

Sunday, July 10, 2016

Jim Blumenstock

Introduction to 1 Peter 2:9-10

Because of the Fall, our world has been plagued by division. In Genesis 3, right after Adam and Eve sinned, Adam tried shifting the blame onto Eve. Presumably witnessing this division among his parents, their son, Cain, would later murder his brother, Abel. Since then, countless divisions and rivalries have developed. Jews and Gentiles; black and white; rich and poor; Capitalist and Communist; Republican and Democrat; Spartan and Wolverine; the list goes on...

Yet in the midst of all of these, God has been working out His plan of redeeming people from the Fall. His original intent was for all people to love one another. That is why He chose Israel and gave them the law. The whole thing was designed for people to love one another (Gal. 5:14). It is also the command Jesus gave to His disciples whom He has chosen to be His people, the primary marker by which they would be distinguished from the world (John 13:35). In this way, for believers, the bond we share with other Christians is stronger than any other human bond—stronger than race, stronger than nationality, even stronger than family.

Context

In this letter, Peter has been making an argument designed to encourage believers suffering persecution (1:6; 2:19; 3:14-17; 4:19; 5:10). In the course of his argument, he reminds them of Christ's suffering on their behalf (1:11; 2:22-24; 3:18; 4:1; 5:1), and of the fact that they have been chosen as God's own people (1:1-9, 18-19; 2:4-10, etc.), so their suffering is not in vain.

Structure

- I. Pronouncement of identity in Christ (9a, 10)
- II. Exhortation to proclamation (9b)

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10

The Church is...

I. A Chosen People

II. A Holy Nation

III. God's People

Discuss

1. In the sermon, Jim mentioned race and family as “boundaries” or “identity markers” that differentiate us from others. What other “identity markers” do we put in place to separate us from others?
2. Read Exodus 19:4-6 and Deuteronomy 7:6-11. What is the basis for God choosing Israel to be His people? Is that basis any different from us as His people under the New Covenant?
3. Jim also mentioned that what separates us as God’s people now is not race, ethnicity, or family, but faith. What does that look like? How can someone tell the difference between Christians who have faith and non-Christians that don’t?
4. Read Mark 3:31-35. How do Jesus’ words here inform the way you think about your relationships with those outside of the church? What about those inside the church?
5. The boundary that divides Christian and non-Christian is permeable one way. Those who are not yet Christians are not permanently divided from those who are. There is still time to turn from sin and trust Christ as Lord and Savior. Who are you going to interact with in the next few days that needs to hear that message?

Go Deeper *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

Gospel Connections: The gospel, contrary to our popular thinking, is not about how *I* can get right with God, but about how *we* can get right with God and with each other. The spirit of our age tells us that individuals have the right to determine their own identity. This is factually incorrect. We can feign the identity of our choosing, and even go to dramatic lengths to pull that off, but deep down we must come to terms with the fact that our identity is not self-created, but determined by God. God determines a person's race, ethnicity, socio-economic standing, and other factors. He also chooses those who will be His people. The distinction of being chosen by God to represent His name on earth ought to be of the utmost encouragement to us. We must remember that the fundamental distinction between people is according to faith in Jesus Christ. For those in Christ, we are family.

Whole Bible Connections: The language of this passage is drawn largely from Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 7, but there is also a connection in Isaiah and Hosea. In the former passages, God speaks directly to Israel to explain to them how He lovingly chose them to be His people not because of any intrinsic value they had, but simply because it is in His character to be merciful. However, Israel rejected God over time, and God determined to “graft in” Gentiles among His people. In Isaiah and Hosea, it becomes clear that God is making a new nation (made up of many nations) that will be distinguished by faith. Because all along, people were not truly marked by ethnicity, but those who shared the faith of Abraham. Therefore, God would create one holy nation out of people from every nation on earth, so that indeed, Abraham would be the father of many nations (Gen. 17:5; Rom. 4:17).

Theological Connections: To be a priest means to mediate between God and mankind. To be a “royal priesthood,” then, means that the church mediates the relationship between God and the world today. That is why we are to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called [us] out of darkness into light.” If anyone is to come to God, it will be through the ministry of Christ's Church.