

Studies in I Peter (32)

The Privilege of Salvation -- Personal Assurance

Introduction

- A. In order to be a successful person, we are told that we must have some personal identity, must know who we are, and be somewhat satisfied with ourselves.
- B. In times of persecution those persecuted are treated as though they are without worth. The Jews, for example, during the Nazi regime, were called "trash people." Peter emphasizes identity for that reason. He wrote to Christians who were undergoing a number of forms of persecution.
- C. The foundation of our identity is found in our creation and redemption. Peter has emphasized this in 1:3-12. The responsibilities and benefits of salvation have also been stated by Peter. This is found in 1:13-2:10.
- D. In speaking of benefits the apostle has explained our relationship (chosen people), office (royal priesthood), character (holy nation), worth (people belonging to God), and calling (show forth God's praise). And now he adds a sixth benefit in 2:10 -- personal assurance.

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. I Peter 2:10

I. The Christian Has The Personal Assurance of Being Included Among the People of God.

- A. The believer's past -- lack of identity: "Were not a people."

The dictionary defines "people" as those possessing a common relationship, goal, culture, and character. Peter reminds us that the non-Christian does not have these facets of spiritual identity. Psychologists have often pointed out the way people are "fragmented and spiritually homeless." We know the reason for this -- it is due to being separated from God. Non-Christians are "aliens ... strangers ... having no hope and without God." Ephesians 2:12.

- B. The believer's identity -- "The people of God."

1. The source of our identity is found in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people." Luke 1:68

2. The basis of our identity is found in spiritual adoption.

As he says in Hosea, I will call them 'my people' who are not my people, and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one. It will happen in the very place where it was said to them, 'Ye are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.' Rom. 9:25,26

3. The content of our identity is found in our relationship with God.

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 2 Corinthians 6:16

4. The benefits of our identity is found in spiritual rest.

*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God.
Hebrews 4:9*

5. The expectation of our identity is found in His coming.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." Revelation 21:3

II. The Christian has Personal Assurance of Having Received the Mercy of God.

*... Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
I Peter 2:10b*

- A. The definition of mercy.

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love (mercy KJV) for those who fear him. Psalm 103:10,11

- B. The explanation and evidence of mercy.

1. Redemption is an evidence of mercy.

For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:17

2. Salvation is an evidence of mercy.

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

3. The new birth is an evidence of mercy.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I Peter 1:3

Conclusion: We must choose to live as the people we are by the grace of God.

Victor M Matthews