

“Set Apart for Service”

Text: Deuteronomy 7:6-9

St. Peter wrote: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (I Peter 2:9) These words were spoken to Christians in the first century A.D. They reflect what God had been saying in both Exodus and Deuteronomy about his Old Testament people.

God had delivered the children of Israel from their long bondage in Egypt. He had given them the 10 Commandments. He had experienced constant rebellion from them, including the incident with the golden calf. In spite of all this, he still claimed them as his own children. Now they were on the verge of entering the Promised Land and Moses was giving a new generation of Israelites instructions regarding their life with God in the new land that they were about to enter.

As we listen to these words today, we can take comfort that we are God’s children as well. Like them we have sinned and haven’t always been the obedient children that we should be. What Moses told them applies to us as well today: “It is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers...” God’s children of all time are special to him. He is totally faithful to his promises and calls us to live differently and apart from the people of this world. It was the same for the people of Moses’ day as it is for us for we are-

SET APART FOR SERVICE

I. God has chosen you as His own

II. God calls you to be different

**III. God's grace assures you of His promise
to you**

I.

A. In verse 6, Moses says: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples on the face of the earth." These people were a treasure to God and you are too.

With our problems and our sins, we can forget that sometimes. Remember, God surrendered the life of his own dear Son, Jesus Christ, for you. That's how much he values you as his child. His greatest treasure is his own dear Son. Through faith in him, God sees you as his own child.

As we consider this selection, we remember that all things and all people belong to God. In Old Testament times he could have chosen anyone. He can do the same today. He was with his children throughout their history. Through Joseph, he brought them to Egypt during a time of famine. Time passed and the Pharaoh was not as favorable to God's children. They were too numerous and they were seen as threat to the Egyptians. Because of this they were enslaved in Egypt and God provided Moses and Aaron to bring them out of slavery. Verse 8 reminds them that God has redeemed them from this slavery.

B. This redemption is a picture of what God would do one day with his own Son Jesus Christ. This redemption pointed to what Jesus would do one day when he went to the cross and gained redemption and salvation for the world. In him you have been chosen as St. Paul points out the New Testament. He says: "Even as he chose us in him

before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. (Ephesians 1:4)

II.

A. Speaking on the book of Exodus God says: “Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all the people, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5-6)

This really put them in a unique position in the world.

As children of God today we are unique as well. We believe in the Priesthood of all Believers. Something God said in Exodus and something Peter mentions as well. It was an important corner stone of the Reformation. All of us all called to serve in the positions that we are in as Children of God.

B. Why does God do this? Verse 7 answers that question. The Israelites were not chosen because of their power or number. They were chosen because of the love of God. That is the only reason. We call that grace. God had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God always keeps his promises. That is a great assurance for you and me. We are his own and we belong to his forever family. We have done nothing to deserve that standing. He gives it freely because of his promise.

This choosing and redemption is for a purpose. Since we are in a unique position, we are called to live differently than other people in this world. As that was a challenge in the time of our text, and so it is today for us as well. Some times in the Old Testament, the enemies of God were killed or wiped out. God does not call us to do that today, but we are to be separate and apart from them in the way we live.

As I have mentioned on other occasions, the pull of the world is strong. Christians are some times confused on

moral issues. This can happen on the job with theft, people living together without the benefit of marriage, abuse of family members as well as substances. In Romans, St. Paul says: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2) We are non-conformists to the world!

III.

A. Again, it is not what you and I have done, but it is the grace of God in Jesus Christ. God has made a covenant with his people. It is a promise that he has kept regardless of their performance. God is always faithful to you and me. Verse 9 contains quite a promise from God to the people of that day and us today as well: “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments for a thousand generations.”

You see it is all God’s doing and his promises. He always keeps his word to you and you can rely upon that. If you consider Israel and their behavior, his selection of them as his people is even more amazing!

B. Of course the same is true for us today as well. God has called us as his very own. He calls us to be different because we belong to him. A great price has been paid for that redemption which has made us his own. Our Epistle for today reminds us that nothing separates us from the love of God, which is ours in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:38-39) We are set apart by God as his own and he calls us to serve him as he has shone his love and service to us in Jesus. Amen.