

A PECULIAR PEOPLE

1 PETER 2:9

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⁹ But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Introduction:

A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, "Eighteen to nothing – we're behind." "Wow," said the spectator, "I'll bet you're discouraged." "Why should I be discouraged?" the little boy replied. "We haven't even gotten up to bat yet!"

The ultimate cure for discouragement is hope. When any situation is placed in the proper perspective discouragement gives way to hope. The team may be losing but there's hope for a comeback. You may be overwhelmed by life's difficulties but there's hope as we trust in the Lord.

The people to whom the Peter wrote his epistle needed hope. They were discouraged. Because of their faith they were being persecuted. At least 15 times in his letter Peter refers to their suffering. Peter was writing to offer them bright hope for their dark days.

We all need hope. Our Nation, our State, our Community, and each one of us need hope. It's easy to be discouraged as we look at our situation. But God wants to bring a bright hope for dark days. Today, just like the day in which Peter wrote a bright hope will come as believers are reminded of who they are, where they are and Whose they are.

Note:

1. THE PROBLEM OF DARK DAYS

Note:

A. The problem of moral darkness

What is "right" and what is "wrong" these days? I guess it depends on who you ask. We live in a world where right and wrong have become matters of opinion, it becomes a matter of who you are or where you are. The problem is that it isn't true. There are absolutes.

The 10 Commandments didn't somehow become the 10 Suggestions. The Bible is "a" book about living it is

“the” Book about life. Sin isn’t new, it has been around a long time, and we just keep finding new ways to justify it as socially or culturally acceptable.

Note who the Lord characterized the world of His day:

John 3:19

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

B. The Problem of Spiritual Darkness

Moral darkness is a reflection of spiritual darkness. While the morality issues in our world will always get the most press, they are really just the “tip of the iceberg” when it comes to the problems that we face.

There is no moral problem that is not at heart a spiritual problem, which means that facing and fixing the moral issues in our lives.

I have seen many people helped through a variety of 12 Step types of programs. I believe in them, and I think they have an important part in any recovery program. With that said, they cannot and will not replace the healing power of Jesus Christ! So many people have gotten off drugs, and stopped drinking, through a great program mixed with a little religion only to fall right back into the same trap and often worse. Why?

Because programs and religion can help a person “reform” but Jesus Christ can change you from the inside out! Listen to what He says in John 12:

John 12:46

⁴⁶ I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Jesus wants to bring light into our world, and I believe He wants to use you and I to help make that happen. It may seem like to big a task for you and me. We may look around and say, “How could the Lord ever bring hope where there is so much despair?” Here’s a clue...

2. THE POWER OF BRIGHT HOPE

Note:

A. God’s Power is Still Changing People

Note Paul’s personal testimony:

1 Timothy 1:15-16

¹⁵ This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Do we believe God is still changing people? If so, then we need to accept our part in sharing the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. There are people all around us that are separated from God and a destined for hell while at the same time we know the way to heaven. That is why we need to be...

3. THE PEOPLE TO BRIDGE THE GAP

There are two things that we need to remember as we consider the great task before us

A. We Are God's People By a Relationship

It's not about US it's about HIM in us. We can't save anybody, but there isn't anybody God can't save. We need to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide our words and our actions. When people see and hear us they ought to be seeing and hearing Christ in us.

There is a great story about Peter and John that illustrates this. They had been arrested for healing a lame man in the Temple and for preaching about Jesus. When they were interrogated by the Religious Leaders this is what they said:

Acts 4:12-13

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. ¹³ Now when they saw the

boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

There is no other way to be like Jesus than to be with Jesus. John would years later describe what being with Jesus meant to him and the other Apostles:

1 John 1:1-3

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ² (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) ³ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Because of their relationship, they knew that they had a responsibility, and

B. We as God's People Have a Responsibility

Let's go back for just a minute to Peter and John before the Religious Leaders. The two were commanded to stop preaching about Jesus, and this is what they said:

Acts 4:19-20

¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. ²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Why is it so easy for us to keep our mouths shut about the Lord but we can't stop it from gossiping about people or things we don't like?

Close:

For those here today who are lost, separated from God, there's hope.

For those here today who have established a relationship with God through His son Christ we need to bridge the gap in showing those around us the hope of God.