

Feb 2nd 2014: Commitment Sunday: 1 Peter Series #8
"Doing Our Job Well" 1 Peter 2:9-25

Today is our commitment Sunday and on such a day it is important that we are reminded again of all we have become in Christ, and what God expects of every last one of us. And one Biblical passage that does this so well is 1 Peter 2:9-25

And it's a passage that begins with a great big But. V9 "But you are...

Prior to this Peter has been talking about those who don't believe in Jesus. They are in big trouble because Jesus is this massive rock that will one day crush all who disobey the Gospel message. Sad to say but the majority of people then and today fit into that group.

However there is this other group of people who believe in the Good News of the Gospel. They are in no danger of ever being crushed by that massive stone because they have hidden their lives in the safety of that rock which is Jesus. This is the group that Peter refers to when he says in v9 ***But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession***

This is the group that have come to believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and the great news is that if you are a believer in Jesus this morning you are in that group. It doesn't matter if you see yourself as a bad Christian, a mediocre Christian, a great Christian or a back slidden Christian, you are in that group and all those wonderful titles apply to you.

Because of your belief, you are in Christ.

In his book "ONE FOREVER" Rory Shiner gives a great analogy of what being in Christ means.

He invites us to an airport and there we board a plane for Melbourne and he suggests that boarding that plane is somewhat like being in Christ. Where the plane goes we go. And it's not our own strength that gets us there. The plane stops us from falling. The plane gets us through the storms. If we walk up and down the plane, we wont get there any quicker. If we sleep or talk or watch a movie, we will still get there. If we are rude and horrible and even drunk we might get a bad reception when we land but because the plane arrives at its destination, so will we.

In a similar way we are in Christ as believers. He keeps us and carries us throughout the journey that will take us into the eternal presence of God our Father.

But then Rory takes the analogy a little further. He asks us to focus on two particular passengers. One is a business woman.....

Even as in a plane all the travelers are different and their experiences may be different but they get to the same destination, so it is for all who are in Christ. But that doesn't mean that God wants us just to sit back and enjoy the flight. He has a supreme purpose for us as we travel in Christ towards our ultimate destination and we need today to renew our personal commitment to that purpose. A purpose that Peter emphasizes at the end of v9

that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Now to some of you this may sound close to impossible. Talking about God stuff to non-believers is something that doesn't come easy to you. But what we see from this passage is that declaring God's praises is predominantly about how we live and act in this fallen world. When others see that then opportunities to give a reason for the Faith that is in us naturally follow and even if they don't, on a coming day God will be praised because of our faithfulness.

Look at v11-12 of 1 Peter 2 (CEV)

¹¹ Dear friends, you are foreigners and strangers on this earth. So I beg you not to surrender to those desires that fight against you.

¹² Always let others see you behaving properly, even though they may still accuse you of doing wrong. Then on the day of judgment, they will honor God by telling the good things they saw you do.

Those desires are that part of our human nature that seeks to argue us out of being or doing the things that please God, and we all know about such battles. Selfishness is one such desire but so is stubbornness and anger and a host of others. All aimed at preventing us acting as that new creation we have become in Christ Jesus.

I was thinking about this on Friday as I was driving along the freeway to see someone in Royal Perth. I had a full day planned and had allowed myself 90

mins to get in to the hosp, see the person, and get home again. Then I saw on the roadside a young lady who was obviously struggling to change a tyre. Instantly the thought was there to stop and help her, followed just as quickly with the response, you've got just 90 minutes and you would never stay within your schedule if you do. By the time the two thoughts had debated the matter in my head I had already passed her and the opportunity was gone. Only then did a parable that Jesus told flick into my head!!

Now that lady may not have wanted my help and if she had she may never had equated it with God's goodness, but that's not the point. My response to the voice of God would have proved to the whole of this creation and the powers in the heavenlies that God was doing a good work in me.

The fact that other desires got in the way that time is not something that I should now continually chastise myself about, because God promises me His forgiveness and the encouragement to do better next time.

The story of Job in the OT teaches us many things but in the interaction between Satan and God over Job it especially tells us that God's people are adverts for God in this world. Satan wants to destroy the impact of God using our lives to show forth His praise. But when we stay in tune with Christ and ask for His strength and guidance in all things then who we are and what we do will more and more honour our God.

That's what Doing our Job Well is all about. Seeking to be excellent adverts for His transforming work in us by consciously living in Christ at all times.

Pater is very practical and he knew that the readers of this epistle had particular areas in their lives where it was a struggle to live out good lives. There are several that he mentions and we will look more closely at some of them next week.

But for us today the challenge is to be more aware that our lives are constantly on display before a much larger audience than we ever imagined. And if we know of areas in our lives where the sinful desires do so often win the day over the voice of God, then we need to realize that it does matter. That God wants to be praised for what He is achieving through us and surely we love Him enough to want that to happen.

So seek out those places where too often you give in to the desires of the old nature and end up not being what God wants you to be and commit yourself to seeking Christ's power to do differently, and also promise God that you are willing to do the hard work with Him to make that happen.

