

MY STORY – WEEK 8

TALK SUMMARY:

1 & 2 Peter were written to followers of Jesus living in the northern areas of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). These were people facing an increasing amount of hostility, harassment, and persecution because of their faith.

During this time, the disciple Peter writes two letters to encourage these followers of Jesus to stand strong and remain hopeful in the midst of what they were experiencing. He reminds them that even though they live in the Roman Empire they need to embrace the fact that they are citizens of God's Kingdom.

Throughout his letters Peter continually reminds his readers of who they are and invites them to live out their faith in real and practical ways.

CHOOSE THE QUESTIONS YOU FEEL FIT BEST WITH YOUR GROUP

(IT'S NOT NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH ALL OF THEM)

1. Icebreaker – With Thanksgiving around the corner, discuss some or all of the following questions:
 - If you could replace traditional Thanksgiving food with a new item, what would it be and why?
 - Would you rather make all the food or wash all the dishes?
 - What is the strangest Thanksgiving tradition you've ever heard of or experienced?
 - Which celebrity would you invite to Thanksgiving dinner?
2. What did you most need to hear or be reminded of from this week's talk?
3. Read how the disciple Peter describes followers of Jesus in 1 Peter 2:9 and then discuss each description he gives to followers of Jesus.

...for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9

Peter begins his description of Jesus' followers by stressing that God chose us. He tells his readers that they are part of a "chosen people."

- What is the most exciting thing you were ever chosen for?
- What does it mean to be God's "chosen people" and what are some of the implications of God choosing us (and not the other way around)?

Next Peter tells his readers that they are "royal priests."

In Israel, only certain individuals were given the task of serving as priests, performing the duties of mediators between God and the rest of the nation. Very few held the honor and responsibility of actually coming into God's presence. But because of the death of Jesus, all believers are now priests with direct access to God. We need no other mediator.

- What does it mean to be a "royal priest" and what are some of the implications?
- Throughout Jewish history, priests had the responsibility of praying with and for others, dedicating themselves in service to God, and pointing others to God. Of all the different responsibilities you imagine a priest having, which one intimidates you the most?

Next Peter tells his readers that they are a "holy nation."

Holiness has to do with something being set apart for a special, sacred purpose. Followers of Jesus are supposed to be different from everyone else around them. Our lives are supposed to be marked by how we love God and love others, even in the worst of circumstances. However, "holiness" is much more than that. It is about being set apart for God's purposes.

- What does it mean to be a "holy nation" and what are some of the implications?
- How should being part of "God's holy nation" impact how we see ourselves in relationship to citizens of the United States?

Next Peter tells his readers that they are "God's very own possession."

God sees us as his possession. He values us. Consequently, followers of Jesus should work to see God as the owner of everything we are and everything we achieve, accumulate, and accomplish. Our allegiance belongs to God and God alone.

- What is one of your most valuable possessions?
- What does it mean to be "God's very own possession" and what are some of the implications?

4. After making it clear to his readers who they are, because of Jesus, Peter concludes with this thought...

As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

- Every follower of Jesus has the responsibility of showing others the goodness of God. Practically speaking, what does this look like?