

It is my joy to minister the Word to you again. Take your Bibles and turn to 1 Peter 2:6-10. We have made our way thus far to verse 6, and we will be looking at verses 6-10. I am humbled by the way the Spirit of God has been moving in a very unusual way in our midst because of our study here in 1 Peter. There appears to be many who are under conviction and I pray that by His grace that will grow for all of us as we endeavor to know more of His glory and grace in our lives. Let's read the text.

“For this is contained in Scripture: ‘Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed.’ This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,’ and, ‘A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense’; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

We all know the feelings of remorse. We have all had times where we have felt the pain of failure, the sting of humiliation and defeat, those times we feel down deep in our hearts that all has been lost. We also know those times when a friend comes along and brings comfort to us in the midst of those tragedies of life. When a friend comes along and communicates to you that they still believe in you and love and care for you, that they won't give up. Whenever we have experienced that kind of love, we are reminded of the marvelous love of God, the One who is longsuffering and faithful and caring, who never leaves us nor forsakes us. Our Good Shepherd that makes us lie down in green pastures, the One who leads us beside quiet waters, the One that restores our soul, the One who with His rod and with His staff comforts us.

Peter knew discouragement. He knew it very well. He knew what it was like to experience deep and profound spiritual failure, when he denied the Lord in particular. He experienced that immobilizing, paralyzing disappointment and humiliation. It was so extreme that he even went out and wept bitterly. But he also knew the tender mercies of the Lord's forgiveness, the Lord's mercy and kindness and encouragement to him. When the Lord would later say to him, ‘if you love Me, feed My sheep. Don't give up. I'm not giving up on you. Remember who you are and remember whom you serve.’ I believe because of that, Peter became one of the master encouragers in the New Testament. What a picture his life became of the tender mercies of the Lord in our life.

May I remind you again of the context of the text before us. The saints of the first century were scattered abroad as spiritual aliens. They were being persecuted and the suffering was mounting. Peter comes to them in the latter days of his life facing martyrdom himself, and he takes them back to the basics of their hope, back to the fundamentals of their faith. He helps them transcend the temporal, helping them to gaze into the eternal by helping them to pensively reflect upon their salvation, to marvel at their inheritance. He reminds them of the source of their spiritual nourishment that's found in the pure milk of the Word. He's doing all he can to encourage them. Indeed it is the Spirit of God who is encouraging those saints through the beloved apostle. He is encouraging them to keep coming to Christ, who as the text said, is “building them up as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Now he comes to this text, where he reminds them of a glorious truth, where he reminds them of salvation's royal benefits; this precious value that is available for all who believe. What a master

encourager Peter was through the power of the Holy Spirit. I pray that the text will encourage each one of you as it has me, very deeply. As we immerse ourselves into the depths of what it means to be a chosen race and a royal priesthood, a holy people, a people for God's own possession who have received mercy, and so on, I pray that it will humble us and cause us to give thanks in a new and profound way.

Peter approaches this in verses 6-10 by elaborating on three basic categories of truth. I see three categories that would be necessary to allay the fears of the saints of that day and even of our day, and certainly encourage all of our hearts. Truths that pertain to the glorious benefits and blessings that will be our inheritance as a royal priesthood. But he is also going to communicate to us the tragic doom that is the inevitable consequence for all those who refuse to bow the knee to Jesus Christ. In the first category of truth we will see a certain promise of eternal delight. Secondly, we will see a certain promise of eternal doom. And thirdly, we will see a certain promise of royal benefits.

A certain promise of eternal delight is for those united to Christ in faith. In verse 6 he says, "For this is contained in Scripture: 'Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed.'" Structural engineers of ancient days knew well the importance of having a cornerstone. It had to be both strong in substance and perfect in symmetry because it would establish the plumb line for every single angle of the building. It was often laid in great ceremony, in a very solemn ceremony, because it was such an important aspect of the eventual structure that would be built. The slightest weakness in the cornerstone or any deviation in its position would doom the potential edifice to structural failure. Based on the perfect dimensions of the cornerstone, every other stone would be pre-cut and eventually brought to the place where the building was being erected and fitted together to erect the final structure.

This is of course the perfect analogy of the Chief Cornerstone, the foundation stone of God's spiritual temple the Church, because the Lord Jesus Christ is flawless in every respect. He is, as the text says, "a choice stone," indeed a stone that has been chosen by the master builder in eternity past, "a precious corner stone" which means a priceless stone, one that is unsurpassed in value. There is no building of the Church apart from Christ, for there is no salvation in any other. Thus the cornerstone is a solid stone, providing a firm foundation. The weight of the whole building of the church rests solely upon Him, for He is the One that secures the entire edifice by His glorious strength. Indeed the perfection of His holy symmetry is the plumb line for the horizontal and the vertical righteousness of His Church. Therefore, all who place their faith in Him, as the text says, "shall not be disappointed."

Every living stone, every believer in Christ, is fitted into the eternal edifice of the spiritual temple of God. Every stone will therefore never be disillusioned, will never be saddened, no stone will ever crumble under undue stress in that edifice. No stone will ever be torn away by any storm of life, nor will any stone ever decide on its own to be torn away from that structure, because we are all fitted together in a supernatural way by the cornerstone. The Cornerstone of our faith secures us forever. The apostle Paul alluded to this concept in Ephesians 2:19-22 where we read, for we "are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." Oh dear friends, what an enormous encouragement this must have been to those saints of old and to every saint hence.

Notice the stone was laid, in verse 6, in Zion. This was a reference to Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 5:7 reminds us that that was "the city of David." "The mountain of the house of the Lord," according to Isaiah 2:3. In Psalm 48:1-3, the sons of Korah praise our God who dwells in Zion, and there we read, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King. God, in her places, has made Himself known as a stronghold." It was Zion where He first established His rule in the hearts of men, Zion being the seat of the Church. But, because of man's rejection, His kingdom was postponed. Yet we know that when He returns He will return to Zion when He will establish His millennial kingdom, "for the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Isaiah 2:3 tells us. What a day that will be! In Psalm 110:2 we read that, "The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.' Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power."

Child of God, think of this. We serve an awesome God. What confidence we should have in this cornerstone. How foolish it is for us to rely upon our own strength and our own wisdom, or upon the wisdom of man. For indeed, as verse 7 says, He is the stone of "precious value" for all "who believe." Even as He is precious in the sight of God so He must be to us as well. Because of the strength and perfection of our cornerstone, we have a certain promise that we will never be disappointed. I fear all too often we fail to appreciate His worth to us. We have very few wants in our life today, especially in our culture here in the United States. We live in unprecedented luxury and wealth far beyond the wildest imaginations of the kings of the past. A man who has never been sick has very little appreciation for a physician. A woman who has never been hungry cannot appreciate the benevolence of one who offers her something to eat. Likewise, I feel many times as Christians, even though we are still sick with sin and in desperate need of spiritual nourishment, we very often find ourselves ingesting the opiates of the world. Very often we eat the cotton candy of religiosity. Therefore, we seldom feel the pain of our true condition. As a consequence of that we do not fully appreciate the infinite worth of our Savior's provision for us, both physically as well as spiritually.

I would ask you to ask yourself, as you think about this last week, how many times did you find yourself really longing to read the Word? Really craving to have an opportunity to set everything aside and say, "Oh Lord, I just want to be alone with You. I want to seal out all of the rest of the world and I want to get into a vault where I can experience Your glory and Your grace and commune with You in prayer and in the reading of Your Word." How often this last week did you long to hear His voice, to seek His help? How often last week did you look for an opportunity to defend Him, to proclaim His excellencies, to praise Him, to thank Him? "For indeed Lord, I have yet to be disappointed in You." I think if we're honest with one another, those moments are far too few in our life, because we have so many other things that we're preoccupied with and so many other things that anesthetize the reality of our spiritual condition. Dear Christian, all of our hope of heaven rests upon Him, rests upon the Cornerstone. There is no other who will bring comfort on our death bed someday. It will be Him and Him alone. Would that we confess our apathy and lean on our Rock, the Rock of our salvation, and find our refuge in Him. For indeed we will not be disappointed.

So Peter offers first a certain promise of eternal delight, but notice secondly, he offers a certain promise of eternal doom for those who are apart from Christ. In verses 7-8 we read, "This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,' and, 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense'; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed." Here

Peter reminds the Jews of a Scripture they would quickly understand, one found in Psalm 118:22 that reads, “the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” Though Christ is precious in the sight of God and to all of us who believe, He is greatly despised by those who refuse to worship Him. It's fascinating how He was and continues to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Remember that the Jews examined the cornerstone and they laughed. They rejected Him with utmost contempt. The Romans examined Him and they rejected Him as a fool and as an insurrectionist. We can think of other systems today, like the Roman Catholic system. They have, for example, rejected His all-sufficient sacrifice, for no longer are we saved by grace alone but by grace plus works, in their mind. They've rejected the sole authority of His Word and they've replaced worshiping Him by worshiping His mother Mary. The Pope even claims he is the vicar, which is the substitute of Christ—a blasphemy without equal.

False religions and cults of the world have rejected Him by dismissing Him altogether. Probably worst of all, the apostate neo-evangelical church of our day has rejected Him by reinventing Him, by making Him into a God that we can manipulate and sell for a profit. Countless men and women in every generation have rejected Him by suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, by loving darkness rather than light. What is so sad is there are many people who profess Him with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. They claim to know Him, but He does not know them. They will be the ones that will someday hear those tragic words when He says, “Depart from Me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you.”

Yet there are many tares that live amongst the wheat. False Christians and nominal carnal Christians are in fact a curse to the church. If I can digress for a moment, these people are the ones that are constantly threatening the spiritual well-being of the church, constantly putting a strain on all of the endeavors of the church to reach the lost and equip and encourage the saints. Sometimes I think of the church as being like a classroom where you've got twenty wonderful, well-disciplined students who are there to learn, and all you have to have is one knucklehead that causes all the trouble. You end up spending 90% of your time with one student just trying to keep them under control.

But regardless of man's unbelief, regardless of man's self-deception, we can rejoice that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church. God has decreed it. Jesus will prevail. Though for centuries Christ has been opposed by His enemies, all of the rejection is in vain. Their eternal doom is certain for indeed God has established His cornerstone and He will triumph. That Jesus would be rejected by men is well prophesied in the Old Testament. As we read in Isaiah 8:14, “...to both the houses of Israel,” and he's speaking about the Messiah here, “a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many will stumble...they will fall and be broken; they will even be snared and caught.”

We must understand and be warned, that God's vengeance is great upon all those Who reject the Stone. The unassailable stability of that Stone is the one that fortifies the church and that will be the same Stone that will someday crush its enemies. It's important to understand that all who reject Christ are enemies of God. All who “play church” and there are perhaps some here, all that play church, all that have a cavalier attitude or even ignore altogether the Word of God, all those who refuse to walk in obedient faith with Him are adversaries of God and they will be crushed someday. These are the ones who, in verse 8, are “disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.”

It's important for me to explain that God has not sovereignly ordained certain men to reject the gospel in unbelief. That is solely man's doing. But because of man's unbelief and his refusal to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, He has commanded that He will someday judge them, and that's what we see even in this text. Therefore, "they are appointed to destruction" as the text tells us. Paul made this clear in 1 Corinthians 16:22 where we read, "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed." Man's rejection is voluntary. It is therefore ridiculous to lay the blame of his destruction on the plan and purposes of God. In Romans 1 we read that because of creation and conscience, all men have been warned about who God is. Therefore all men are without excuse because they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Therefore, the consequences of their eternal doom will fall squarely on their shoulders, not on God's.

So, Peter encourages us here. He begins by giving us a certain promise of eternal delight for those who are in Christ, and then he warns those that are apart from Him of a certain promise of eternal doom. And next he does something very fascinating. He transports every weary saint into the glories of heaven by reminding us of, thirdly, a certain promise of royal benefits; royal benefits for all the people who are of His possession. Unlike those who have rejected the cornerstone and have stumbled over Him as a rock of offense, those that are disobedient to the Word and thus appointed to doom, he says in verse 9, you are "a chosen race." What an incredible contrast here. Here we are confronted again with the inscrutable mystery of sovereign election, the most hated and maligned doctrine in all of Scripture. Hated by those too proud to admit that they, being dead in sin, are unable to contribute to their salvation apart from God's saving grace alone. Hated by those who have a rabid commitment to self-determination, and therefore are blinded to a love that was established for them in eternity past, a love that is unchangeable in securing them forever. Hated by those who cannot stand to have any doctrine in the Bible that they believe they cannot fully understand. Certainly there is a tension between man's responsibility and God's sovereign choice. Indeed it is an inscrutable mystery, but I would argue that it is no different than any other doctrine in all of Scripture. We are unable to understand any of them to a full extent.

So he says here, we are "a chosen race." What an amazing truth, underscoring God's sovereign grace, one that frankly was first revealed to us in Deuteronomy 7:6-9. This is the very text to which Peter now alludes, speaking of His redemptive plan and election of Israel. "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which he swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His loving kindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep his commandments."

Like Israel, we have a glorious hope. What a blessing to know that we, through no merit of our own, have been chosen by God. Again, what an encouragement this must have been to the people of that day. To be able to rejoice, knowing that our salvation is all of grace from start to finish, based solely upon the elective purposes of a sovereign God. One who, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:9, "has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity," literally before time began.

Remember, Peter even began his epistle with this fundamental doctrine in chapter 1:1-2 reminding them that they were “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Foreknowledge means a prior establishment of an intimate relationship. Later in verses 21-22 Peter again emphasized the enormous power and divine purpose in understanding what it means to be chosen by God. He says, “so that your faith and hope are in God.” In other words, so that it's not in yourselves. Trust in what God has done and is continuing to do. Beloved, our election is a call for utmost humility and rejoicing. It is the Gibraltar of our hope. Jesus said in John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.” And I'll give you one of many other passages in the New Testament. Paul says in Ephesians 1:4-6, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” What a staggering truth this is, one that should cause us all to fall on our faces in utter humility.

Charles Spurgeon said, “Friends, if you want to be humbled, study election, for it will make you humble under the influence of God's Spirit. He who is proud of his election is not elect; and he who is humble under a sense of it may believe that he is. He has every reason to believe that he is, for it is one of the most blessed effects of election that it helps us to humble ourselves before God.” What an encouragement this must have been to the saints of that day, experiencing their children being torn away from their families, experiencing husbands and wives being separated, tortured and killed. And in the midst of all of that to be able to come back to the cornerstone and say, “Oh, thank you God that I have my hope fully resting upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You that You in Your infinite love have chosen to elect me. That you chose to save me in eternity past, and that all that I'm experiencing now is somehow an opportunity to give You glory, so I will continue to trust in You. Because I know that what You have started You will bring to fruition.” These are the glorious realities that are available to all of the saints who understand God's sovereign love for them in His elective purposes.

The apostle Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So Peter once again reminds these beleaguered and persecuted saints to rejoice for you are a chosen people, a people elected by God Himself. But notice there is another royal benefit for the people of His possession. Not only are we “a chosen race,” but in verse 9, “a royal priesthood.” Here Peter turns our minds to the Old Testament in Exodus 19:6. We read there that God used this concept to summarize the potential blessings that He would give to Israel if they would remain faithful to the covenant. Obviously they didn't. These blessings were conferred later to the Church and they eventually will be conferred once again to those people of Israel who will come to a saving knowledge of Christ when the Lord returns again.

But as royalty, He promised them in Exodus 19 that they could represent God by having dominion on the earth. And as priests, He promised they could serve and worship Him, and have unrestricted access into His very presence if they would be obedient. But, because of apostasy and rejection of their Messiah King, they forfeited those glorious opportunities and instead these were conferred to believers in the Church. And now we, therefore, are a part of the royal family of the King, as well as priests who can offer up sacrifices of praise—not to mention have unlimited access into the very throne room of His glorious presence. We are a royal priesthood, literally a ruling priesthood. Do you realize that

someday we will reign along with the believing remnant of Israel? We will reign with Christ Jesus when He comes to establish His millennial kingdom. It's an amazing concept. In Revelation 20:6 it says we "will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

I smile when I turn on the news and see all these world leaders jockeying for position. When I see all of the political maneuvering and machinations, all the pride and arrogance, I have to laugh because all of those rulers who are now in charge will someday be replaced by us. God has a sense of humor, doesn't He? Certainly at His second coming He will establish His kingdom and renovate the earth, and for a thousand years He will rule and reign and we will reign with Him. As we study Scripture we see that He will station us around the world and we will rule and reign with Him in glorified bodies. Every decision will be perfect. Every judgment will be just. Every thought will be absolutely holy. Paul spoke of this incomprehensible privilege in 1 Corinthians 6:1-4, he says, "...do you not know that the saints will judge the world?...Do you not know that we will judge angels?" Oh child of God, how we should shout for joy given the certain promises of royal benefits that belong to the people of His possession. This is why Peter communicated these truths to these people.

We're "a chosen race," "a royal priesthood," but notice also, "a holy nation." In other words, you are a people that have been utterly set apart from sin unto God. This is the whole idea of sanctification, a theological term that has three distinguishable phases. Let me give you a brief theology lesson here to keep your minds sharp. It's important for us to be precise with our theology. We have positional sanctification, progressive sanctification and perfected sanctification. Positional sanctification happens at the moment of our salvation when we are born again. At that point we have been delivered from the penalty of sin, that is positional truth, having to do with the believer's judicial standing before God. That's our positional sanctification. But secondly, there is progressive sanctification, which is a spiritual process of growth where we are gradually becoming more and more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. A process that is in the process of helping us be delivered not from the penalty of sin because that's already happened, but from the power of sin. As we grow in Christ we begin to see more and more of that. Sin no longer has the grip it once had when we were young or immature in the Lord. Thirdly there is perfected sanctification. This is the one that we still await. It has to do with the consummation of the process of sanctification. It is one that is accomplished by God when someday we enter into His presence and at that point we will be delivered from the very presence of sin.

But here, Peter is referring to positional sanctification. We as a holy nation, whereby he is reminding us that we have been set apart from the penalty of sin, the imputed righteousness of Christ is now ours and we have been empowered by the Spirit of God and delivered from the very power of sin, and we are well on our road to someday being delivered from the very presence of sin. Can you imagine what that will be like, when there's no more sin? I can't, really. I can get glimpses of it every now and then. By the way, the problems we have with our health and physical bodies is because of sin, that will all be gone. All of the lusts of our flesh are due to sin and that will all be gone. All of the rest of the people we have to deal with that are sinners will be perfected and we won't have to deal with that anymore. It's going to be an incredible time.

So when he says you're a holy nation, a holy people, you are a people that have been consecrated by God to be a peculiar people in all of the world. You have been called to live lives of purity and righteousness, lives that should manifest and extol the glorious attributes of our King. You're a holy nation. Moreover he says in verse 9, "we are a people for God's own possession." In the original language the word 'possession' has the idea of something that has been acquired for a price, something

that has been purchased. Indeed, we have been bought with a price. We have been bought by the very blood of our Redeemer. And for what purpose? The answer is in the end of verse 9, "that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Let me humbly ask you, is that the motivating force of your life? Do you wake up in the morning and ask God, "Please give me an opportunity to proclaim the excellencies of You because You have called me out of darkness and You have transferred me into Your marvelous light." Or do we wake up and say, "What do I need to do today to satisfy the lusts of my heart?"

He has called you, it says. This is a reference to that effectual call of the Holy Spirit when He quickened your heart and caused you to see your sinfulness. That moment when He breathed spiritual life into the rotting corpse of your iniquity. That time when He caused you to be born again. In fact, Paul says in Colossians 1:13 that He has, "rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son." I ask you, is this not sufficient reason for us to proclaim His excellencies? What other priorities should there be in our life? Do you find yourself longing to sit down with your spouse and say, "Honey, let's talk about the excellencies of the Lord in our life. Let's talk about the things He has done in our hearts and in our children's hearts. Let's come to Him as the rock and refuge of our salvation and as our God and cry out to Him as our heavenly Father and say to Him, 'Oh God, won't you please save our children! Won't you save our grandchildren? Won't you use us in a powerful way?'" Do you proclaim the excellencies of Christ to your children? Would they be able to list some of the excellencies of Christ having heard them uttered from the lips of their parents, grandparents, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders and hopefully their pastor?

Oh the great and undeserved dignity and honor and blessing we have, those of us who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and how easy it is for us to forget our former condition. That's why Peter reminds us in verse 10, "for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." I was struck in some of my readings by John Calvin's comment regarding this very issue in verse 10. He says, "How incomparable is God's goodness towards us; for he sanctifies us, who are by nature polluted; he chose us, when he could find nothing in us but filth and vileness; he makes his peculiar possession from worthless dregs; he confers the honor of the priesthood on the profane; he brings the vassals of Satan, of sin, and of death, to the enjoyment of royal liberty."

Beloved, please understand our royal benefits are literally the sum of His grace, that He might be glorified in and through us. Because we have been called out of darkness into light. We must therefore shine as beacons of hope to a lost and dying world living in darkness. We must be torches of divine glory so that people can look at our lives and our face. They can look at our appearance, our demeanor, and say, "There's something about that person. I want to know more about what's going on in that person." And then by the power of the Spirit of God there will be a time when you will have an opportunity to share what's going on in your life. You'll be able to share with somebody that, "By God's grace, I'm part of a chosen race and you can be too. I'm part of a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession. It's for that reason that by God's grace you have seen me through my life and my lips proclaim some of the excellencies of Him who has called me out of the darkness into His marvelous light. Because once upon a time I wasn't anybody, but now by His grace I'm part of the family of God. There was a time when I had not received mercy, but now I have and that mercy is available to you as well."

Dear Christian, I plead with you to get lost in the wonder of the certain promises of the royal benefits that are ours in Christ. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. And yes, I know that sometimes the mountains of truth of great Bible doctrine have summits that reach far beyond the limits of our spiritual eyes. I understand that there will always be thick clouds of mystery that will conceal the highest peaks of Bible doctrine. I think of Psalm 139:6 when the psalmist said, "such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it." I understand that. Indeed, we do not have the mind of God. We are but clay. But dear friends, please understand that the great heights that we can see should cause us to fall down on our faces and to humble ourselves before our King in adoration and praise and then also to obey the words of the beloved apostle, "that I may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvelous light, for I once was without mercy, but now I have received mercy."

So may those of us who love the Lord Jesus Christ rejoice knowing our certain promises of eternal delight and certain promises of royal benefits. What an encouragement that should be to each of us. And to those of you who still reject the Cornerstone, I plead with you as a servant of the most high God, that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and that you be saved while there is still time. Don't play church. Don't pretend. God knows your heart. Perhaps He's bringing conviction to you right now. For if you refuse to believe, you will have a certain promise of eternal doom. May God have mercy on your soul.

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