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The Significance Of Being A Christian

People Who Belong To The Lord (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Introduction

1. Last week, we looked at the importance of our having become a Christian.
2. We noted that each of us who is a Christian is . . .
 - a. Is a new creation of God (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB95)
 - b. Is now living a new life
 - 1) Though as Paul writes in Colossians 2:13, we “were dead in [our] transgressions,” Christ “made [us] alive together with Him, having forgiven all our sins.”
 - 2) As he writes in Ephesians 5:8, we “were formerly darkness, but now [we] are Light in the Lord.”
 - c. Has a new loyalty
 - 1) As Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, we have “turned to God” from the idols in our lives “to serve a living and true God.”
 - 2) We now set apart “Christ as Lord in [our] hearts” (1 Peter 3:15).

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3. Tonight, I want us to begin our lesson by noting something which Paul said to the Christians in Corinth:
 - a. It is found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 :

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in

you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, NASB95)

- b. Notice that Paul challenged their thinking by asking “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”
 - c. As Christians, you and I have been “bought with a price.”
 - d. Because of this, we now belong to the Lord.
4. Tonight, I would like for us to consider the significance of that fact.
[First, it means that you and I are . . .]

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I. God’s Special People

A. WE HAVE BEEN CALLED BY GOD TO THIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

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“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so 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.” (1 Peter 2:9–10, NASB95)

1. Notice how Peter describes us. We are . . .
 - a. “A chosen race”
 - b. “A royal priesthood”
 - c. “A holy nation”
 - d. “A people for God’s own possession”
 - 1) “His own special people” (NKJV)

2) “A people belonging to God” (NIV84)

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2. These terms were once reserved only for the physical nation of Israel:

a. They were a people whom the Lord had chosen (Deuteronomy 10:15).

“Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.” (Deuteronomy 10:15, NASB95)

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b. He had made them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5).

“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;” (Exodus 19:5, NASB95)

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c. They were His special people above all the other nations (Deuteronomy 7:6).

“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.” (Deuteronomy 7:6, NASB95)

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B. THE FACT THAT WE ARE GOD’S SPECIAL PEOPLE MEANS WE HAVE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The last instruction Peter gave to the Christians in Asia Minor in his second letter are these — “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

2. Only by doing this can we carry out what God intended when He “called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” — that is to “proclaim [His] excellencies” (1 Peter 2:9).

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II. God's Beloved Children

“to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Romans 1:7, ESV)

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A. AS CHRISTIANS, YOU AND I ARE BLESSED TO BE CHILDREN OF GOD

1. In one sense, all people are God's children (Acts 17:26, 28-29).

“and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation . . . for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’ Being then the children of God . . .” (Acts 17:26, 28–29, NASB95)

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2. In another sense, many do not have God as their Father (John 8:42-43).

“Jesus said to them [the Jews], “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.”” (John 8:42–44a, NASB95)

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3. Those of us who are Christians are children of God in a special way:
 - a. We became sons of God when we were baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

(Galatians 3:26–27, NASB95)

12A

- b. **We have been adopted by Him** (Galatians 4:4-6).

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”” (Galatians 4:4–6, NASB95)

12B

- c. **Because we do God’s will, Jesus considers us His family** (Matthew 12:48-50).

“But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”” (Matthew 12:48–50, NASB95)

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B. AS GOD’S CHILDREN, WE HAVE BOTH BLESSINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Our blessings include that fact that . . .

- a. **We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ** (Galatians 4:7; Romans 8:16-17).

“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” (Galatians 4:7, NASB95)

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” (Romans 8:16–17, NASB95)

13B

- b. We have an inheritance awaiting us “in heaven” which, according to the apostle Peter, “can never perish, spoil or fade” (1 Peter 1:4, NIV84).

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- 2. Because of these blessings, we should . . .
 - a. Express our gratitude to God (Colossians 1:9,12).

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may . . . joyously [give] thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light” (Colossians 1:9,12).

14A

- b. Abstain from those things which defile our flesh and spirit (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1; cf. Isaiah 52:11).

“Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. “And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 6:17–7:1, NASB95)

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III. God’s Heavenly Pilgrims

A. AS CHRISTIANS, THOUGH WE LIVE IN THIS WORLD, WE ARE NOT OF IT

- 1. This was a part of Jesus’ prayer for His disciples in the upper room (John 17:15-16).

“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” (John

17:15–16, NASB95)

2. We are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20).

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;” (Philippians 3:20, NASB95)

3. We are seeking a city which is to come (Hebrews 13:14).

“For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.” (Hebrews 13:14, NASB95)

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B. AS GOD’S PILGRIMS, WE HAVE SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS

1. We are to live our lives here in reverent fear (1 Peter 1:17).

“Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” (1 Peter 1:17, NIV84)

2. We must not become too attached to this world (1 John 2:15-17).

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.” (1 John 2:15–17, NASB95)

Conclusion

1. As we have seen tonight, because we are people who belong to the Lord, God considers us His special people, His children and pilgrims here who are longing for their heavenly home.
2. Such privileges should . . .
 - a. Fill our hearts with gratitude and humility.
 - b. Move us to be the kind of people God calls us to be.

3. Tonight, I want each of you to ask yourselves . . .
 - a. Do I act like a special person of God?
 - b. Am I living as His child?
 - c. Do I see heaven as my true home?
4. If you cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, let me encourage you to make the necessary changes in your life:
 - a. Ask God to forgive you as a Christian and help you to live a life which pleases Him.
 - b. Make the decision, now, to become a Christian.