

The Elect of God

Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Peter 2:9-12

- Introduction: Election is one of those topics that is hard to process because it involves a paradox; people have free will, yet God is completely in charge and has no limit to His power and authority. I, for one, have gotten used to such paradoxes because I believe in a Trinity, that God is completely one and completely three and the same time, yet one and only one God. There are just some things in the Bible, and in life, that can't be tied up in a neat package. One of the people who struggled with this was the famous physicist, Albert Einstein. Hugh Ross, in his book The Finger of God, wrote this about Einstein.

*"Einstein gave grudging acceptance to 'the necessity for a beginning' and eventually, to 'the presence of a superior reasoning power,' but never did he accept the doctrine of a personal God. Two specific obstacles blocked his way. According to his journal writings, Einstein wrestled with a deeply felt bitterness toward the clergy, toward priests in particular, and with his inability to resolve the paradox of God's omnipotence and man's responsibility for his choices. 'If this being is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an almighty being? In giving out punishment and rewards He would to a certain extent be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him?' Seeing no solution to this paradox, Einstein, like many other powerful intellects through the centuries, ruled out the existence of a personal God. *"*

- For today, let's take a look at election in a way that is personal, setting aside philosophical considerations of free will and God's authority, but consider instead the wondrous privilege of the follower of Jesus being someone chosen by God and that a deep understanding of being chosen influences how a person looks at other people and at life that enriches the soul.

- Set the Stage

Our main text for this morning is 1 Peter 2 in which the great Apostle tells the fledgling church that they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, His own special people. It was a statement made to the ancient Israelites and now includes people from non-Jewish backgrounds that have chosen to follow Christ. They are not included in this great honor, that they are chosen by God, not because they are better than anyone else, but because of God's great grace upon them. I remember seeing videos on Facebook in which a foster child was offered adoption by the family as a birthday present. It was a wonderful thing to see the joy on that child's face as she broke down in tears at the news. There is something so powerful when you know that you belong, that you are chosen.

- Main Points

In the midst of this text I want to point out one word, one word of many that are worth careful examination, but this one is especially potent when we look at our lives and sometimes wonder about the point of it all. It is "sojourners."

Sojourners

The word refers to someone who lives in a country without the rights of citizenship, both Abraham and Moses were called sojourners, and the same word applies to followers of Christ, people chosen by God. We must temper our expectations of this world and not be too surprised when it disappoints. As people chosen by God, the follower of Christ should, over time, get the feeling that they really don't belong here. That is a good thing. Our citizenship is really not of this world, for Ephesians 2:19 tells us *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."* To be a citizen of the Kingdom of God means that you are not a citizen of this world. Don't have expectations that are too high. You don't belong here.

- Colossians-how you act arises from whose you are

Our passage in Colossians outlines the natural response of someone who is chosen in Christ. The comfort and privilege of the position encourages to live according to this passage. We are to put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness and longsuffering; bearing with one another and forgiving one another even as Christ forgave you. It is upon these truths that you should meditate so they influence your behavior in everyday life.

Application

The application is to take time to think on these things, to try to imagine what it would be like to never feel accepted, that you were never part of anything greater and now in Christ are chosen by God, sojourners on earth and citizens of heaven. The idea is not to force yourself to act forgiving when you are mad, but to meditate on this truth that they heal your soul and give you strength to act like the Christ you serve.

- Conclusion

The idea that God elects is challenging and hard to reconcile with the idea that people have free choice. I suggest that we do not spend so much time trying to reconcile the two but rather meditate of the joys of being chosen by God in Christ. We are no longer citizens of the world, but rather of the Kingdom of God, that will last forever.

*Hugh Ross, The Finger of God, Promise Pub., 1991, p. 59.
<https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/predestination.htm>