

Subject: *Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ – Part 2*

Scripture: *1 Peter 2:1-10*

Many of the letters in the NT remind us of who Christ is and who His people are, or in other words, there is a Redeemer and this is what it means to be His redeemed people. We live in a time when many people are searching for identity. It is important for them to know their personal identity, and so they research their family tree or ancestry. Services are popular that help a person to research their historical roots or their DNA. For some, their identity revolves around a sports team, a political party, or a social group. Believers should be interested in their spiritual identity. The Bible tells us who we are, and our identity revolves around Christ.

Christians are a group of people who enjoy unique, spiritual blessings, given by God because of their position in Christ. Peter mentions several spiritual blessings that believers have because of our salvation in Christ. In last week's sermon we considered four spiritual blessings found in this text:

1. We taste the Lord's goodness (vs. 3)

Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

2. We draw near to Christ (vs. 4)

Peter describes believers as those who are "coming to" Him. This means that believers come to Christ in repentance and faith when they are converted. And it also means that we draw near to Him in fellowship and communion. We have the privilege to stay close to Him. We come to Him as a living stone, the foundation stone of a building.

Peter reminds us that Christ is a living stone. This refers to Him as the foundation stone of a building. He is the living stone because He rose from the dead and is alive forevermore.

Christ is the living foundation stone who is "disallowed" by men (rejected after close inspection), but chosen of God and precious. Believers understand that Christ is "chosen by God and precious" (costly, highly prized, rare). Peter refers to Christ as precious three times in this text (verse 4, 6, and 7).

3. We are the Lord's temple (vs. 5)

Believers are living stones because of our union with Christ (the living stone, vs. 5), and we are built up as a spiritual house (temple). In the OT God had a temple for His people, but in the NT God has a people for His temple.

4. We are a holy priesthood (vs. 5)

Verse 9 says we are a “royal priesthood.” When we think of priests we may have in mind a spiritual leader in the Catholic Church or the OT Jewish priests that God ordained to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people. But the text describes NT believers as a holy priesthood. We don’t need someone to be our priest because we are priests. And in last week’s sermon we looked at what that means to be God’s priests. We are chosen by God, cleansed from sin, clothed for service, anointed for service, prepared for service, called to obedience, ordained to offer sacrifices to God. Now we offer “spiritual sacrifices” (vs. 5) through Christ. Before Peter mentions more of the believer’s spiritual blessings in Christ (vs. 9-10), He comes back to the subject of Christ as the living stone and the difference between those who believe on Him and those who reject Him. Let’s look closely at verses 6-8, where Peter quotes from three OT scriptures that have to do with Christ and the church.

In verse 6, Peter quotes from Isaiah 28:16. The speaker is Yahweh (God the Father). He says, “I lay in Zion (Jerusalem) a chief cornerstone, elect, precious.” Christ is the chief cornerstone whom God the Father has chosen to be the chief cornerstone of the church. This was foreordained by God. Then Peter shows the difference between those who believe in Christ and those who reject Him. He who believes on him (Christ) shall not be confounded (put to shame, embarrassed, disappointed). In other words, the person who believes on Christ will be blessed. Therefore (vs. 7), to you who believe, Christ is precious. This was the text that Charles Spurgeon used for his first sermon. Notice this...God says that Christ is precious (vs. 4, 6) and the believer agrees with God.

In verse 7, Peter shows the contrast to unbelievers. They are called “disobedient” because they do not obey the gospel to believe in Christ and repent of their sins. Then Peter quotes from Psalm 118:22, the stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner (cornerstone). Then in verse 8, Peter quotes from Isaiah 8:14, Christ is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to all who reject Him. Verse 8 goes on to say they were disobedient to the word (the gospel) to which they were appointed. This does not mean they were appointed to disobedience, but they are appointed to doom because of their unbelief and rejection. In other words, God’s judgment on unbelief is just as sure as His salvation and blessing by faith.

5. We are a chosen generation (vs. 9)

In contrast to the disobedient who are appointed by God to judgment and wrath, as Christians we are chosen by God to salvation and blessing. Peter may have had this OT text in mind: *Deuteronomy 7:6 For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*

Just as the Jews were God’s chosen people then, all believers in Christ are God’s chosen people now.

6. We are a holy nation (vs. 9)

God has saved us and separated us from the world. In 2:5, Peter says we are a holy priesthood, and here we are a holy nation. We are holy in position (“saints”) and we are to be holy in practice. Holiness defines who we are as God’s people. Our new nature is holy and our conduct is to be holy (set apart for God).

1 Peter 1:15-16 But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy.

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

7. We are God’s special people (vs. 9)

This phrase is translated differently (KJV, a peculiar people; NKJV, his own special people; ESV, a people for his own possession). Peter doubles down on this description in verse 10. We were once (before salvation) not a people, but now are the people of God. We had not obtained mercy (in salvation), but now have obtained mercy. This makes me think of Paul’s testimony in *1 Corinthians 15:10 I am what I am by the grace of God.*

Ephesians 2:1-10

What is the purpose of these rich blessings from God? There is a two-fold purpose. First of all, God has blessed us because that is who He is. He is kind, merciful, good, generous, and loving. He does what He does because He is who He is. He is the benevolent, good God.

But there is a second purpose (vs. 9), “that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” The word translated “show forth” is only found here in the NT, and it means to tell forth, proclaim something otherwise not known. Believers are to be living, walking testimonies to the goodness and grace of God. We once walked in darkness, but now we walk in the light. The many spiritual blessings that God freely gives us are meant to glorify God.

May our lives reflect the beauty and glory of our Savior. May we be holy, thankful, and contented. May the people around us know that we belong to God, love and trust God, walk with Him, and live for Him. Last week I began this 2-part series by reminding you of the song, “Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” We should not only count our blessings, but we should live in such a way to make our blessings count for God’s glory.