

PP Alien Invasion: We Come in Peace

Text 1 Peter 2:9-12

4/9-10, 2016

Like many of you, I read a lot, and since reading shapes our thinking, I am careful what I read

PP *“Let us ... consider this settled: that no one has made progress in the school of Christ who does not joyfully await the day of death and final resurrection.”*¹ Calvin

PP *“If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”*

1 Corinthians 15:19

There is so much that God has given us to enjoy here...I love my family, my friends both in the church and out of it, love being a pastor (usually), love riding my bicycle, love barbecues and kayaking and camping

But as one of my favorite rock bands of the early 80's sang, we have to *Hold on Loosely* Christian, you and I are made for another world, but isn't it so easy to lose sight of it, and when we do, we begin to become irrelevant to what God is doing here!

Alien Invasion is all about remembering who we are as Christians, and learning to live in a way that will bring the people of this world to glorify God

PP 1-Our identity

Identity is what you have when you answer the question, *Who Am I?*

And the way we answer the question of identity starts with who or what has the prominent voice in our lives

If you had a critical parent, then you are prone to believe you will never be good enough

If an influential teacher told you how well you write, then you will write with confidence and joy

If your favorite coach expressed his/her amazement with your ability, you will want to impress

Passed over by boys as a young girl will make it difficult to ever believe you are beautiful, and a man who says you are will have a potentially explosive impact in your heart

Here is the critical point...God's voice must gain its prominent place in our hearts or identity will always be grounded in inferior opinions

This is precisely how King David answered the identity question of *'Who am I'*

PP *“Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, ‘Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?’”* **2 Samuel 7:18**

Who am I for David, was rooted in God's love and care for he and his family

Christian identity is entirely based on God's underserved, unearned grace

And this is the secret to developing a robust, healthy Christian identity, learning to hear most prominently the language of grace, unmerited favor

Who are we is a question that Peter is more than eager to answer

“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. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” **1 Peter 2:9-10**

These are Old Testament descriptions of Israel, now applied to the Church of Christ

¹ Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin, 3.9.5

PP *“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 who are on the face of the earth.”* Deuteronomy 7:6

We have here four truths that give a community of believers their Christian identity

PP a-We are chosen by God

But what is the significance of being chosen by God?

PP i. *Being chosen by God means that He loves us!*

This isn't an arranged marriage done for political reasons where love has no part in it
It's not the last kid on the gym wall picked for a team, simply because everyone has to
This is the kid on the wall at the dance, invited out on the floor by the prettiest girl in school
It means to be selected and included into something, God's treasured possession that He loves

PP ii. *Being chosen by God means we are secure...for it wasn't by chance, it was thoughtful determination*

Ephesians 1:4 makes clear that *“God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world”*
Christian, God chose you long before you said yes to Him, and in fact it was His gracious choosing of you that enabled your yes
Our God's choices stand irrevocable!

PP iii. *Being chosen by God means we have a purpose in our lives*

You choose a kitchen appliance, not to sit on the counter, but to be used for a specific function
God's choices instill purpose and Peter is about to move on to that subject

PP b-We are the children of God with access to Him

All believers are spiritual priests, all ministering as a *‘priesthood’* to our God
Priests administered the sacrificial system, but no one today is walking lambs to church
As priests, we have access to God through Jesus at all times, laying our prayers before Him
Every Christian can bring suffering people to God and bring God's mercies to the sufferer
We are a *‘royal priesthood’* because we have been made the children of the King of kings
Peter says we have full rights as children of God, access to Him, and given the highest calling of bringing God's grace and mercy to those in need through teaching and praying

PP c-We are a distinct people

PP The most basic meaning of the word *‘holy’* is *set apart and different*

The people of God are different because we have been set apart by God, dedicated to serve Him
He is our King, we are His people, a *‘holy nation’* governed by His Word, led by His Spirit

PP d-We are His, belonging to Him

The church is *‘a people for God's own possession’*, purchased by His blood, belonging to Him

PP *“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.”*

Acts 20:28

PP This is the identity of the church, the community of believers: chosen by God, children of God, separated for God, belonging to God

And what is true of the corporate church is true of every believer in Christ

There is not one Christian over which God does not say, *You are mine and I am yours!*

Church, He has *‘called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.’*

Not physical, but moral darkness, and into a new kingdom as Paul tells us in Colossians:

PP *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” Colossians 1:13*

We have been made for a different kingdom and this world’s kingdom no longer satisfies

PP 2-Our Mindset

Remember who we are: The chosen by God, children of God, separated for God, belonging to God, bought out of the world and made for the kingdom of God

“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11

This biblical identity enables us to see ourselves as *‘aliens and strangers’*

PP *‘Aliens’* literally means *‘alongside the house’* and *‘strangers’* is a synonym

It doesn’t refer to a stranger passing through, but a foreigner who settles down, however briefly next to and among those who belong in a place

This is the Christian mindset...we are aliens, in a home not our own, visitors traveling through, stopping briefly until we spend eternity with God

When we think like this, we are willing to forfeit temporary pleasure for those that are eternal

PP *“For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.” Hebrews 13:14*

PP *“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” Philippians 3:20*

But what are the *‘fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul’*?

He has listed some in 2:1...*malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander*

Peter listed others in 4:3...*sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries*

Every time we run headlong into fulfilling the passions of our flesh, we have forgotten that something far greater than earthly pleasures exist

A Christian identity produces a mindset through which we see ourselves in this world, but how it does it influence the way we conduct ourselves?

PP 3-Our Conduct

The quote that impacted my decision for this sermons series the most was this one:

PP *“When the church has tried to become like the world, it has lost its effectiveness”*

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” 1 Peter 2:12

It seems obvious that Peter got this from Jesus

PP *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* Matthew 5:16
'Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles'

PP *"The world takes its notions of God, most of all, from the people who say that they belong to God's family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us; they only hear about Jesus Christ"*² Alexander MacLaren

'among the Gentiles' necessarily means we live life in the midst of the world of unbelievers

We aren't to build colonies on earth, safely tucked away from unbelievers, but **'among'** them

PP And the way we are to live is **'excellent'**, which means beautifully good
 The Roman Empire was tolerant, liberal in its dealings with its many different provinces
 They subjugated many cultures and people groups into the empire, and they often allowed those religions to continue by co-opting them into the Roman system
 They invited Christians to place Jesus in the pantheon beside Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, the Christians refused
 When the Christians were given the opportunity to spare their lives by bowing before the Roman image of the divine Caesar they refused
 Just bow, take a pinch of incense, saying 'Lord Caesar', and offer it to the fire and live
 But Christians willingly gave up their lives because they would not worship anyone but Jesus
 And Rome brought their hatred against the church, bringing all kinds of slanderous charges
 Christians were accused of cannibalism, believing they killed and ate a child at their feasts
 Their gatherings to celebrate communion were misconstrued to be sensual parties of incest
 They were accused of damaging the trade of honest businessmen, rioting, turning slaves against their masters, hating the world, and ironically, paganism, because they wouldn't worship the Roman gods

Plato was told that a certain person was slandering his name...his response was this:

PP *'I will live in such a way that no one will believe what he says.'*

The fact is, the early church did defeat the slanders of the unbelieving world

In the early part of the 3rd century, Celsus made the most famous and the most systematic attack of all upon the Christians, in which he accused them of ignorance and foolishness and superstition, but never of immorality

Brother and sister, whether we like it or not, we are advertisements for Christianity and for Christ
 And when we live well, **"they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."** 1 Peter 2:12

Through the way we live, we can draw people to Christ, so they will glorify Him in His return
 Let me tell you what won't do that
 Giving all your coworkers packs of Testaments for Christmas
 Or ladies, wearing a *Modest is Hottest* T-shirt, or Christians walking around Musikfest in *Bloodwiser* T-shirts?

² First and Second Peter and First John [N.Y.: Eaton and Maines, 1910], p. 105.

Nope, not even at the gym breaking out *Seeds of Samson* energy bars, or walking on the beach in sandals where the left one leaves *Jesus* imprinted in the sand, and the right, *Loves You*
Not offering toast to your college roommate from a toaster that scorches a pic of Jesus in it
Not carpooling with a *Wash Away Your Sins* air freshener dangling from your mirror

The power of being '*aliens and strangers*' in Christ is seen in how we live, not what we wear
How we talk, work, rest, forgive, love...as we live among those who do not believe
Alien Invasion...on a mission of peace to the world!!

Amen

Pray