

The Eternal Elite

by Warren Wiersbe

As Christians, we are part of a special family, share a special future, possess a special faith, and enjoy a special fellowship, making us God's elite.

Duration: 50:14

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:6

Topics: "Christian Identity", "Gods Kingdom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that as Christians, we are not loved or wanted by the world. However, this should not discourage us because we belong to a special family and are part of God's elite. The sermon highlights four distinctives that make Christians special: belonging to a special family, sharing a special future, possessing a special faith, and enjoying a special fellowship. The preacher encourages believers to take pride in their identity as born-again Christians and to confidently proclaim their special status in God's kingdom.

Transcript

Tonight we begin a brief series in 1 Peter, and I want to read chapter 1, verses 1 through 12. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the sojourners scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace unto you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto

themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into.

If we were to read this entire letter tonight, we would find that Peter is talking about suffering. This is a letter of encouragement. He's writing to Christians who were scattered in various parts of the world, and he's writing for the purpose of encouragement.

Now, we need encouragement these days. It doesn't take much to discourage some of the saints, but even the strongest Christian has his days when he's just a little bit discouraged. Now, as far as the world was concerned, these people weren't very important.

He calls them strangers or sojourners, resident aliens. Here were people who had no permanent home, and I can just see their friends and neighbors saying, you know, we feel sorry for you people. You're Christians.

You just don't have any permanent home. You're really strangers in this world, and they were scattered. They were scattered throughout these different provinces, and so here we have sojourners who are scattered who are suffering.

In verse 6, they were in heaviness through manifold trials. Over in chapter 3, beginning about verse 13, he talks about having to submit themselves and the way people were lying about them and falsely accusing them. Over in chapter 4, he talks about the trial, the fiery trial they're going to go through down in verse 12, and so here were scattered people, sojourners, strangers to this world, people who were going through suffering, and they needed some encouragement.

Now, in these first 12 verses, the Apostle Peter does such a beautiful thing. He says, as far as the world's concerned, you are strangers, sojourners, scattered. You aren't too important, but as far as God is concerned, you belong to the elite.

In fact, some of the translations read like this. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect sojourners. Now, if you look at the word sojourner, you'd get discouraged.

This world is not my home. The world doesn't love me. The world doesn't want me.

There's nothing here that I want, but here I am. So don't look at the word sojourners. Look at the word elect.

That word elect dignifies the Christian. We belong to God's elite. We are God's special people.

That's the whole theme of this first part of the chapter, verses 1 through 12. So when you find yourself discouraged, when the world slanders you, and when life gets difficult, when business isn't working the way you think it ought to, or when your own life is not what you think it ought to be, when you look into that mirror and say, I'm never going to make it, read 1 Peter 1, verses 1 through 12, and notice the distinctives that make the Christian special. Now, there are four of them.

There are in this section four distinctives that take the Christian and lift him out of the herd, make him special, take him out of the crowd, and make him special. Now, what are these distinctives? Well, verses 1 through 3, we are special because we belong to a special family. Verses 3 and 4, we are special because

we share a special future.

Verses 5 through 9, we are special because we possess a special faith. And verses 10 through 12, we are special because we enjoy a special fellowship. Now, let me repeat those.

We belong to a special family. That makes us elite. We share a special future.

That makes us elite. We possess a special faith. That makes us God's elite.

And we enjoy a special fellowship. Now, let's take these distinctives individually, and I hope we can go out of here into the murky night and say, praise God, I'm glad I'm saved. First, we belong to a special family.

We have been born again, according to verse 3. This term, born again, is being thrown around quite a bit. I notice in the TV guide this next week, there's going to be a special television presentation on the born again. I'm always a little bit afraid when something that belongs to the Christian becomes common property out there in the entertainment world.

That sort of cheapens it just a little bit, but we're glad for any witness that can be given. The Greek people were not strangers to this term, born again. A lot of people have the idea that when Jesus said to Nicodemus, you must be born again, he was inventing something new.

No. The Greek people had used this phrase, born again, whenever they wanted to refer to any new stage in something. When there was a change in the seasons, nature was born again.

When a child moved into a new stage of life, such as from childhood to adolescence, he was born again. Whenever there was a change politically, and the nation moved into a new phase of history, they said the nation has been born again. The phrase born again carries with it the idea of change, something new, and you and I have been born again.

We belong to a special family. Now Peter explains the process to us in verse 2. Look at it. God the Father is involved, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

You can't be born without a father. God the Spirit is involved through sanctification of the Spirit, and God the Son is involved unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. A man said to me one day, I don't know why you people emphasize the Trinity.

Well, we have to emphasize the Trinity because our salvation depends on it. We have to emphasize the Trinity because all of the revelation of Scripture depends on it. Here we have God the Father and God the Spirit and God the Son all involved in this marvelous experience of being born again.

You see, Peter is not telling unsaved people how to get saved. Peter is telling Christians how they got saved. He's not explaining salvation to unbelievers trusting they'll believe.

He is explaining salvation to believers. You would not understand your own physical birth if somebody didn't explain it to you. And Peter says I want you to understand your spiritual birth.

How did all of this come about? Number one, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Now you cannot separate election and grace. He had set up here, grace be unto you, peace be multiplied.

You can't separate those. My God and your God is light, he's holiness, and he could condemn everybody and nobody say a word. God is love, and in his love he might want to save everybody.

But if everyone is saved, what about his holiness? If everyone is condemned, what about his love? What is it that resolves the theoretical conflict between a holy God who judges sin and a loving God who forgives sinners? The grace of God. And the grace of God means that God in his grace chooses before the foundation of the world some to be saved. Now at this point someone looks at me and all of the arguments, all of the problems stem up.

But may I remind you that the entire Trinity is involved in salvation. Election is not a detriment to salvation, it's an encouragement to salvation. If you're here tonight and you're not a believer, I don't know if you're among God's elect or not, but I do know this, Jesus died for you.

I do know this, God is not willing that any should perish. I do know this, God who will have all men to be saved. And I do know this, he's commanded me to give the invitation to every sinner.

As far as God the Father is concerned, I was saved when he chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world, but it took more than that. As far as God the Son is concerned, I was saved when he died for me on the cross. As far as God the Holy Spirit is concerned, I was saved on May the 12th, 1945, when the Spirit of God put all of this together, convicted me, and I believed on Jesus Christ.

And then I discovered I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It's a beautiful picture here, chosen by God the Father. Now we're chosen by God the Father according to his foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge does not mean to know beforehand. There are those who say God the Father looked down the ages, he saw who was going to believe, so he chose them. There's a problem with that because this word foreknowledge is used over in the book of Acts chapter 2 verse 23 relating to the death of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ died according to the foreknowledge of God. Does that mean that God the Father looked down the ages and saw that somebody was going to kill Jesus so he chose it to happen? No. Foreknowledge is the same as foreordination.

God the Father in the councils of eternity by his own grace has chosen, foreordained, that's all the word of God tells us. One of my professors used to say to me and to our class, try to explain election. You may lose your mind, but if you explain it away you could lose your soul.

Either we're saved by grace or we aren't saved at all. If it's grace then it's the working of God. God the Father chosen through sanctification of the Spirit.

Now the Holy Spirit of God goes to work to set apart the sinner to be saved. Now how does he do this? He does it through the word of God. Look at verse 22 of 1 Peter chapter 1. Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.

Verse 23, being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God. So God the Father chooses, God the Holy Spirit uses the word of God to speak to the unbelieving sinner and to set him apart and bring him to faith. Where does faith come from? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Now Peter believed that and so did Paul. Over in 2 Thessalonians Paul tells us how people got saved in Thessalonica. Listen to this, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. But we are bound to give thanks, verse 13, always to God for you brethren beloved of the Lord because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.

You can't escape it. Through sanctification of the Spirit, there it is, and belief of the truth unto which he called you by our gospel. How does God get people saved? People go out with the gospel and they share the gospel, the good news, and God the Spirit uses the word to impart saving faith and a new nature to the believing sinner.

Which leads us to the third person who's involved. Chosen by God the Father, set apart by God the Spirit, unto obedience. Now what does that obedience mean? It means the same thing it says in verse 22 of 1 Peter 1, saying you've purified your souls in obeying the truth.

Did you know that the unbelieving sinner is a rebel? God doesn't suggest that we repent. God doesn't hint that we repent. He has commanded man everywhere to repent.

And the sinner who says I will not believe is disobedient. But the sinner who is convicted by the Spirit of God, enlightened by the word of God, believes he is obeying the truth. Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

It costs something for us to be born again. Our Lord Jesus Christ had to die. His death is given in verse 2. His resurrection in verse 3. Unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The cost of our salvation. What did it cost God the Father to choose me? What did it cost God the Spirit to sanctify me, set me apart? What did it cost God the Son to make this possible? He had to die. Now salvation is free, but bless your heart, salvation is not cheap.

And the person who says I will not believe is not only disobedient to the Holy Spirit, he is walking on the blood of Jesus Christ. That's why rejecting Jesus Christ is such a serious thing. Sometimes we witness to people as though, well, take it or leave it.

If you leave it, so what? Oh no. It's dangerous to play with the gospel invitation and it is deadly to reject it. Now what happens when we believe on Jesus Christ? We're sprinkled by his blood.

In the Old Testament you find the sprinkling of the blood in three cases. Number one, the nation was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice when they were entering into their covenant with God. When they became a holy nation, they were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice.

Two, the priests were sprinkled. When a man was made a priest, he was sprinkled, the blood was applied to his body. Three, the lepers.

When a leper was cleansed, he came to the priest and the priest spent a week examining him. Finally he says you're clean and he sprinkled him with the blood. That's what happens when you're saved.

I came to Jesus Christ as a citizen of this world. I didn't belong to any holy nation and when I trusted him, he sprinkled me with his blood and I became a citizen of heaven. I came to Jesus Christ, I was not a priest, I was an outcast.

I couldn't offer any worship or spiritual sacrifices to please him but when I trusted Jesus Christ, he said I'll make you a priest and he sprinkled me with his blood. I came as a leper. Not a cleansed leper either, I came as a leper.

I came as a moral leper, a spiritual leper. I was dying, I was in a living death and he sprinkled me with his blood and made me one of his children. Peter must have had this in mind because over in chapter 2, he talks about this in verse 5, ye also as living stones are being built up a holy priesthood.

So we're a priesthood. Also in chapter 2, verse 9, you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. So when you trust Jesus Christ as your savior, this is the result of being chosen by God the Father, set apart by God the Holy Spirit who uses the very word that I'm preaching and you're sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ.

We belong to a special family. Now that makes us elite, chosen, set apart, sprinkled by the blood of Christ. No Christian ever has to walk around with a sad expression, his head down, his chin dragging, saying to himself, oh how terrible, I'm a Christian.

The way most of us live, that's our attitude. Instead, he should stand tall and straight and just look anybody right square in the eye and say, you know what, I may be suffering and I may be part of a scattered people and I may be a stranger in this world and you may think I'm a strange person but I want you to know something, I've been born into a special family. I belong to a special family.

I am among God's elite and by the grace of God I'm proud of it. A second distinctive is given to us, we not only belong to a special family but we share a special future. You see, some people are looked upon as being very special because of the family they belong to.

I was waiting at the Hancock Center one day, a friend was going to meet me there and we were going to go off someplace for lunch. He arrived just about that time, a very well-dressed lady came out of the Hancock Center with some other people, got into her limousine and off she went. He said, did you know who that was? I said, no, but I could tell she's somebody special.

He told me who she was. Some people brag because of the family they belong to. We belong to a special family.

Some people brag because of what they're going to get. I'm going to inherit something someday. Oh, I tell you, I'm in my uncle's will.

I'm in my father's will and I'm going to inherit something. My future is tremendous. I'm special.

Well, we share in a very special future. Look at it. Verse 3, he has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance, who are kept by the power of God.

Now, here's a marvelous thing. We share a special future. Now, when I was not a Christian, I had no future.

None at all. I was without God and without hope in this world. Have you ever talked to somebody who has no hope? I've gone into hospital rooms.

Maybe you've had this experience. I'm sure Pastor Filken has had this experience in his visitation ministry, and the doctor has said to the family, now there's no hope. That's a hard thing.

No hope. We Christians never can say no hope because we're born again unto a marvelous hope. We share a special future.

Now, he makes two remarks about this hope. It's a living hope, verse 3. It's a lasting hope, verses 4 and 5. Now, I want a living hope. I don't want a dead hope.

Most of the world is living on dead hope. I want a living hope, and our hope is a living hope because it depends upon a living Christ. As long as Jesus Christ is alive, I have hope.

He lives by the power of an endless life. He ever lives to make intercession for me, and he being raised from the dead dieth no more, and he is my hope. Now, my hope is not a promise.

My hope is a person, Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ, the promise means nothing, and so it is a living hope. It's a living hope because it's based on the living Christ.

It's a living hope because it's based on the living Word. Peter tells us here, we're born again, not of corruptible seed. When my mother conceived me, and when your mother conceived you, that was a conception of corruptible seed, and the instant you're born, you start to die, and you and I are physically headed for corruption, unless our Lord returns and changes our bodies.

We are redeemed. We are born again, not by corruptible seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth. So, I have a living hope because of the living Christ, and I have a living hope because of the living Word.

Now, when a hope is a living hope, it's always growing. A dead hope gets smaller and smaller and vanishes, but a living hope gets brighter and brighter and bigger and bigger, and that's the kind of hope we have. As Christians, we share a special future because we have a living hope, and the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto that perfect day.

And Peter's encouraging these saints. He's saying, I know you're going through the furnace, but remember, you've got a living hope. You may die, but your hope will never die.

Your job may die, but your hope will never die. Your whole world may fall to pieces around you, but that hope will never die. On the other hand, quite the contrary, that hope will get bigger and bigger and brighter and brighter because it is alive.

It's a lasting hope. Some of us can remember when Neville Chamberlain came back from meeting with Adolf Hitler with his umbrella in one hand and a piece of paper in the other hand. Hope.

Peace. We've averted a war. Yeah.

For how long? About five weeks, was it? And then Poland was invaded and we were on the move in World War II. There are some hopes that die. We have a hope that is a living hope and a lasting hope.

Look at it. To an inheritance. Now, the only way to get an inheritance is for somebody to die.

Well, he did die. Then he arose again to make sure nobody would steal the inheritance from us. My Lord Jesus Christ is not only the testator who made out the will and then died so the will goes into effect, he's also the executor of the estate.

He arose again and now he is taking care of my inheritance. An inheritance incorruptible. Every earthly inheritance falls to pieces.

Eventually, there's corruption. The moth and the rust can ruin material things. Thieves can break in and steal.

Someone leaves you a beautiful estate, a lovely house and you've got to spend thousands of dollars to keep it from falling apart. Our inheritance isn't that way. It's incorruptible.

There is no damage. It cannot be damaged. It is undefiled.

It cannot be stained. It cannot be defiled. There's no dirt.

It fades not away. It cannot decay. The picture here is of a flower.

You've had people bring you flowers and they're so beautiful when they come. Those roses are so gorgeous and they open up a little bit, but after two or three days, what happens to them? You finally pick the whole thing up, shake the water off of them, throw them in the trash can. They fade away.

We fade away, but our inheritance doesn't fade away. We have a lasting inheritance because it is reserved in heaven for you. I was preaching over in Denmark back in 1957, and I had to travel all the way from Copenhagen, Denmark, way across the islands, there are about 400 islands there, by train to a village where I was going to preach.

No one told me that on Danish trains you have to have a reservation. Now you do on American trains too, I understand. Pastor Smith is the only one who travels by train around here.

He's the train addict, and so I'm on this train and I'm sitting on this seat and going to enjoy the Danish countryside, and some conductor comes along and looks at me and begins to say things in Danish that I did not understand, and so I do not speak of the English, you know. So finally someone there who knew English and Danish said, you know, you're sitting in somebody else's seat who has a reservation, you've got to have a reservation. I said, where do I get one? He said, off the conductor, and so I felt around for some kroner to see if I could afford a reservation, and I got a reservation.

It's a marvelous thing when you're going to a concert or going to a ball game just to relax and say, I've got a reservation. I arrived at a motel one morning, about 1.30 in the morning, and the reservation had not been covered. She said, I'm sorry, if you'd have been here at six o'clock we could have let you in, but that room is gone.

1.30 in the morning. Now the inheritance that I have in Jesus Christ is reserved in heaven for us who are kept. You say, oh, it's a marvelous thing to have the inheritance.

It won't fail, but I may fail. Oh, no. Jesus Christ cannot throw you out of His will.

I'm glad I haven't had any relatives, and I don't know of any now that would do it, who kept holding the will over my head. You better be good. I'll cut you out of my will.

Our Lord will never do that. He says, not only am I keeping the inheritance for you up there, I'm keeping you down there. We are kept by the power of God.

We're not kept by ourselves. When we put faith in Jesus Christ, the power of God goes to work in our lives, and we're kept. We're preserved.

We are reserved. It is a lasting hope. Now we've noticed that we belong to a special family.

That makes us elite, and we share a special future. We don't have to worry about the future, but there's a third distinctive of the believer, verses five through nine. He possesses a special faith.

I've had people say to me, oh, I wish I had faith. You've heard that, haven't you? Oh, I wish I had faith. You know what the answer to that is? You do have faith.

Everybody has faith. The only difference between my faith and the faith of an unsaved neighbor is what we're trusting. Everybody's got faith.

A little baby's got faith. Put a pacifier in the baby's mouth, that takes faith. The baby doesn't know what it is.

Feed the baby some kind of food takes faith. Our dear little children have faith. They trust us.

Everybody's got faith. The difference is that a Christian has put his faith in Jesus Christ. Now we possess a special faith.

It's a faith that can be trusted, and it's a faith that can be tested. That's a good kind of faith to have. It's the faith that can be trusted, who are kept by the power of God through faith.

That word kept is a military term, who are guarded as if by soldiers. Now the Bible does say, keep yourselves in the love of God. It doesn't say keep yourself saved.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, the way children by their obedience keep themselves in the love of their parents. It does say keep yourself from idols. It does say you'll keep yourself from the wicked one, but it never says keep yourself saved.

It says unto him who is able to keep you from falling. I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the ending, being confident of this very thing that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. So it is a faith that can be trusted because we are guarded, who are kept by the power of God through faith.

Literally it says having once and for all been kept. The tense of that verb is you have been kept, you are being kept, you always will be kept, which sort of hints to me that a truly born again person cannot lose his salvation. We possess a special faith.

It can be trusted. Why can it be trusted? Because we're kept by the power of God. We are not kept by our own power or by the power of a church or by the power of sacraments or ordinances or ceremonies.

We're kept by the power of God. Why are we being kept? Because he has something marvelous in the future through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I have been saved from the guilt and the penalty of sin.

It's all settled. I am being saved from the power of sin. He talks about that later on.

Thank God one day we shall be saved from the very presence of sin. That's the salvation he's talking about, waiting for the adoption, that is the redemption of our bodies. So it's a faith that can be trusted.

Can your faith be trusted? There are a lot of people who are trusting a faith that can't be trusted. Our faith is special because it can be tested. A lot of folks have the idea Christians don't go through any problems.

Look at this, in this you greatly rejoice though now for a season if need be you are in heaviness through manifold trials. But you know you go from heaviness to happiness. Verse 8, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now only a Christian can have heaviness and happiness at the same time. Only a Christian can have sorrow and joy at the same time. Only a Christian because of his faith can go through the furnace and praise God.

You know what he's saying here? He's saying our faith can be tested. Don't be afraid. We have a faith that has passed every test.

Now God always tests your faith. He tests my faith. He called Abraham and said Abraham you go to a land I'm going to show you.

Abraham said all right I'm going to go. So he went, no map. He marched right off the map.

There was no place for him to know where he was going. He got there and discovered the place was hungry. It was a famine.

His faith was tested. Along came Lot one day and Lot caused trouble. Abraham's faith was tested.

God said Abraham I'm going to give you a son. He waited and waited and waited. His faith was tested.

Finally when Abraham did get the son, the son was grown, God said Abraham why don't you take that son now and lay him on the altar. His faith was tested. A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted.

You say oh I don't know why I'm going through these difficulties. I'll tell you why. God's testing your faith.

You say but God knows me. That's right but you don't know me and you don't know you and you don't know God. I don't know God as I should and so as I go through these difficulties I am learning what my faith is like.

I am learning what I am like and best of all I'm learning what he is like. It's a faith that can be tested. He compares it to an assayer who takes ore.

You know back in the gold rush days a fellow would be digging away and he'd find what looked like gold ore. It might be fool's gold. He takes his ore down to the assaying office.

He says you test this ore and so that ore is tested and then out comes the report. Now what Peter is saying is this the report is worth more than the ore because the report says hey there's more wealth back there. Now our faith is tested.

God puts us through the refining furnace. God takes the dross away from us. God purges us.

Our faith is tested and then we come through the trial of our faith is much more precious than the trial of gold because the gold perishes. But you know when you've been through the trial and your faith has stood the test that is worth more than everything because then you know you can face the next trial and you can always trust God and the result of it is joy unspeakable and full of glory. Would you connect verses 8 and 9 in your bible believing, receiving, believing, receiving.

That's the way it works. Suffering, believing, receiving. We possess a special faith and Peter tells me in verse 7 that the best part of the test is not here.

Oh we know we get joy unspeakable and full of glory. As we go through the trying of our faith our muscles grow. We have joy.

We rejoice. We are refined. That's not the best part of it.

Might be found under praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Somebody here tonight is saying oh I'm going through it.

I'm going through it. I don't know what I'm facing. God is trying me.

Well it's going to mean blessing to us here. But when we see the Lord Jesus and he smiles and says I know what you went through and you stood true. You trusted me and that's going to be praise and honor and glory in heaven.

We're a special people because we belong to a special family and we share a special future and we possess a special faith. Real quick now in the latter part of this section verses 10 through 12. We enjoy a special fellowship.

A person is known by the company he keeps. He's also known by the enemies he makes but he's known by the company he keeps. And there are always people who like to be name droppers.

Do you have any friends who are name droppers? I have a an acquaintance who's in Christian music. If I named him you'd know him because you've all heard him sing. But oh what a name dropper he is.

And you can't be with him. You cannot be with him 30 seconds before he's talking about having seen Frank Sinatra or somebody else or somebody else. It gets nauseating because I'm not interested in that.

A person's elite position may come from the company he keeps. Look at the company we keep. We are a very special people because we enjoy a special fellowship.

The prophets, the apostles, the holy spirit, the angels. Here are the prophets. Did you know that Isaiah worked for me? Isaiah worked for me.

So did Jeremiah. Did you know that Hosea went through all he went through with his wife for me? You know David did it for me. That's what he says.

This salvation that you are enjoying, the Old Testament prophets were inquiring into. And they would polish their bifocals and they would read the Old Testament scrolls and they'd listen to the message of God and they'd say what is this all about? In one place he talks about a suffering Messiah. In another place he talks about a glorious kingdom.

What's going on? They were working for me. They were working for you. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things that are now reported to you.

That just blesses me. That gives me the whole Old Testament. That makes Jonah my friend and Ezekiel my friend and Solomon my friend because they work for me.

That's great fellowship. Someone says who are your friends? Are you important? Back when I was in Youth for Christ and we used to have a lot of teenage conventions and Carol Thiessen will remember this because she was a part of the ministry there for a while. We'd be at these conventions you know and these kids were great autograph seekers.

They'd come up to you and say are you anybody important? I had one friend who'd say yes I am. He'd take the Bible and he'd sign Billy Graham. Do you know anybody important? I sure do.

Who are some of your friends? Moses. You don't look that old. Moses.

David. You see I'm a special person. Long before ever I was born God had all the Old Testament prophets working for me.

And then there's the Apostles. They did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you. These were second generation Christians.

These people had never seen Jesus Christ. Whom having not seen ye love. The Apostles came along and helped to win these people to Christ.

That gives me my New Testament. Here is Paul in a Roman prison. He's chained to a Roman soldier and he's writing Ephesians.

You know why? For me. Paul worked for me. Peter worked for you and me.

And so did Matthew and Mark and Luke and John. And John's an old man and he's on the Isle of Patmos and God says John I want you to write the things that you've seen and write them down because Weersbe is going to need that someday. Well you want to know how special we are? Look at the fellowship we keep.

We belong to a very special fellowship. We've got friends that are fantastic. The Old Testament prophets.

The New Testament Apostles and preachers. And then there's the Holy Spirit. In fact he mentions the Holy Spirit several times here in this passage.

Verse 11. Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ did signify when he testified the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Verse 12.

They preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Here's a remarkable thing. The Holy Spirit is a part of my fellowship.

He lives in me and he wrote the Old Testament through the prophets and he wrote the New Testament through the Apostles and now he teaches me what he wrote. I can recall when I was in my student days I would like to have gotten some of those textbook authors right there to ask them a few questions. Well I've got the author living with me.

You say do you have any special friends? I certainly do. You belong to any special group? I certainly do. I've got the Holy Spirit who wrote the Bible teaching me what the Bible says.

It doesn't stop there. We've got the angels. Which things the angels desire to look into.

It's a kind of an interesting picture that really means which things the angels desire to stoop over and peek into. Did you know the angels watch the church when the church gets together to worship? Paul says over in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 10 that God is through the church teaching the angels. Oh are they learning.

I'm sure the angels must learn a great deal from some business meetings, some committee meetings. The angels are watching us now and the angels work for us. Are they not all ministering spirits sent to do service for those who are the heirs of salvation? I'm not going to stand here for the next half hour and give you story after story of how the angels of God have protected the people of God.

We could all tell stories like that. It's true. Oh the world laughs at this.

The world says we're crazy but we aren't crazy. We belong to a special fellowship, the prophets and the apostles and the Holy Spirit and the angels. So what difference does it make what kind of a house I live in when I've got friends like that? What difference does it make what kind of a future there is for the economy when I've got an inheritance like this? I want you to go away tonight with a sanctified superiority complex.

Now not a false, not a carnal superiority complex. Oh no. No Jesus doesn't want that.

But a sanctified superiority complex. The kind that the Roman citizens had. That soldier picked up that whip and Paul said I am a Roman citizen.

Boy that whip was dropped. Whenever you feel like you're left out, you're one of the scattered people, a sojourner, a resident alien. The world is moving faster than we are.

The world's got more than we've got. We seem to be on the losing end of every deal. Just remember you belong to God's elite.

You belong to a special family. It started way back before creation. It's going to end way down there when Jesus comes.

You share in a special future, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled that fadeth not away. You possess a special faith and that faith is going to be tested. But the testing of our faith is the secret of our joy.

And our victory. And you enjoy a special fellowship. You're never alone.

The prophets are working for you and the apostles are working for you and the Holy Spirit is working for you and the angels are working for you. Now don't take any of this for granted. Please don't take any of this for granted.

Because all of this costs Jesus Christ his life. Let's go out this coming week humbly proud that we are a part of God's elite. We don't have to apologize.

We don't have to hang our heads in defeat and shame because we belong to him. Gracious Father in heaven, we marvel that we are here tonight because back in eternity you chose us. We don't understand all of the ramifications of this marvelous process.

But we're thankful that we understand enough to know whom we have believed. I pray for any here tonight who have never been born into the family. Tonight they'll trust Christ.

Who have no bright future before them. Their future is a lake of fire. I pray, Heavenly Father, for those who have never put their faith in Jesus Christ.

For those, O Lord, who don't belong to this marvelous fellowship that they'll trust him. And Father I pray that those of us who are saved and know it will rejoice in it and not look upon it as some kind of a handicap but rather look upon it as the greatest experience in all the world. I pray in Jesus name, Amen.

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