he basically points out how you can see that a storm is gathering in America in particular and in the West in general, and that storm is the storm clouds of persecution seem to be gathering. And so that's something that I think is accurate. I think it is. You see, you know, if you look at the signs and you look at the way that the culture is moving, you look at the predominant values and beliefs of the people, you see that more and more and more they stand at odds with faithful Christians, gospel-believing Christians. It's always true as we saw last time that we're light in the midst of darkness, and so this is normal. It's actually exactly what we should expect, but at times it becomes more of a clash and we see this happening, and so I chose this book because I do see that and we see increasing cultural hostility to the gospel, we see escalating social animosity to Christians, and we see a growing spiritual opposition to the gospel all building to a climate in which persecution is more likely. I mean, it's always there but even more intensely. It's more likely that we see that.

This is almost exactly the climate in which Peter wrote his letter. There was a gathering storm in the first century. The storm clouds were on the horizon, was about to, they were about, he wrote 63-64 somewhere in that AD, a massive persecution breaks out in 65-66 AD in Rome that spreads throughout the Roman world. So just a couple of years before and he doesn't know the future, but the Spirit of God knows the future and the Spirit of God who coins these words through Peter, Peter the human author, the Bible is fully human and fully divine, so we talk about what Peter meant, what he was intending, but we understand that God is superintending what Peter is intending. But Peter, looking at his environment, concerned for the faith of believers, for Christians, he writes in order, his goal is to galvanize their faith, to strengthen their resolve to stand for Christ, to fortify them for faithfulness. And what he hits again and again and again, I mean one of the very most important things that Peter says in this letter, in fact, you could argue it's the main theme, is you must know who you are if you're to be faithful. Your identity in Christ is a theme that Peter is going to hit again and again and again and what he does is he tells this group of believers to whom he writes who are mostly Gentiles and Peter knows this, he tells this group of, a mixed group, Gentile Jewish Christians, but mostly Gentiles, he tells them again and again and again by drawing on the rich imagery of the Old Testament, he tells them everything that was true of Israel in type is now true of you in reality. Everything that Israel appeared to be is now true of you. I mean the fundamental essence. God still has a plan for the Jewish nation, not saying that that's not also true, but the highest reality is the people of God that he's intended to bring to himself, he's always intended to bring from every tribe and tongue and kindred and he's telling this group of believers, this mixed group of Gentile and Jewish believers that you are now the

fulfillment of all that God was typologically anticipating in the old covenant. You are the people of God. You have been redeemed from darkness.

The exodus, they were delivered out of Egyptian bondage. They were delivered out of slavery in Egypt. He says, "You have been redeemed," in chapter 1, "not with perishable things but with the blood of the Lamb." You see, he's drawing on that Old Testament Passover imagery. You've been delivered, redeemed means delivered from slavery, purchased out of slavery, that's what the word redeemed means. You've been purchased out of slavery with the blood not of the Passover lamb, the literal lamb, the true Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ. You see the type has met its fulfillment. And because you have been delivered now from the darkness of the kingdom of darkness, Satan's dominion not just Egypt, the true ruler of this present world, you've been delivered out of his hands and you've been brought into the kingdom of God, you are now the people of God. You're a kingdom of priests. You're a holy nation, a people set apart for God's own possession. All of this language from the old covenant that applied to Israel, it now applies to you. You are now the temple of God. You are now the priests of God. This was staggering and if it was staggering for the first century Jews who had come to Christ to realize that it's true now of Gentiles as well.

I'm going to walk through next week and show you how Peter works through this in his own life because he comes to understand it more and more and more. This is amazing and essentially the theme of the message today, the fundamental importance of your identity in Christ is know who you are, know what you are, and live consistent with it. If you know who you are, you know what you are and you believe it, it will change everything. This is what Peter is doing in his first two letters, the introduction to his epistle. Let's read 1 Peter 1:1-2.

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Let's pray together.

Father, we rejoice in the wonder of having Your word, the eternal word of God that we can understand by the power of the Holy Spirit that You have spoken to us. We pray that You would speak to our hearts today, that You would show us those of us who belong to Christ today, You would show us who we are and to everyone in this room who doesn't belong to You, to know that they're invited today to become a follower of Jesus and that You will not turn away any who seek You. Lord, be exalted in our hearts, in our lives for the glory of Your Son. We pray in His name. Amen.

So the fundamental importance of your identity in Christ. You must know who you are, you must know what you are so that you can bear up under the circumstances whatever may come. Last time we saw that a key part of this first two verses were two key words

we mentioned last time, two key words in the Greek. It takes more than two words in English to translate them. The first word 1:1 chosen or elect depending on the translation that you have. That's a key word, you're chosen by God. We said that it means you belong to God, that's your identity. You belong to God. You're chosen. You're elect if you're in Christ. This is true of you if you have repented and placed your faith in Jesus. If you are resting in Christ alone for your salvation, you're trusting in his finished work, the cross, you're trusting, as we sang earlier that he is your surety, that he is the one who guarantees your standing before God, he and he alone, if this is true of you, then you have been chosen, Peter says. And you reside as aliens, that's the second Greek word that we translate in multiple English words. It sometimes could just say alien, but you live as an alien in a foreign land. So you belong to God, you don't belong here. That was last week and what I want us to look at today is what he continues to say about this. He basically explains how it is that this has come to happen in verse 2. How could it be that you who used to belong here, you who were dead in trespasses and sins, you and I dead in trespasses and sins, without God, without hope, how can it be that we now belong to God, we don't belong to this world?

He answers the question "how" in verse 2 with these three key phrases. He says you and I have a radical new identity, completely different than who we were, and this identity is rooted in the work of the Triune God. It is what God has done, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. You are different because God, the Triune God, has acted on you in a way that has made everything different, the doctrine of the Trinity right here in verse 2. God is one God yet he is three in person. You read your Bible carefully, there's no other conclusion you can come to. Equal in power and glory, the three persons of the Trinity. One in essence. One in substance. Yet three distinct persons within this one substance. That's the doctrine of the Trinity. God is Triune, three in one. And Peter, in order for us to understand the wonder of our identity, to know who we are, begins to unpack this for us and essentially says you have a new relationship with God and you have a new relationship with each person of the Trinity, and he wants you to think this way.

And so we have three points this morning, each related to answering the question how we have become what we are which relate to each person of the Trinity in the order that we have it in the text. You have been chosen, verse 2, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit unto," literally in the Greek, "unto obedience and sprinkling by the blood of Jesus Christ." That's the word order in the Greek. Doesn't really say to obey. The New American standard translates it that way. I think it'd be better to say obedience. Each of the phrases or each of the phrases center on a key word, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," that's a noun, foreknowledge. It's not foreknow in the verb sense. It's the noun that speaks of the result of that. "By the sanctifying work of the Spirit," sanctifying work actually can be translated sanctification. It's a noun also. It's not an ongoing action, it's kind of a finished work, and some translations say, "by the sanctification of the Spirit, or in the holiness." And then the last phrase, "unto obedience and sprinkling." Obedience and sprinkling are both nouns as well in the original. It's always difficult to translate from one language to another, and you have to change things around a little bit to make it sound and say and

communicate, but that's why it's good when you're studying the Bible to look at multiple translations of, you know, New American Standard, NIV, ESV, Legacy Standard, etc. Look at those things, it helps you to see what the underlying text is saying with more clarity. You don't have to know Greek to know that, you just read the Bible in these various translations and it'll help you do that.

And what we see is each person of the Godhead relates to us in a new way, and what I want us to think about, how is it, you know, how have you become what you are? To know who you are you need to understand how you became what you are, and the first point this morning: how have you become someone who does not belong to the world but belongs to God? How have you become that? First point: you have been loved by God the Father from eternity past. This is true of you if you're in Christ. You have been loved by God the Father from eternity past. This is what Peter is trying to communicate with this phrase "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." You're chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. There's an intimate connection between election and foreknowledge.

One thing we're gonna see is that knowledge and love are also closely connected in the Hebrew mindset, and one of the things that's important when you're studying words in the New Testament like the word foreknowledge, God is inspiring his word to be written in the first century at a point in time and words have a certain meaning, but you know, like we're translating from any language, right? You try to pick the word that describes it the best when you translate from one language to another, and sometimes you have to take some liberties and change things around a little bit. Well, one of the things that's important to remember as you look at New Testament words is that the New Testament authors when they were writing, they were trying to communicate Old Testament words and concepts into New Testament Greek. Do you see what I'm saying? They were thinking in biblical forms from the Old Testament when they're writing into the New in Greek so that it's not just what, say, a Greek lexicon says this is how the word was used in classical Greek, Greece, or this is how the word was used in first century, you know, just normal language. The question, that's relevant but the bigger issue or another important issue is how does this Old Testament reality that they're trying to translate, what kind of baggage comes with that word? This is important with the word foreknowledge, because the word foreknowledge in the way that it's used in the New Testament, is richly informed by how the word knowledge and know is used in the Old Testament. Sometimes we might be tempted to think that foreknowledge is simply as we would think of it, the way we would normally use the word foreknowledge is to know beforehand, prescience, you just know something before it happens. But that's not the meaning of the way God uses this word. It's not just merely that he knows what's going to happen like an innocent bystander, but he just knows. He knows. He's been given information and he's a passive observer, but he knows. It's not that at all. God's foreknowledge is active knowledge. It's foreknowledge in electing and choosing.

And you see how he uses it. The same word is used, actually, it's the verb form is used in verse 20 of this same chapter when it speaks of, we read verse 19, "but with precious blood," you were redeemed "with the precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and

spotless, the blood of Christ," this is 1 Peter 1:19, "the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world." It doesn't mean just mean that God just knew what was going to happen before it happened. It's speaking of Jesus was known before the foundation of the world and all of the plan of God was planned out, not just known but actively God is knowing it in the sense of intimate involvement in making it happen. Same idea is in Romans 8:28-29, you know, everybody knows Romans 8:28 or a lot of people know it, "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose," right? But verse 29 is what that purpose is, "that we should be conformed to the image of His Son." And he says if you look at that actually, Romans 8:29, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." Foreknowledge of believers he's talking about here, for God to have known them beforehand meant he was determined to predestine them. It's speaking of his sovereignty in bringing people to salvation. Those whom he foreknew he predestined. "Those whom He predestined," verse 30, "He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." How are you saved? You're saved by the action of God. You see, it's all God. I mean, we have to repent and believe. Yes, the gospel says that, the Bible says that other places, but here, just like here, like in 1 Peter 1, the emphasis is on the work of God. That is the foundation of whatever human response follows from it.

You also have Peter used the same word actually in his amazing sermon in Acts 2, this word foreknowledge, the sermon that saw 3,000 people come to faith when the Holy Spirit is poured out at Pentecost. Peter comes to, begins to approach the climax of his sermon in verse 22 and he says, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know," Acts 2:23, "this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God the Father, you nailed to a cross by the hands of sinful men and put to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." This man delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge. It wasn't that God just knows it ahead of time as a passive observer, he just happens to know the future. That's his deity, he just knows the future. No, it's his foreknowledge and his predetermined plan that's being carried out.

It's the same idea that you see throughout the Scriptures. When you read the Bible carefully, you can't come away from the doctrine of unconditional election. Just read it carefully. You're going to see, yes, it's difficult to work through these passages. Romans 9 just nails it home. But receive it. We don't want to spend time debating it because Peter doesn't debate it. He says just, "No, you were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." The other concept of this is that when you look at how the word "know" from the Old Testament flowing into the New what it means, the word "know" means intimate knowledge. The Hebrew word "yada" means "to know in an intimate personal way." So to foreknow means to know from before in an intimate, personal way. Genesis 4:1 is the first use of the word "yada" in the Bible. Adam knew his wife and she conceived a son. That's what it says in the Hebrew. The New American Standard

translates it had relations with his wife. The Hebrew says Adam knew his wife. Do you see that, the intimacy?

So when God knows his people, Amos 3:2, listen he says this, Amos 3:2, this is one that really shows you what yada means. "Out of all the nations of the earth you alone, Israel, have I known." You mean you don't know anything about all the other nations of the earth, God? Are you ignorant of them? No, he knows every hair of every head of every person he's ever created. He created every single human being in their mother's womb. Personally God did that. But he says, "Out of all the nations of the earth you alone have I loved, have I known with that intimate personal knowledge of deep affection and treasure. You have I loved." That's what he means.

And so foreknowledge of God is to have been loved by the Father from before time began just like he's getting out when he says foreknown before the foundation of the world back to 1 Peter 1:20. Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world. You were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1:4. God foreknew Christ, he loved Christ, he planned this out to shower his love upon his Son and to bring through his Son every elect from every tribe and tongue and kindred into his very family room for eternity. That's the idea. In fact, look at Ephesians 1, glorious picture of what salvation is verses 3 to 14. But let's read from verses 3 to 6. This is Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." You see the language, there's so much overlap with what he's saying in 1 Peter 1. Predestination, love, chosen, elect, his electing love that brings you to himself as an adopted son or daughter, it is rooted in his love.

So Peter's saying, "Listen what you need to know," back to 1 Peter 1, "what you and I need to know about our identity is that you have been loved by God the Father from eternity past. He has chosen to bring you into His family and He loved you before you were born and he calls you to Himself and He calls you to call Him Father." We sang that out. Paul says earlier in Romans 8, the verses we were just reading, that the Spirit has been given to us and he calls us, he causes us to cry out, "Abba, Father." God wants to bring you into relationship with himself in which he, as your loving Father, he delights in you. If you're in Christ, God delights in you, he treasures you. You are his precious child, the apple of his eye, the object of his affection.

Now how does that help you, I mean, think about how that helps you with whatever you're encountering in life. Your loving Father has ordered your steps. He has planned your way. Come what may whether you're walking in sunlit meadows, he's leading you in, you know, fertile fields or he's leading you by still waters, the good times or he's leading you to the valley of the shadow of death. He's leading you and it's your loving Father. You have been loved by God the Father from eternity past. You are loved by him now. You will be loved by him all the way till he brings you to himself. Do you believe that? Do you know that? Are you mindful of that? Peter says you must know that. You

must meditate on that. It doesn't appear to be. Appearance and reality are very different things, aren't they? When we look at our lives, it doesn't appear like we are the beloved children of God. We seem to be rejected by the world. We're experiencing all these difficulties but we've already been told this world is not our home. You've got to know your Father loves you and treasures you.

The second thing, though, is not just the foreknowledge of God the Father, it's the next phrase, "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit." The second point about your identity: you need to know that you have been sanctified by the Spirit entirely for his purposes. You have been sanctified by the Spirit. Not you are being sanctified by the Spirit, you have been sanctified by the Spirit. That's the force of the word here. It's a noun which speaks, it's actually a noun which speaks of the result of sanctifying. And one of the things we need to understand is the New Testament uses the word "sanctification" in two different ways, and a lot of times in our circles we focus on one of the ways the New Testament uses but not the other, and the one we neglect is actually the most important one. We think of sanctification, the way we tend to think of it is in terms of progressive sanctification, that is, you are progressively being made holy. That's the Christian life, right? And that's an important part, you are to become more and more holy. In fact, Peter is going to call us to that just in a few verses. But the way that the Bible uses the word sanctification first and foundationally is you have been sanctified, it's something that's already happened. You have been separated and the word "sanctify" means "to be made holy" which means to be set apart and separated. It's speaking of positional sanctification. I mentioned earlier the two ways sanctification is used, progressive sanctification, but more important and foundational is positional sanctification. This is the idea that when God set his saving love upon you, what the Holy Spirit did was he set you apart from the world. He separated you from the world unto God. You have been taken from one state to another state of existence. You have a new status because you have a new state. That's what he means when he says, and that's why it would be better if he said "by the sanctification" so you'd have a sense that it's done because that's the Greek. It literally says that. "By the sanctification of the Spirit." By the finished work, the finished result of his action in setting you apart. It means you are positionally set apart now, the Spirit sets you apart exclusively for his service.

Now here again, he's thinking in terms, it's just so clear he's thinking in terms of Old Testament imagery is informing what Peter is saying. In the same way that the Father set his love upon the nation of Israel, he set his love upon them when they were not looking for him. In fact, Deuteronomy 7:7 and following speaks about this. "I did not choose you. I did not set My love upon you because you were more numerous from all the people of the earth. No, you weren't. But I chose you, set My love upon you for My own purposes." So that's back to that first point. He loved us, he chose us all out of God and who he is, the Father, but what he did, he set his love upon them and then he set them apart. He purchased them and set them apart unto himself. He made them distinct from all the other nations. That's exactly what happens when he brings them out of the exodus. He takes them to Mount Sinai, gives them the law, and tells them they're to be a kingdom of priests. In fact, it's interesting, he told Moses when he's about to go to Pharaoh, he says, "What I want you to do is go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Let My people go that they may

come apart and serve Me or worship me." What he's saying is, "I'm taking the nation of Israel out of slavery," think about this, out of the bondage of Egypt, out of slavery, "and I'm bringing them to Myself into My presence to worship Me." This is what the purpose of sanctification is, you are set apart for God's purpose, that is, to commune with him and to worship him. That is your identity. Set apart from all the rest of the people in the world, everyone who belongs to Christ has been set apart now into this new calling, this duty.

As you read on in Exodus, after he brings them out he tells them in Exodus 19 that they're to be a kingdom of priests. He says in verse 3 of Exodus 19, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.'" You see, I brought you where? "To Myself. I set you apart. "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." That's what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. You have been set apart positionally and your purpose is worship, your purpose is holiness. Loved by the Father, treasured by the Father, set apart by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has set you apart unto himself.

Now our problem is we don't believe, we have trouble walking in faith that this is true. We don't believe who we are. This is our struggle. We forget who we are. We forget that we've been set apart. We forget that the Father loves us. We look at our lives and the difficulty that we encounter and we wonder, "Does God really love me?" We look at our lives and we see remaining sin which we confessed earlier in our confession, though we've been brought to Christ and we're dead to sin, we still live as if we weren't dead to sin. We still see sin at war in our members and we wonder, "Is it really true that I've been set apart unto God, that I've been separated unto holiness?" Our progressive sanctification is not making progress, but we must remember that the reality of who we are is what God says we are.

This is so important because think about this: if you meditate on the fact that you have been set apart unto God, that you belong to God, that you have been delivered from the domain of darkness, that the reign of sin has been broken in you even though you feel sin's power still coursing in your veins, the reign of sin has been broken, the reality is you're set apart unto God, when you sin you are not doing what is natural to you. Doesn't it feel natural? Doesn't it feel like you're being consistent with who you are when you sin? This is saying when you sin no matter how you were before you came to Christ in all the years that you had of living in ignorance, fulfilling your lust, all the time that you did that, when God saved you, he set his love upon you, brought you to himself, separated you from that, so that now if you live like you used to live, you are living a lie. The truth is you're holy. The truth is you are really set apart unto God. The truth is you are wired now for righteousness. "But I still feel the presence." Yes, you do. That's why Peter says, look what he's telling us this in verse 14, know who you are and now the message is know who you are and live like who you are. Live consistent with who you truly are, not

with who you used to be. It's irrelevant who you used to be. You are now set apart unto holiness to God.

I love 1 Corinthians 6:9 when the Apostle Paul makes this point, listen, we've all come from such checkered backgrounds. I mean, many of us have come from great ungodliness, others have come from great self-righteousness, growing up in the church in wicked self-righteousness, some of you have come from completely pagan backgrounds where you were given over to all kinds of wicked sin. But look what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators," look at the sin list he gives, "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." Those who are characterized by these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Look what he says, verse 11, here's the good news, "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." This is who you are now if you're in Christ. Stop living like who you were. Live like who you truly are and believe that when I walk, when I say no to sin, even though it feels so natural because we still have this body of sin, we still have this flesh in which sin dwells. This is why it's going to be so wonderful when we are liberated from the body, this decaying body. We set it aside. Now free to be who we are without any resistance. But the reality is, you already are who you are in Christ.

Look what he says in 1 Peter, verse 14 of chapter 1. He says, "As obedient children," do you see that, you're children of the Father, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance." Don't be conformed to your former lusts. The lust you feel in your flesh, you have a natural tendency to want to conform to those. Stop it. "Don't be conformed to your former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" He says, "Be holy as I am holy. Be holy because you are holy. You've been set apart unto Me."

You know, one of the things that we can do when we are tempted to sin is remember, "Look, my body is not my own. I'm bought with a price. I belong to God. I might feel like I want to give my members to this particular sin, that particular sin, but it's irrelevant. I am not my own. I have been set apart. I am a part of the priesthood. I'm about worship. I'm about praising God in every circumstance. I must worship him. Holy Spirit, help me. Lord Jesus, help me remember who I am. Help me walk in the power of Your victory." You believe that and you take a step away from sin and you deny yourself, you turn off the computer, you bite your tongue if you're about to speak a harsh word, you turn your eyes away from that which is not of God and you remember who you are, and you walk as if what God says is true really is true. Now doesn't that just make sense? If God says it is true, who are you to say it's not? Are you going to listen to your flesh, are you going to listen to the God of this age who is a liar from the beginning? Or are you going to listen to God who is true? He says you're holy.

You have been loved by God the Father. You have been separated or sanctified by the Spirit for his eternal purposes. Thirdly, you have been united to Jesus Christ in a covenant union. You have been united to Jesus Christ in a covenant union. This last phrase here in the three phrases related to the Trinitarian work of God in saving us, "foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit to obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ." You have been united to Christ in a covenant union. I believe he is thinking in terms, turn with me to Exodus 24. I encourage you keep reading through 1 Peter and just look for all the Old Testament imagery that is on every, almost every verse almost. But when he talks about obedience and sprinkling, I think he has this idea in mind, this image from Exodus 24. This is a little bit after, we read Exodus 19 earlier. They come out of Egypt. They come to the mountain, Mount Sinai. God has given Moses the 10 Commandments. He's come down to tell the people about the 10 Commandments now. He's going to go back on the mountain for 40 days. That's when they're going to build their golden calf. That's not yet happened. He's now come and you've got the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20. He's now bringing them to the people and it says in verse 3 of Exodus 24, "Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!'" We will obey. God brought them out of Egypt to set them apart to himself to obey.

Verse 4, "Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar." He sprinkled on the altar. "Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!' So Moses took the blood," verse 8, "and sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" He gave them the word. They obeyed, they said, "We will obey," and they were sprinkled and they're brought into a covenant relationship. Now this is the type. This is the Old Testament type that is a picture. The reality is now those who come to Christ have come to a place. The Spirit has set you apart from the world, brought you to Jesus Christ directly to him and you have a posture and you have now obeyed him.

It doesn't mean back in 1 Peter 1, it's not talking about ongoing obedience, it's talking about the initial obedience of faith. It's talking about your salvation just like the other things are. God's foreknowledge, you have been loved by God. You have been separated, positional sanctification by the Spirit. You have been united to Jesus Christ in a covenant union, you have obeyed him and you have been sprinkled by his blood. You now are in a covenant relationship with Jesus. I invite you to look at that passage later that we just read, Exodus 24. One of the things that's interesting is after the covenant ceremony, God says you're in covenant with him, what does it mean to be in covenant with God? Covenant is a binding relationship. It is an unbreakable relationship. But its relationship. You have come into a relationship with Jesus Christ. A covenant relationship with Jesus Christ. In the obedience of faith, which Romans 1:5, Romans 16, I think verse 26 says the

same thing, the obedience of faith, that when you place your faith in Christ, you're submitting to the word of God. God says this is how you're saved. You believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are obeying the command of God. He says believe in Lord Jesus Christ and you say, "Yes, I do." That's the obedience of faith. I'm trusting in him.

You have come now into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ in which he is your Master, he is your rabbi, he's your Lord. You are his slave. He's your Kurios, you're his doulos, that is, he's your Lord, you're his slave. He's your husband. You're part of his bride. You're in union with him but it is a wonderful union, a fellowship. What I meant to say a minute ago when I said look at Exodus 24, read those passages past the sprinkling of the blood, what happens the next day is God has Moses and the leaders of the people come up on the mountain and they see his glory. They see God. And listen what else: they eat in his presence. They have a feast in his presence. God wants them to eat in his presence. This is rich for the Lord's Supper. What the Lord's Supper is us eating in the presence of God. Think about that. God is a God who wants you to eat in his presence. Think of how wonderful it is to eat something really great. I mean your favorite food that you haven't had in a long time, and when you eat that, and now think about sitting down to a meal with people that you love and you eat and you have the pleasure of the eating along with the pleasure of the company. This is what humanity is all about. That why you see people eating together, unbelievers get together and they eat. Now they do it, a lot of times we can do it sometimes too sinfully, right? We can eat too much. But if you learn to eat the right amount and you learn to eat and savor it, and delight in it, and taste and see that the Lord is good, Psalm 34:8. God made me for the purpose of fellowshiping with him, communing with him, and so Jesus Christ has brought me into a covenant relationship and like I said, Exodus 24, the next thing they do is they come together and they eat in his presence. This is the kind of communion you've been invited to and Jesus is your truest friend.

So the Father loves you. He cares about you. He broods over you. The Spirit sets you apart unto his purposes. You're anointed to be a king, a priest in his kingdom. And Jesus Christ your truest friend invites you into a relationship of following him and walking with him and communing with him every day. You're called to be more like Jesus. You're called to love him and follow him. This means that no matter what you encounter these things are true of you if you're in Christ. Your Father is caring for you, watching over you, planning every detail of your life. The Spirit is there with you ready to empower your worship in this moment. He's not forgotten you. You find yourself being persecuted, you find yourself suddenly being in a position that you never imagined you're in, guess who's there with you? Your Father is with you. The Holy Spirit is with you. And Jesus Christ is right there at your side loving you, saying, "Follow Me." And there's no better place in the world to be to know this kind of love, this kind of purpose, this kind of fellowship. That's what we're called to in Christ and if we have that, we have more than we need to be faithful.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are for so great a salvation. We pray that You would continue to enlarge our ability to see these things. Open the eyes of our hearts that we might know the hope of His calling. And Lord, if we come to know the fellowship of His sufferings which we know we need, let us do so more and more with the rock-solid confidence in His love for us, in His presence with us, in His power over all. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.