

A Chosen Generation (1 Peter 12:6-12)

You know, the Bible makes it pretty clear that we're going to endure some rough times as we make our way through our lives in this world. God's word is nothing if it is not honest. Our Lord tells it like it is and He understands that life is not always pleasant.

Job certainly grumbled about it.

"Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man? Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, And like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages, So I have been allotted months of futility, And wearisome nights have been appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I arise, And the night be ended?' For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn. My flesh is caked with worms and dust, My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, And are spent without hope. Oh, remember that my life is a breath! My eye will never again see good. (Job 7:1-7)

Boy, what a pessimist! But then, Job had plenty to grumble about.

How about somebody like Solomon, though? He was rich beyond anyone's dreams. He enjoyed a stellar reputation among the kings and queens of the earth. God had endowed him with wisdom greater than any of his contemporaries. And he wrote:

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge." And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind. For in much wisdom is much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. (Ecclesiastes 1:14-18)

That's certainly uplifting!

And what of Jesus, who said:

In the world you will have tribulation; (John 16:33)

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. (John 15:20)

"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. (Mark 8:34)

Or of Paul, who wrote:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

And yes, even Peter ... much of his letters are about explaining the persecution, the hardship that comes with being a believer in Christ. That hardship, those trials, the persecution of this life is a reality, confirmed by holy scripture. But my friends, we must not dwell on it because the privileges that come with being a Christian far, far outweigh any hardship this world could ever dish out. If you have trusted Jesus for your salvation, you are of a privileged class. You are a chosen generation.

Let's begin to look at our text for this morning:

Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. (1 Peter 2:6-8)

Now if you have attended Canyon Community Church for any length of time at all, you know I am a strong believer in divine election. I believe it is what the Bible clearly teaches.

*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 should be holy and without blame before Him in love, **having predestined us** to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6)*

If you can confess Jesus Christ as Lord and if you can believe that God raised Him from the dead, it is because God chose you before the foundation of the world. That should give you great comfort, because as Jesus said:

This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:39-40)

So I am quite Calvinistic when it comes to the doctrine of election, but I am not a fatalist. A fatalist says "God is going to do what God is going to do, so there's no sense in me praying, or witnessing, or trying to live a life that pleases Him. We are all just puppets on strings being manipulated by divine will."

That is not Biblical!

You are awesomely **responsible** for your response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you accept Him, He will become an unshakable foundation for your life of faith, the Chief Cornerstone, elect and precious. If you believe in Him you will by no means be put to shame. But if you reject Jesus, He will become your Rock of offense, a stone of stumbling. And instead of becoming your foundation, He will cause you to trip and fall.

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

So right off the bat, I have to ask you "What's it going to be?" Are you going to make Jesus the foundation of your life? Will you admit that you are a sinner deserving of eternal condemnation? Because all have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard and the wages of sin is death. Somebody's going to have to pay that wage. You could try to pay it yourself, but that means a forever of the most horrible suffering in hell or, you could simply let Jesus take the hit for you. He already paid for your sins on the cross at Calvary.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

If you repent of your sin, agree along with God that you are guilty, and then turn to Jesus in faith alone, you will be saved and He will become the foundation of your life. But if you reject the offer of salvation, Jesus will become your stone of stumbling, you will trip and fall, and that fall will take you all the way to the Lake of Fire. God will not send you to hell. You go to hell because you love darkness rather than light. You go to hell because you love your evil deeds far more than you love the One who sacrificed everything to save you.

What's it going to be for you? Is Jesus your firm foundation or is Jesus your stone of stumbling?

Now look at verse 9.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9)

In verse 8, Peter is talking about those who foolishly reject Jesus and stumble into hell. In verse 9, he draws an emphatic contrast. *But you*, he says. You are different. You are not like those who stumble over Jesus. Because of that, you have great blessing just dumped on you and he gives us a list.

You are a chosen generation. The word translated “generation” is *genos (γένος)*. It comes from a word meaning kin so it implies family. The NIV translates it as “chosen people”. The ESV translates it “chosen race”, as does the NASB. What it means is we who believe in Christ have become God’s family, His kinfolk. And we have become God’s family by His choice. He wants you to be His kids!

And if you are His kids, you belong to a royal priesthood. Right away, I see a contrast with the Old Testament Priesthood. Priests came from the line of Levi. Kings came from the line of Judah. So a royal priest would have been utterly impossible. But Jesus ushered in a completely new thing. The New Covenant combines the offices of priest and king and Jesus is our perfect High Priest. He is also our perfect King. The writer of Hebrews calls Him a High Priest of the order of Melchizedek, a priestly king, or a kingly priest.

Because we are now part of Jesus family, we are royals so ours is a Royal Priesthood. We talked a little bit last week about what that means. We have the privilege of offering spiritual sacrifices before the throne of God, our prayers, our praise, our obedience, our very lives.

Peter says we are a holy nation, and God’s own special people. How many ways can he put it before you understand how privileged you are? And as God’s special people, we have a special mission. We have the responsibility to ...

... proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Our job as Christians is to praise God, to glorify God, to praise Jesus and to glorify Jesus. We are to tell the world about Him.

And why must we do so? Not so that we can be saved; our works can never do that. God saves us; we do not save ourselves. But we labor for the kingdom of God because we want to express our gratitude for what He has done. He called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. As it says in verse 9, we ...

... who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:10)

My friend, you deserve nothing more than an eternity of torment in the pit of hell. You are a sinner. You are a sinner because we are all sinners.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

But if you have confessed Jesus as your Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you have obtained mercy. We who trust Christ are His people. Don't you think He deserves our obedience, our devotion, our lives?

So we are a privileged, chosen generation. What are the implications? How should this amazing fact impact the way you live? Peter tells us:

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:11-12)

This world is not your home. The world's system is not your system. You are a sojourner. You are a pilgrim. You are a resident alien in this world. So live in a manner that brings glory to God Almighty. You need to endeavor to be above reproach. Oh, if you live like a Christian, you will be reproached, but make sure your conduct is honorable. When they slander you, it should be obvious that the charges are slanderous. Your good works should be obvious to all. They should be obvious to your brothers and sisters in Christ and they also should be obvious to unbelievers. Don't give in to fleshly lusts. You don't have to anymore because you have the Holy Spirit living inside you.

Don't give in to the temptation to live for this world. Because a day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Everyone will glorify God. Sadly, many will make that confession with great sorrow. They will stand on the precipice above that boiling Lake of Fire. They will have to admit that your good works brought glory to your Lord and Savior.

But I beg you, live your life today looking forward to that glorious commendation that will come to the faithful when Jesus welcomes you home with the words: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

You are a Chosen Generation. Rejoice in it! And live as if you believe it!