

## 1 PETER 2:9-10

<sup>9</sup> *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.* <sup>10</sup> *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

**I** find these verses in 1 Peter to be some of the most compelling passages in scripture. A people once excluded are now embraced. Those who were exiled, now chosen. The reviled have been made holy, the rejected are loved.

Those to whom Peter writes know what it is like to be marginalised, oppressed, and harassed because of their faith. They are people without status – except in the eyes of God. They are unknown and unseen and unimportant. Except to the Creator of the universe.

In this verse, we are called – perhaps challenged – to see ourselves not as the world sees us, but as God sees us. We are called to judge ourselves not according to the values which seem to matter most to the world – status, wealth, power – but according to God's boundless love in Christ. Because of God's work for us in Christ we are called worthy, loved, chosen. You are called worthy, loved, and chosen in the eyes of God.

This is how we learn to be God's people, His 'special possession', rather than people beholden to this world. Ours is a status characterised by abundance, hope, faithfulness, and love. What Christ has done is give a people, who had been told they held no value, a sense of eternal value. When we think we are useless, unimportant, a failure, or an embarrassment, the word of God reminds us who we really are: God's own people.

This is a love that transforms us. But for a purpose. For with the gift comes a calling – so *'that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light'*. We are transformed to be agents of God's transformation; our eyes are opened so we can enable others to truly see.

This addresses the human tendency to judge others as 'less', which we do for all sorts of reasons. In Christ God has chosen them too, they are included, with us, as part of His people. We cannot put boundaries or walls down between us. Those who we might be tempted to exclude, ignore, and reject are exactly those whom God gathers up and welcomes.

Consider your five friends: they are included in on this. Oh! that the Spirit would so move in them that they might come to know it for themselves.

The transformation is incredible. Our marks of shame become signs of God's love. As we pray today, let us pledge to see everyone we meet through the loving eyes of God.