

Sunday Morning Message

January 26, 2020

A Peculiar Treasure

Text – Exodus 19:1 - 20

Congregational Reading – Exodus 19:1 - 6

Year Theme Verse - *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Introduction

The historical context of Exodus nineteen, is the beginning of the forty year wilderness wanderings of Israel. They had been rescued by God from Israel just a few months before, and God had now brought them down into the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula to Mount Sinai, and was about to give them the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic Law (see map).

Read vs. 1 – 20

In these verses, God was making a covenant with the People of Israel. His offer to them is found in verses 4 – 6, and their reply is found in verse 8. God promises that He will make Israel a “peculiar treasure above all people,” and “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” In response, the people promised that they will obey God. After this agreement, or covenant, is agreed upon, God will then give them His commandments through Moses.

My focus this morning is on the phrase found in verse five, “peculiar treasure.”

The phrase, “peculiar treasure,” is translated from one Hebrew word (הַגְּלוּלָהּ – cĕgullah – [seh-goo-lah’]) which means “a valued or treasured possession.” Sometimes we use the word “peculiar” today to refer to something in a derogatory way, but here it just has the idea of something that is different, unique, or special. In the context of these verses in Exodus, the peculiar treasure that God is referring to is Israel, the people that He had just redeemed from Egypt “on eagles’ wings.” God uses this phrase, “peculiar treasure,” one other time in reference to Israel:

“For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, [and] Israel for his peculiar treasure.” (Psalm 135:4)

The Hebrew root word (הַגְּלוּלָהּ – cĕgullah) behind the phrase has also been translated into other English phrases that have a similar meaning, such as: “special people” (Deuteronomy 7:6), “peculiar people” (Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18), and even “jewels:”

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day

when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Malachi 3:16-17)

In all of the these Old Testament examples, the reference is to God's People, Israel.

In the New Testament Book of Hebrews, there is an allusion to this idea, also in reference to Old Testament believers:

*"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ... These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and **confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth**. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16)*

Strangers and Pilgrims doesn't just mean that they were from a geographically distant place. It means that they were very different from the other inhabitants of the land. They were peculiar.

Now I want to make a leap here into other New Testament verses and broaden the application of that phrase "peculiar treasure," to include Christians. Twice the phrase, "peculiar people," is used specifically in reference to New Testament believers:

*"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself **a peculiar people**, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Titus 2:11-15)*

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 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 Peter 2:9-10)

God considers His people today to be a peculiar treasure to Him just as He did (and still does) the Nation of Israel. Notice, however, that He put a caveat in all of these verses, regarding how and

when He especially sees His people as a peculiar treasure. In Exodus 19:5, it was conditioned on the fact that Israel obeyed God's voice and kept His covenant. In Titus 2:14, it is connected with the fact that these believers were redeemed from iniquity, purified, and zealous of good works, and that they [*denied*] *ungodliness and worldly lusts, [and lived] soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*

In 1 Peter 2:9, these peculiar people are said to "*shew forth the praises of God,*" meaning that their lives were to glorify God.

If you are saved, you are a peculiar treasure to God. You are different from other people who do not have that special relationship with God through faith in His Son. You are not better in yourself than other people who do not know Him, but you are certainly seen by God as something peculiar, very special to Him. You are one of His jewels. Shouldn't your life (and mine) reflect that special relationship? Shouldn't the way we live here on earth "shew forth the praises" of the God who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Sad to say that many of us are hiding our light and trying to blend in with the rest of those that are still in darkness. Ought we not rather embrace the fact that we are peculiar and special to God? It may be that we will then be used of Him to draw more people to Christ.

Concluding Thoughts

1. Embrace the fact that you are peculiar treasure.

Since being peculiar is a good thing, don't try to hide it – embrace it. Don't try to be like the rest of the world. They have got it wrong.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (2 Corinthians 6:17)

2. Enhance your Peculiarity

After God had made His covenant with the people, Moses went up into the mount to receive the Law. The laws that God gave them, caused the nations around them to see that Israel was not like them. They were different. God gives us principles to live by through His word that will help us to live out in reality how God already sees us.

Spend time in the Word of God. Read it. Study it. Put it into practice.

Spend time with God's people.

3. Enlighten Others so that they can be a Peculiar Treasure also.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

Let your light and your peculiar life shine to the lost people around you. When they see your peculiarity, they will glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

Communicate to them the love of Christ. Give them the gospel.

You are a peculiar treasure to God, one of His jewels. You are precious and valuable to Him. He treasures you. Don't try to hide the fact that you belong to God. God wants to show you off to the rest of the world.

