

The People of God

1 Peter

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Bible Text: 1 Peter 1:1-2

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Let me ask you, please, to turn in your Bibles to the book of 1 Peter 1. This past Wednesday night we began a new study of the book of 1 Peter that we will be going through in our mid-week service and so I thought that this Sunday morning we would expose all of you who have not been present on Wednesday night and encourage you to continue with us in this study at the mid-week service. 1 Peter 1 is where we are this morning. We're going to read verses 1 and 2.

“1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

Let's go to the Lord together in prayer and ask his blessing on his word.

Father in heaven, first of all we want to thank you on this Fourth of July weekend for the many blessings that you have bestowed upon us as a nation and, Lord, while we acknowledge your blessings to us and, indeed, we have been blessed in so many ways, we also confess our sins because, Lord, we recognize that as a nation in so many ways, we have turned our back on you. We ask not only for your forgiveness but we also ask for your mercies in the way of an awakening. O God, we pray that you would open hearts and bring many of our people to faith in Jesus and, Lord, turn us as a country in a way that righteousness would be what characterizes us instead of sinfulness. We thank you, Lord, for the young men and women and those who have left families to defend this country and to serve us not only here but in other places, many of whom are not with us today because they're serving our country in that way and we ask for their safety and, Lord, for their soon return and we thank you for the many who have sacrificed in times past and have served this country in that way in times past that we might enjoy the freedoms that we have. Lord, we thank you above all for the freedom that is ours in Christ, a freedom that is not physical but it's spiritual, the most profound freedom that anyone can know and I thank you for the salvation that is ours in Jesus.

We ask that this morning, as we read and study and consider who we are in him, that you would not only enable us to understand it but, God, you would grip our hearts with it that we might live different lives, that we might live in accordance with who we are according to your description of us in Jesus. Lord, we also pray for those in this place who don't know the Lord Jesus. We ask that you would today bring them into this family, bring them to yourself, Lord, by granting them repentance and faith in Christ. We will thank you for what you do. Holy God, the Living God, we give you thanks and praise today in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you are familiar at all with the ministry of Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones who is now in heaven, with the ministry that he had for many years at Westminster in London, then you know that one of the things that characterized Lloyd Jones' ministry was just his unswerving commitment to the Scriptures and a refreshing openness to the working of the Holy Spirit and the absolute necessity for the working of the Holy Spirit as the word of God is preached and taught. Lloyd Jones had sound doctrine but he didn't believe that it was to be dry and empty and dead. He saw the need for the Lord to be at work personally and powerfully as that doctrine goes forth and as it's understood and applied.

One of the things that he insisted on as you read his sermons and as you become familiar with his writings, one of the things that he insisted on was the idea that one of the greatest problems in the church is our complete lack of grasp on who we really are as the people of God. That is, the Lord has told us in his word who we are in Christ and Lloyd Jones over and over again would say that the reason why so many of us are living such sub-Christian lives, the reason why so many of us are so unlike the New Testament description of a Christian is because we haven't really taken to heart what God has told us about ourselves in Christ. That is, if we would ever really get a handle on who we are in Christ and believe it and live in the light of it, it would absolutely transform the way that we live. To put it negatively, he said that we would not be the depressive, defeated, grumbling and complaining group of people we often are but rather we would be the most joyful, hopeful people on the face of the earth.

I agree with that whole-heartedly and I mention it because what you have in verses 1 and 2 of 1 Peter 1 is one of the most amazing descriptions of the Christian that you'll find anywhere in the New Testament. That's what you have in these two verses: you have a description of who we are in Christ, what God has done for us, what has been accomplished in our case. My prayer this morning is that we will hear it and believe it and that our lives will be different because of what we hear and what we see in these verses this morning.

How are we described? Peter is writing to a group of Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, what is now modern day Turkey, and how does he describe them? How does he begin his letter? How does he identify them? And realize as he identifies them, he's identifying us because we're in the same position if we know Christ that they were in.

Here's the first that we notice, verse 1, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles." Elect exiles. If you have a different version, you may find the word

“elect” or “chosen” in a different place in terms of the translation but nonetheless, the idea is there in all the translations that we are a people who have been chosen by God and that's where I want us to begin this morning. What does it mean to be a Christian? It means that you are someone who was chosen by God for salvation. You are someone who is elect. I've said it many times and I will say it again: if you want to get rid of the doctrine of election, you're going to have to cut away a great portion of your Bible because it's all over the Scriptures and if you just want to ignore the doctrine of election, you're going to have to ignore a great portion of your Bible. Everyone who believes the Bible has to believe in election because the word is in the Bible. I mean, there it is, elect, right?

So, if you believe the Bible is God's word, if you believe it's inspired of God, then you have to believe in election because the word is there. The only question left to be answered at that point is: what do you believe about election? You have to believe in election, it's there, God uses it. You have to believe there are people who are called “chosen” because there it is but now, what exactly do you believe about it? What do you believe that election means? What does God mean when he refers to his people as elect?

Before I define what I believe the Scriptures teach that word to mean, I first just want us to recognize some general principles that emerge by virtue of the fact that the word is used. First of all, it ought to be clear to us that early Christians understood the doctrine. Right? I mean, if you're going to write to someone and you're describing them and you say to them, “Hey, you are one of the elect,” if they don't know what that means, then that introduction is purposeless. No, if I'm going to describe you as someone who is elect and I'm not going to explain it right there, then I assume you already know what it means. You've already been taught this; it's already been explained to you. The very fact that Peter could begin a letter this way and refer to someone as elect, says to me that these early Christians had already been taught the doctrine of election. They already had some understanding of it.

Right away, that challenges us as churches, doesn't it? How do our churches excuse themselves when we have entire congregations who know little or nothing about the doctrine of election? If the early Christians had been taught this doctrine, how do we excuse ourselves when we don't teach Christians this doctrine? How do churches excuse themselves when they intentionally avoid the subject? Surely, they must be ignoring something that the early church didn't ignore and I tell you and I tell you this sadly but you can go to churches all across this nation and sit there 52 weeks and not hear one sermon on the doctrine of election when the word is all over the New Testament, the idea is all over the Old Testament and it's obvious from an introduction like this, that the early Christians were taught this doctrine.

Second, it ought to be clear to us not only that they were taught this doctrine but that this was no optional teaching. Someone would say, “Oh yes, the doctrine is there. I agree the word is there but, you know, it's so controversial, so divisive. We just choose not to get into it.” Well, understand from this introduction that this is something so central to the Christian life, so central to the Christian's understanding of himself that it's used here as a

title for the Christian. Who is he writing to? He's writing to the elect. What does that mean? That means that Christians are the elect. I mean, this is a title for a Christian. What does it mean to be a Christian? It means that you're someone who has been chosen by God. If you're a Christian, you're elect. Do you know what that means? Not only were the early Christians taught this doctrine, it's something so central to the Christian's understanding of himself that it could be used as a title for the Christian. It doesn't sound like something optional to me, does it to you?

Third, it ought to be clear to us that the believer is to think of himself or herself in these terms. Peter is not just using this for them. Peter is using this to describe them because this is how he wants them to think about themselves. How are you to think about yourself as a believer? You are to think about yourself as someone who has been chosen by God. Let me just ask you this morning: do you think about yourself that way? When you think about what it means to be a Christian? If I were to have asked you this morning before this sermon, "Tell me, describe for me how you think about yourself as a Christian?" Would one of the first things, because this is the first thing listed here, would one of the first things that would have come to your mind have been, "I am someone who has been chosen by God. I am elect." Do you think about yourself in those terms?

Now, if we take those three principles seriously, if we see that early Christians were taught this doctrine, if we see that the word "elect" was used as a title for a Christian, if we believe that these people were to think of themselves in terms of someone who has been chosen by God, doesn't that demand that we study this doctrine? I mean, doesn't it demand that we know what it means? It does.

So, what does it mean? What does it mean that someone has been chosen by God? What you find when you study what the word of God has to say about this doctrine is that God chose you, Christian, for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, not apart from faith in Christ but through faith in Jesus Christ before you were ever born. He chose you, not because of anything seen in you. He didn't look down and say, "Well now, you know, I can see that so-and-so is going to have a good heart. I can see that they're going to really seek me and so I'm going to choose them." No. Not because of anything seen in you. The book of Romans 9 makes that very plain. Not because of anything foreseen in you. Some people try to explain the doctrine of election this way: God looked down through the corridors of time and he saw who would choose him and who wouldn't and so God chose those whom he knew would choose him.

Folks, do you understand what's wrong with that? First of all, it doesn't take seriously what the Bible says about our sinful condition, does it? Because the Bible teaches us very clearly that there is no one who seeks God. There is no one who understands. There is not one human being, if left to themselves, who would have ever on their own loved Jesus. Not one. Also, what that does is it ultimately gives the credit for salvation, for belief, for faith, to the person, doesn't it? It ultimately says that the reason why you're saved is because God looked down through time and saw you were going to have the sense to believe. I mean, how do you explain your belief that way? Is it because you're smarter? Is it because you have a softer heart? Is it because you're just a better person? I mean, what

did you believe and someone else didn't? If God simply just looked down through time and saw that it was all about you, then you get the credit for it. Something else wrong with that is: that virtually makes God's choice not a choice at all. If God simply chose you "because he knew you would chose him," then God really chose no one. He didn't make any choice at all. God's hands were tied by your choices.

No, that's not what the doctrine of election is at all. It's not what he saw in you. It's not what he foresaw in you. You in no way merited salvation. You in no way deserved it. God chose you because he chose you. God chose you because he loved you before time and you didn't deserve it. And when God chose you for salvation, he chose to give you everything that you needed in order to become his child. He chose before time to bring you to himself at the proper time. He chose to send his Son for you who would accomplish everything necessary to save his people from their sins: living a sinless life, born of a virgin, dying on a tree as a substitute for all those who will place their faith in him, being raised from the dead. God chose to do everything in his Son necessary to save us and then in time, God chose to send the gospel to you so that you would hear the good news, so that you would hear the truth about Jesus and then God chose, by a work of his Spirit which we'll talk about in a moment. He chose to grant to you repentance, a broken heart, an understanding heart and faith in his Son Jesus. Then, on the basis of your faith in Christ, God chose to give himself to you, to actually come and indwell you and to secure you for all time and for all eternity and all of this is done freely by his grace.

That's the doctrine of election. That God chose to save you and that's who you are, Christian. That's how you're to see yourself. Who are you? You are one of God's chosen people. How can you be discouraged when you realize that you're one of those people? How can you feel like life has handed you a raw deal if you know Jesus? We know it well, right, someone says, "How are you doing today?" What's the answer? "Better than I deserve." If God had given us what we deserve, we would have all perished but you know Jesus and it's due to God's choice. If you know Christ, you're blessed beyond all riches. O, how we should be joyful if we know Christ.

But he doesn't stop there, does he? He doesn't just describe them as elect, he describes them, verse 1, "as elect exiles." Not only are we chosen, second we are strangers. We are strangers. How should the Christian think of himself? He's a stranger. He's an exile. He's a pilgrim. He's a sojourner. The word means "to sojourn in a strange place." It referred to someone who would come from a foreign country and take up residence beside the natives. When God saved us, he made us different from the world around us. He turned us into pilgrims. He transformed us into sojourners. He took us out of the world which is passing away and brought us into his Kingdom so that now we are citizens of heaven living in a strange place. It once was our home, we once belonged to the world system, we once walked according to Satan, according to sin, according to the course of this present age, but God delivered us out of it, brought us into his family and now has stationed us here as missionaries in the midst of this lost and dying world so that we're the chosen of God who now dwell here on this earth as exiles, strangers.

Do you understand the relationship between the two? The only reason why you're a pilgrim here is because God chose you. Listen to what Jesus said in John 15:19, "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own but because you are not of the world," listen to this, "but I chose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you." Why are you hated, Christian? Because you don't belong to the world. Why don't you belong to the world? Because Jesus chose you out of the world and brought you to himself and made you different from lost humanity.

Salvation has resulted in a change concerning the realm where we belong. In fact, here's a wonderful thought: we went from being one kind of stranger to another kind of stranger. We went from being one kind of alien to another kind of alien. Listen to this, Ephesians 2. In fact, why don't you just turn there. I want you to see this with your eyes. Ephesians 2 and look at verse 17, "And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near," speaking of Christ. Verse 18, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." Jew and Gentile, he's talking about. We've now been brought into one body through Christ. We both have this access and, Gentiles, listen because most of us here this morning we're not Jews, most of us are Gentiles. If you're not a Jew, you're a Gentile. Here's the wonderful thing that's happened in our case, verse 19, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." If you talk about our heritage as Gentiles, to us we're not in trust to the oracles of God, to us, we're not in trust to the fathers and the prophets and all of that. We were pagans by our heritage, strangers, aliens to God's truth, aliens to the truth of who God is, aliens to the word of God and God through his Son has now made us fellow citizens together with all those believers from the past and we've been brought together in one family and now our alien status is not found when it comes to God's family but it's found in a world that doesn't know God.

Back to 1 Peter 1, let me ask you: do you think of yourself this way? Do you recognize yourself as a pilgrim? Do you think about your life here as one of just passing through? Do you see yourself as a missionary? Do you see yourself on mission? Do you recognize that this is not your home? Do you see that you're different from unbelievers? Do you recognize what is different about you? And why you're different? I mean, what really is different about you from an unbeliever? What is different about you? And why are you different? It's because of salvation, isn't it? It's because of Christ. It's because of God's choice. What's different about you? Everything is different about you. You have fellowship with God. Your sins have been forgiven. Your nature has been changed. You've been made a new creation in Christ Jesus so that your thoughts are different, your ambitions are different, the way you live is different. Everything is different and the world hates you because the world doesn't have you as its own anymore. You don't belong. You're chosen. You're a stranger.

Here's the third description of the believer in this introduction, 1 Peter 1:1, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles," now, here's the next one, "of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The word for "dispersion" there in some translations, I think it has "scattered," diaspora is the word. It was a word used for the dispersion of Israelites into Gentile countries, sometimes

dispersed because of their sin. You have the captivities and the exportation of Jews to other parts of the world like Babylon. Dispersion. Sometimes there would be a dispersion because of persecution. Here, he describes all believers as those who have been dispersed. In fact, Wednesday night, if you were here last Wednesday night, I pointed out, I think, the primary audience for this letter is not Jewish believers but Gentile believers. So, in what way or for what reason would you refer to Gentiles as dispersed? Tom Shriner offers this helpful note. Listen, "The term 'scattered' could be translated literally as 'of the dispersion.' The term 'dispersion' was often used of Jews who lived outside Palestine who were scattered from their homeland because of their sin. In the New Testament, the word is used in only two other places, in both cases probably referring to Jews who were outside the land. In this instance, however, the word probably is used metaphorically. Peter was not writing to Jews but primary to Gentiles and hence, he was hardly suggesting that they were the dispersed of Israel in the literal sense and yet he signaled again that they were the people of God who joined with believing Jews in the promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

That is, this word "dispersion" is used to remind us that just like Israelites who were the people of God, were dispersed at times throughout the nations, so we now as the people of God, have been scattered by God throughout the world. Who are you, Christian? Well, you're chosen, you're a stranger but get this, you've been dispersed. You've been scattered by God by design. What does that say to us? Well, it says that we have a strategic presence in the world. God has scattered believers all over the world and he's done it strategically like seed that's been sown so believers have been strategically placed by God all over the planet for the purpose of not only glorifying God but evangelizing the lost. You are where you are by God's design. Do you recognize that? You are in this world for a reason. If God didn't have work for you to do, you would already be in heaven. So, if you're here, there's a work for you to do and God has you placed somewhere, not by accident but by design.

This also reminds us of our unity with every other believer all over the globe. We not only have a union with one another because we belong to the same local church but we have unity with every true believer in Jesus Christ. We have been joined to God's Son, joined by God's Spirit so that we all share the same Father, the same Lord, the same life, all headed to the same destination. You have believers here in Pontus, in Galatia, in Cappadocia, in Asia, in Bithynia and what he says about those in Pontus can be said of those in Cappadocia. It's the same. We belong to the same family.

But it also speaks of our need to congregate, doesn't it? Could you imagine moving off to a foreign country where you can't speak their language and no one speaks your language and there you are feeling all by yourself, absolutely culturally different from all those around you. Nothing that makes you feel at home and all of a sudden you discover that there is someone else from your home town living two doors down. Could you imagine never contacting them? Never going over to visit with them? Never saying a word to them? Would that happen? Here we are, beloved, in a foreign land, as it were. We are all citizens of heaven, having the same Father, the same Lord, indwelt by the same Spirit. Do you not think that true believers will want to congregate together? Gather together?

Especially when, in that place, worship is going to our God and the word of our God is going to be taught? Can you imagine someone saying they belong to the family, they just don't want to have any part with the family? They just don't want to be around their fellow citizens? It doesn't make a bit of sense, does it?

By the way, if those early believers were not faithful to congregate with one another, how would they have ever received this letter? I mean, this was before the days of email. If you're not there, you don't hear it. If you're not there, you don't get the message. How do you get the message? You've got to be at the church. I've got news for you, beloved, even those this is the day of email and downloads and all that stuff, the Lord works in a special way when his people gather together and if you're not there, you don't get the message. You miss something. You miss something.

What is he telling us about ourselves? You're chosen. Do you think of yourself that way? You're a stranger. Do you think of yourself that way? You've been scattered by design. The people of God in the midst of the world. Do you think of yourself that way?

But then, fourth, in verse 2, he tells us what we were chosen for. You've been delivered. What does it mean to be saved? It means you've been set free. It means you've been delivered and there are many aspects to that. Notice what he says in verse 2, "According," you're the elect exiles of the dispersion, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood." You talk about a power packed verse, it's that one right there.

God chose you, first of all, in accordance with his foreknowledge. Some people say, "Oh, you see there? There it is. The choice of God is according to his foreknowledge," and when they think foreknowledge they think foresight but they've misunderstood the word "foreknowledge." That's not what it means. Foreknowledge does not simply mean that God knows the future. The word "foreknowledge" means that God preplanned a relationship with you. In other words, his choice of you was not some cold choice, his choice of you for salvation was in reference to a relationship. God made a choice of you because he preplanned to have a relationship with you. He preplanned a love relationship with every single one of his children. That's what the word "foreknowledge" means. It speaks of a relationship.

Let me give you an example of this from the Old Testament, Amos 3:2. Speaking to Israel, God said this, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that God was only aware of Israel? I mean, if you wanted to talk to him about Babylon, he didn't know who they were, "I don't know who you're talking about. I don't know they exist." Is that what that means? Out of all the families of the earth, only you have I known about? No, God is saying out of all the families of the earth, only you, Israel, do I have this special relationship with and in that sense, I know you. I have known you. In fact, God goes on to say, "therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities, because we are in this relationship, I discipline you." It's in that sense of the word "foreknowledge" is used. God preplanned to know you. Do you remember in Matthew 7 where many will

appear before the Lord Jesus we're told one day and say, "Lord, Lord, have we not done this in your name? Have we not done that in your name?" You know the passage, right? And what does Jesus say to them? "Depart from me ye that work iniquity, I never," what? "Knew you. I never knew you." Does that mean that he didn't know about them? It means he didn't have a saving relationship with them.

Foreknowledge is not just God seeing, it's God planning, it's God choosing to have a relationship with you so you were chosen in reference to this relationship. By the way, I can demonstrate that from the text right here because if you would, please, look down at verse 17 of 1 Peter 1. "And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers." What does it mean to be saved? It means you've been ransomed, bought with a price. "Not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Verse 20, "He," Jesus, "was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you." Jesus was foreknown. Now, does that mean that God looked down through the corridors of time and just happened to see his Son coming into the world, happened to see him living his life, happened to see him on a cross and God says, "Well, it's inevitable. I see that all of it is going to happen so I'm going to choose it." Or was this God predetermined plan? Did he know his Son from all eternity as the Savior of the world because he planned it to be so?

In the same way, believer, you were foreknown as a child of God before you were ever born. Not because God just saw it happening and he said, "Oh well, it's inevitable." You were foreknown before time as a child of God because God planned to have a relationship with you. He chose you for it. That's a part of your deliverance, fellowship with God. Look back at chapter 1:2, notice how this came to us in time, "according to the foreknowledge of God," this choice was in accordance with God's plan to have a relationship with you. Notice, "in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood." Now, this is a very odd order in terms of what we would expect and what we're used to. Think about it with me: when you think about the word "sanctification," if I ask you whether or not you're being sanctified, what do you think of? You think of the progression of the Christian life, don't you? Growing in the Lord, alright? But you notice here that sanctification precedes obedience to Jesus Christ and even more strange, precedes what? The sprinkling of his blood.

So, you have election, foreknowledge, sanctification, obedience, sprinkling with his blood. You would think it would be: election, foreknowledge, obedience, sprinkling, sanctification but it's not that way. Why? Because the word "sanctified" doesn't just refer to progressive growth in the Christian life, the word itself just means "to set apart; to count; to consider as holy." To set apart. Now, here's what God is telling us: you were chosen for salvation in view of a relationship and then, here's what God did, in time, in history, at the right moment of your personal life, God set you apart for himself and he did this by the work of his Holy Spirit. What he's describing here is regeneration. What

he's describing here is that work of new birth. What he's describing here is that work of the Spirit that leads to the next thing he mentions.

What's the next thing he mentions? Obedience to Jesus Christ. What's he talking about there? He's talking about faith in Christ. He's talking about obedience to the gospel. He's talking about believing the good news. Chosen for salvation, chosen for a relationship but how did you come to obey Jesus? How did you come to submit to him as Lord and Savior? How did you come to believe upon him? His Spirit did a work in your soul that set you apart for that obedience. Set apart by the Spirit unto obedience to Jesus Christ and what happened when you trusted in Christ? When you obeyed the gospel? You do understand the gospel as a command. We've been sent forth for obedience to the gospel among the nations. We preach the gospel and we call men and women to obey the gospel. What is the command of the gospel? Repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God worked in our soul. We heard the gospel. He worked in our souls so that we obeyed Christ. We believed the gospel. What was the result? We were sprinkled clean by his blood. We were forgiven of all of our sins. That's why the order is what it is because this doesn't have progressive sanctification in view. This is talking about who you are as a believer. This is talking about salvation. This is talking about conversion.

Chosen for a relationship, that's before time. In time it had to come to pass. How did it come to pass? The Holy Spirit came to you as the gospel was being preached to you and he worked regeneration in your soul. He opened your heart like he did for Lydia so that you could see and understand and you desired Christ, so that you obeyed the gospel, you submitted to Christ as Lord and then the blood of Jesus cleansed you from all your sins.

What does it mean to be a Christian? It means you've been delivered. It means you've been ransomed. It means you've been set free. Do you notice in this verse that the entire Godhead was at work in your salvation? When he mentions that you were chosen, you were chosen according to the foreknowledge of, what does he say? God the Father. And then you were set apart in time by who? God the Holy Spirit. And then you were cleansed from all your sins after you obeyed who? The Lord Jesus Christ. Chosen by the Father, worked in by the Spirit, obeying Jesus Christ, cleansed by his blood. That's salvation.

If you think of yourself the way God describes you, you have to see yourself as chosen. You have to see yourself as a stranger. You have to see yourself as being scattered strategically. And you have to see yourself as someone who has been delivered by God's Son. Foreknown, sanctified, obeying Jesus, sprinkled clean by his blood. Which gets to the last way we're described. At the end of verse 2, "May grace and peace be multiplied to you." Who are we, brethren? The last way we could describe ourselves from God's word is to say that we are recipients. We are recipients. Ongoing recipients of multiplied grace and multiplied peace.

May grace, first of all, be multiplied to you. Did you meet with grace this morning when you woke up? Has God been gracious to us? Did that stop the day we met Jesus? Or does it continue? And when will it stop? When will God stop being gracious to you? What's

the answer? Never. Never. And grace in our case is not just added to us. That's not a strong enough word. It's multiplied to us. In fact, for every grace you're aware of, there are multiplied graces you haven't even recognized. Our story is grace upon grace upon grace upon grace. And in the midst of all that grace, do you know what God wants us to know? Multiplied peace. Think about it. This is what Lloyd Jones was saying. If you believe this, why is your soul disturbed? If you believe this, why are you afraid? If you believe this, why did you lie awake last night? Why do you worry like you do? If God be for us, what does the Bible say? Who can be against us? Do you believe it? Or is the reason why we live the lives we live because we don't believe it? God tells us who we are and it's as if we say to him, "Oh no, that's not me."

Not only peace in your soul but peace in your relationships. Is your home a Christian home? I mean, is everyone in that family saved? You know what, many of us, you want to talk about grace, there are many of us sitting here this morning that every member of our household knows Jesus. Is that not grace? But now, let me ask you: if every member of your household knows Jesus, why is there arguing? Why is there fighting? Why would two believers ever have a bad marriage? Why in the home of believers would there be cruel, unthoughtful parents? Or why would there be rebellious children? It ought not to be which is why what we must do afresh and anew is not only realize who we are but submit to Jesus just like we did the first day and say, "Lord, not my will be done, but yours be done. Not my way, but your way." That we might not only know multiplied peace in our soul but peace in our relationships.

The greatest problem the church faces, Lloyd Jones said and he was right, is that we don't really have a grasp on who we are and so we live lives that don't resemble what God's word tells us we are. Who are you? If you're saved, you're chosen, you're a stranger, you've been dispersed, you've been delivered and you're someone to whom every day you're alive, grace and peace is coming your way if you'll just receive it and walk in it, coming your way in a multiplied fashion. Tell me again why you're not happy. Tell me again why you don't have joy.

May God help us to live in light of who we really are and may every person in this place who doesn't yet know Jesus realize that today is the day of salvation and the Lord stands ready to forgive you and receive you and save you. Will you repent of your sins and look to him? And all God's people would say Amen.

Let's pray together.

Holy Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your Spirit's work in this place and in this hour and we thank you that people have been pointed to your Son. We ask, Lord, that what has been seen in your word today would not fall on deaf ears, that we would not be forgetful hearers who see ourselves as though looking in a mirror and then walk away and forget what we've seen, that we would take these things into our hearts and meditate on these things throughout this day. Lord, may you change us forever in light of what we've seen.

Then Father, we pray for those outside your family at this present time. Strangers and aliens when it comes to your grace, when it comes to your Son and we ask that in your mercy, even this moment, even this hour, even this day, they would cry out from their heart to Jesus for forgiveness, loving him, ready to follow him, ready to obey him. Lord, I pray they would hear the gospel today, that it's not how they live that will bring them salvation, it is what your Son did for them, living his sinless life, dying on a cross for their sins. Lord, may they look to Jesus and, Father, I pray that they would realize at the same time that he's not just a Savior, he's Lord, that they would come ready to obey him. We ask you this in Jesus' name. Amen.