

The People Of God

“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Pet. 2:10).

One of the special friends in my life is Evangelist Milton Taylor. We have traveled many miles together, roomed together, fellowshiped together, wept together, preached together and prayed together. Milton is a devoted man of prayer, and I love to hear him pray. Often, as he approaches God in thanksgiving and praise, he will begin by saying, “Father, there’s no father like You.” In the same breath, he usually adds, “And, Father, there are no people like Your people.”

To both statements I give a hearty “Amen.” There is no father like our heavenly Father. He is a perfect Father! And there are no people like God’s people. Of course, it cannot be said that we are a perfect people. At our best, we are filled with limitations and shortcomings. But, even with all of our imperfections, we are His people, His chosen people, His redeemed people, His set-apart people.

Simon Peter spoke of the people of God in the previous verse as “a peculiar people” (2:9), or, as the word indicates, “a people of God’s own possession.” Not only does God possess us by virtue of Christ’s redeeming work, but He also possesses us from within through the indwelling of His Spirit. We are no longer under our supervision. We are His people, and thus, under His holy authority. What else is said about the people of God?

The people of God have not always been known as the people of God! “Which in time past were not a people.” Of course, in God’s mind, from eternity we were His chosen people. But in our minds, and in the minds of others, we were not His people. We lived for ourselves, in our own selfish energy and for our own selfish purposes. Whereas His people mind those things that are “after the Spirit,” we were occupied with “the things of the flesh” (Rom. 8:5).

The people of God are now recognized as the people of God! Jesus taught, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Previously, we could only manifest the flesh, and be known in relationship to the flesh. But now, as regenerated souls, we are known in relationship to the Spirit. And, bless the name of the Lord, we are known as “the people of God.”

The people of God, only through intervening mercy, are the people of God! “Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” The only testimony we can give is that God has shown mercy toward us, for “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom. 9:16). Can you give that testimony, dear friend? If not, why don’t you cry out to God for mercy? God grant it to be so.