

**January 10, 2021 James Gallaher**  
**Building Identity: A Chosen People**

**1 Peter 2:9** *But you are a chosen people, 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.*

Peter explains this new identity in Jesus Christ. The entire foundation on our identity is built upon this understanding of community. This community was birthed out of the common understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done. You cannot have identity apart from that community.

What does that identity in Christ look like? This week let's look at the meaning of "Chosen." You are chosen. Look at a piece of Sapele Mahogany (view on Sermon Video) that has rough edges, is cumbersome, requires work, is unrefined, and is difficult to carry around. Our lives resemble these characteristics and yet we are chosen. Why is it hard to accept? Do we fear where we are from? Do we ask if we are good enough? Do we think that if people really knew us, then they won't accept us? Some even thinking God won't accept us unless we clean up first. Sometimes we don't want people to know what we haven't been through – like not having a remarkable testimony. We feel we don't measure up but the fear of people knowing where we are from needs to be overcome.

Peter tells us that we are chosen. Chosen – an object of choice or divine favor; picked or selected, beautiful; of a better quality than the rest. Our flawed thinking: if chosen means better than the rest, then certainly I am not chosen as there are many others better than me.

God sees us and selects us and it's not in exclusion of others. Selection is an offering made to anyone who will call on His name. Being chosen is an involuntary (on our part) selection by an all-powerful God. We don't have any part in it. There is nothing to accomplish first.

**John 15:16** *You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.*

Is it a big struggle to understand our identity? This selection process excludes all of our shortcomings; it is initiated and completed by God. God chose us. When we understand our identity in Christ, then we can fulfill the calling that Christ places on every one of our lives. On the contrary, if our identity is based on us choosing God, then our fulfilling will always be based on our own ability. Jesus clarifies that He chose us!

With every choosing, there is a price to pay. The challenge is understanding who pays. For many, we try to pay for our salvation, but we can't afford what it cost. **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* There are no strings attached. We cannot redeem ourselves. Sometimes we continue to try to earn it through works. Jesus gave a gift on the cross - He paid for what we cannot earn. When we live as if we are under debt then it's the same as being in bondage. Jesus came to set us free. Those who Christ set free are free indeed. **John 8:36** *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

In working for Christ, two people can do the same things, but have different motives – one is wanting to pay a burden of debt, another is wanting to serve with joy. Christ died for you so that you can be free! Do you carry a debt burden? Do you live to repay the debt to Christ? Or do you live every day excited to serve Him. Have you missed the true meaning of salvation? It changes us on the inside to no longer be in bondage but set free to do as God calls us.

We've been selected; we've had the penalty for our sin paid for; and redemption offered to us, but we don't have to accept. Redeemed means to be pulled out of one place and put into another. God created man different than the rest of creation. We have free will. God gives us the choice to love Him, to do right, to do wrong. God will not compromise this. Redemption is a decision that rests on each of us.

Do we think God will force us into holiness? Do we hope that God will make us do the right thing? Redemption is an offering. It's in our hands – He offers – He doesn't require. We can choose to leave areas of our lives unredeemed after salvation. **Titus 2:14** *Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, eager for good deeds.* What areas of our own lives are unredeemed? Our language? Our actions? The way we think? The ways we respond to others? Relationships? We try to fix ourselves, but He desires to redeem us from those things and to make us zealous for good deeds. Zealous is a deep desire and consuming motivation for good deeds.

**1 Peter 1:18-19** *Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.* Redemption is an offering – a gift we must be willing to receive. He provided the offering. The answer is surrender – to give up and allow God to do it.

God chose us! God chose you! We can look like this piece of wood - rough edges, stains, not refined, yet that is what God chose – He chose you and me! He chose! He paid! He paid to buy us back. This piece of wood has been selected and the owner has a plan just like The King has a plan for each of us and The King always completes His plan. **Jeremiah 29:11** *For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.* God has a vision. God chose because He loves us. He knows us. He knows we can't pay. He has taken care of it all. Are you available to be redeemed? Redemption is not just about salvation. Just like the wood has pieces that will need to come off and work has to be done, there is a plan. All we need to do is surrender. Surrender the unredeemed parts. Be available and ask God what needs to change in me?

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How do you understand being chosen by God? Why is it hard to understand? Or to measure up?  
What does it mean to be redeemed in salvation? Redeemed from every lawless deed?  
Is God pointing out some unredeemed portion of your life?