

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JUNE 3 - 7, 2019



IN COMMON

SERMON SERIES

June 2 - July 28

MONDAY

1 Peter 2:9

Remember that day on the playground when two of the most athletic students in the school, your secret heroes, were called out to choose two teams. It went quickly at first, the obvious picks, but then you realized with horror that you were still not part of a team; you had not yet been chosen—this still brings back nightmares!

We all want to be chosen, to be special, to be the called out first. In this passage Peter tells us just how special we are to God. We are chosen by our omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient God, whom we can call “Abba.” This may not seem that significant to us today in the 21st century with over 2000 years of Christian history, until we realize that before the coming of Christ to this earth, the Israelites had the exclusive title of being the chosen nation (Deuteronomy 14:2). Peter here changes that reserved privilege and clarifies that the “chosen” people are no longer only for one nation, but for all who follow and believe in Jesus Christ. You and I have been handpicked to be one of His precious children. We as members of the church have been chosen; we are set apart from the world, and we are His special family.

To make us even more special, we claim the right to be a “royal priesthood.” It is easy to skip over the significance of these two words as being just another description of a Christ-follower. But Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, breaks through two significant social barriers of the time: access to God only being possible through priests, and royalty being only accessible for the elite. So, what did this mean?

In the Old Testament, priests did two things: (1) They had the right, privilege, and responsibility to go directly to God. They could talk directly to God, worship Him, and fellowship with Him. Everybody else had to go through a priest. (2) The priest had the privilege and responsibility of representing God to the people and ministering to their needs. But since the resurrection of Christ, we have these rights as His chosen ones! In addition, we are royal! No bowing or kneeling to earthly kings, for through a risen Christ we now have royal and priestly status.

QUESTIONS

What can you change in your life today that will remind you that you are chosen and precious to God? Does this change any of your relationships?

PRAYERS FOR KEN ZELL

Pray for Ken Zell, who works with students as an Associate Regional Director of the Greater LA area through InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. With over 1 million students attending college in the Greater Los Angeles basin, Ken has the privilege of serving alongside students as they learn to live God-centered lives.

TUESDAY

1 Peter 2:9

We have all experienced those “awkward” moments at a special event, or perhaps a family celebration, where something is offered, or something is said, to which we might have reacted negatively; then almost immediately we knew we were different. As followers of Christ, it is not unusual to feel like the “odd man or woman out” in the world today. It is, in fact, rather tempting to avoid these “situations” and even adjust our behavior or conform to the situation to “fit in” and become one of the crowd.

Yet, Peter writes that we as believers are chosen, royal, holy, and God’s special possession. We are intended to be different from the world and from those who do not know and follow Christ. Our position as Christians on issues and situations must be a worldview that others who do not know Jesus will see as different. We pray that as salt and light to His Word, and through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, our different opinions or living patterns may cause others to question their own worldview.

There are, of course, many obvious ways that we are set apart and different from the world. We behave and act differently as a body who unconditionally loves and serves others. Our daily lives, as well as our plans for the future, are determined by prayer and His voice spoken to us through Scripture. Our decisions are made in the context of eternity, not the calendar. We are different, but we do this knowing that we are God’s special possession.

Being “special” generally refers to something that is beyond what is common or usual. “Special” is something exceptional or distinct. We all have that “special thing” in our drawer, or that box of pictures of something or someone we consider to be special or unique. Peter reminds us that you and I have been made unique, separate from others, distinctive, and special in God’s eyes as He has purchased us with the blood of His son, Jesus Christ. It is who purchased us (God), our purchase price (His only Son’s life), and His reason for purchasing us (to restore our relationship to Him) that enables us to be called His special possession.

QUESTIONS

How will you live today differently knowing that you are God’s special possession?

PRAYERS FOR KEN ZELL

Pray for the roughly 1500 InterVarsity students on college campuses throughout Los Angeles to be bold and loving witnesses of the Gospel so that many of their classmates and friends might come to know Jesus.

WEDNESDAY

1 Peter 2:11, 12

What does it take to live a godly life in an ungodly (pagan) world? Many of us have asked ourselves this question repeatedly. No matter where we are, where we turn, or what we do, it seems that we are constantly being exposed to a television show, a movie, a radio program, or an office discussion that is probably not what we would listen to in the church sanctuary! However, we cannot live in a bubble or filter everything we see, read, or hear. Peter's solution is for us to live godly lives in a pagan society (v. 12). So how might we do that today?

Put God first! We need to have open eyes, a clear mind, and a heart that is totally fixed first on Jesus Christ. We do this by being absolutely committed to a discipline of prayer and the study of God's Word. We cannot live godly lives unless we follow the "instruction manual" that God has given us, and this is His Word, the Bible.

Spend time with the Lord. Pray and schedule a life that enables you to know God in a personal way. Start the day by intimate time with your Lord, praying over the steps you will take throughout the day. Model your life on Jesus (Mark 1:35), who rose early in the morning and went to a quiet place to pray.

Know that God loves you with an unconditional love! No one, even your closest family member or friend, will ever love you or care for you as much as God does. Christ died so that you and I can have eternal life. He loves you with an everlasting love, and His love never changes. You can't earn more of it and you can't lose it.

Don't conform to the behavior and customs of this world, but live in it! God's purpose in creating the world is for humans to live in it. It was never God's intention that we "escape" from a sinful world. He would say we are to go into all the world and preach the gospel; we are to be salt and light in a world that He loves (Matthew 5:13-16). Can we as Christians do either of those two things if we live completely isolated and secluded from the rest of the world?

QUESTIONS

Is there anything in your daily schedule that you are convicted to change in order to live a godly life?

PRAYERS FOR KEN ZELL

Pray for the graduating seniors that they might discern God's call for their lives in this next season, find healthy churches where they can continue to grow spiritually and use their gifts, and depend upon God's strength and grace to weather the challenges of a major transition.

THURSDAY

1 Peter 2:9

We are not only called to live in this world (godly lives), but we are also called to be different or set apart (John 17:14-15). This is really the meaning of living a holy life—to be set apart. We are not to participate in the sinful activities the world promotes, nor are we to retain the corrupt mind that the world often reflects, but rather we are to conform our minds to that of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2). This is the ultimate goal for daily living, and this is our commitment to what we believe. But easier said than done, right?

There is no “magic” solution or formula to living a holy life, but from God’s Word we have principles for living in a sinful world:

Holy living means going to God first. Matthew 6:33 reminds us that we are to seek His kingdom before and above anything else. It also reminds us that He will give us all that we need to live righteously. God resources us for *holy living*.

Holy living means hearing, believing and obeying God’s Word. James 1:21-25 exhorts us to “*humbly accept the word God has planted in you,*” going on to say, “*listen ... and do what it says.*” God provides a detailed guide for *holy living*.

Holy living means knowing God in an intimate way. Our personal relationship grows as we spend more time in conversation with God—not only sharing our concerns, needs, and intercession for others, but

taking time to hear His voice through the stirring of the Holy Spirit. God provides a listening ear and comfort for *holy living*.

Holy living means being strengthened and encouraged by other believers. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages us to meet together to encourage and support one another. God provides encouragement by bringing other believers into our lives.

Holy living means that we have to be as “*shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves*” (Matthew 10:16). Discernment and boundaries on what we watch, read, listen to, and participate in are decisions that we must make, sometimes in an instant; these godly decisions set us apart from the rest of the world.

QUESTIONS

Keeping our minds on Christ in the midst of busy lives is not easy, but necessary. God knows the complexity and tension we live in; and for this reason, He sent us His comforter, the Holy Spirit. What areas of your life need changing in order to grow in your walk with the Lord through *holy living*?

PRAYERS FOR KEN ZELL

Pray for the 40 InterVarsity staff members who serve on campuses across Greater Los Angeles that God would strengthen their leadership, deepen their faith, and fill them with boldness and perseverance as they seek to reach every corner of every campus.

FRIDAY

1 Peter 2:12

It is hard to think about our lessons in Sunday School without recalling the first time we heard the story of Daniel in the lion's den. Perhaps it was the mystery of lions, animals which we had never really seen. Or perhaps even then we realized the miracle of God's hand in sending angels to shut the mouths of the lions behind a sealed cave, showing the power of an Almighty God. Daniel's *holy living* was in a society and culture that is similar to the one we live in today. His model encourages us as we strive to live godly and holy lives.

In 1 Peter 2:12 we are told to *"live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of wrongdoing, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us."* Doesn't that sound similar to the story of Daniel? Daniel was in exile in Babylon; yet even his accusers admitted that they would never find anything to charge him with, other than *"something to do with the law of his God"* (Daniel 6:5). What a reputation! Now that is *holy living*!

We as God's people today remain in "exile" in this world, waiting for Christ to return us to our rightful and permanent home in the new heaven and the new earth. In today's passage, Peter reminds us that we are exiles, and he urges us not to conform ourselves to the customs and traditions of this temporary residence, but to transform our lives through love and *holy living* in order to glorify God.

Peter also tells us that we must live honorably among the Gentiles (or in this world). We are encouraged to do good deeds while we live in community. This is for our earthly lifetime; we have eternity to live in His presence and a sinless world. For when we do such things here on earth, pagans (those who deny Christ) will recognize the good deeds now. Ultimately, they will see who we are, how we live, how we love, and who we represent (Jesus).

Let's commit to living a daily life that is purposeful, loving to our neighbor, and focused on the mind of Christ—a life that does not cause anyone to stumble, but shines the light of Jesus so that He, not we, will be glorified.

QUESTIONS

How is today going to look different as you seek to glorify Christ, especially to those who don't know Him?

PRAYERS FOR KEN ZELL

Pray for God to open doors to unreached campuses. The vast majority of campuses in Greater Los Angeles that have no active Christian ministry are community colleges. Pray for God to provide volunteers, Christian faculty, and partnering churches to help us reach the unreached places.

Sources:

- GotQuestions.org quote can be found at www.gotquestions.org/curse-fig-tree.

