

God's people – Hey that's us!

Between series I like to deal with some of the questions that come up from people. Recently because of computer issues, I lost my years plan for preaching. So I went back over my basic outline, reconstructed the year and then looked at peoples questions or issues they have raised and I noticed, with I believe the guidance of the Holy Spirit that 1 Peter deals with most of those issues throughout the book. So I moved things around again. So This is a series of dealing with some of that as well as part of the systematic teaching plan.

Listen to this!!!

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Apostle -one who is sent. Originally the 12 disciples. (Of course Peter was one of these so the intro is valid)

Question - Is apostleship just those guys? Some say so.

But

There is a gift of apostleship.

1 corinthians 12:

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? 30. Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31. Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

So this concept of being sent is still current. Yes.

But not everyone has that gift. My feeling is that apostles are ground breakers, in some ways missionaries, those sent with. A task for God.

Peters job, what he was sent to do in this case was encourage the people he was writing to.

He is one sent of Jesus. He is sent as Jesus representative. The words he says he says on behalf of Jesus.

And he writes to a select bunch.

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2. Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

God's elect - whoa. This could be controversial. It shouldn't be, it's just part of the bible.

In one respect it is just a salutation to God's people scattered around the place.

The word elect is what causes issues. The other word in is chosen. The third word is foreknowledge. Put these words together and people get all hot and bothered.

Predestination as a concept is one of the most divisive concepts in the bible over the past four hundred years.

One of the reasons for this is our concept of personalising our relationship to God.

Some like to think God has specially chosen me I am special.

Others think I have chosen to follow God, I am special.

Others think I am so special God has to choose me.

I don't really mind what view you follow, we need to look at what the bible says and what those words mean to us.

Let's go

God's elect – eklektos has the essence of being selected, yes chosen.

Chosen - Same word (Actually the translation repeats it the greek doesn't)

Foreknowledge - prognōsis which is translated foreknowledge but from what I gather it is more like forethought.

But the passage is focusing on something different. Firstly, where it says To God's elect, it isn't that word eklektos but another one parepidēmos which is about being an alien or a stranger (Not a science fiction type alien but a foreigner) What they have done in the passage is translated it with as fuller meaning as they could.

What Peter is doing is recognising the Christians in those areas as being:

1. not local
2. Not of this world (Faith in a Godly kingdom rather than existing world and
3. Scattered by persecution.

Along side this he is pointing out how precious they are to God.

My old greek new Testament seems to give this passage a feeling of preciousness. Those people Peter is talking to are precious to God. Yeh special is one way of putting it, but precious give a more refined idea. Sometimes I think we get so caught up in issues of the bible we forget to look at the passage and work out what God is trying to say to us.

Yeh elected, chosen and foreknown but precious is the idea we need to take hold of.

Notice it says "sprinkled with His blood" It is His sacrificial giving on the cross which emphasizes this value that we have to God.

Today, God wants you to know you are precious, the theological issues that can arise from this passage are not really on my agenda, your preciousness is.

The other aspect of this passage has to do with what we are elected, chosen and foreknown to for-obedience.

Notice what it says:

to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Here is a funny thing. This could be read that we are elected, chosen and foreknown to obedient. And I think that is a right reading of the passage. We are called, predestined and expected to do what God says.

I know sometimes we are not obedient, so does that mean we fall out of being elected? Or fall out of being chosen? MMM how does that work. More about that over a few weeks.

We are called to live a life as God designed for us. We find that life style in the bible. It is based around the sacrificial offering of Jesus on the Cross.