

God's Portion... Us!

For the Lord's portion [his allotted inheritance] is His people. Deuteronomy 32:9

How much do the opinions of others shape the way you define yourself? Perhaps not always in a positive way. Have you ever thought about how God sees you? In our failures and flaws, do we wonder if His view is not always positive either? Not so. In His Word, God assures us over and over just how loved and cherished we are.

Consider the book of Deuteronomy. Moses is reviewing the law of God to the people. He knows they will be rebellious. They were rebellious under his leadership, and they will be even more so after he dies. So, in chapter 32 he teaches them a song to remind them of their past and to foretell their future. The song articulates God's divine jealousy, incited by their choice of idols over Him, but it also proclaims His profound love and desire for their ultimate welfare. The song has dire warnings for rebellion but also hopeful words that "are your life" (32:47) because they remind them of the goodness of God.

At this point, the nation of Israel is preparing to enter the land God has promised to them. God reminds them that He has divided the nations -- He has assigned to each their inheritance and their portion. Then we read the [beautiful] words of verse 9— the Lord's portion is His people. Of all the glorious portions God could single out as having chosen for Himself, it is His people.

His portion. In the OT culture, inheritance was significant. There were familiar and specific procedures regarding it. Moses employed the imagery of inheritance in presenting God's claim on His people. Israel received the Promised Land as their inheritance from God. It was their covenant heritage... they were entitled to it in perpetuity. In the same way, in our verse, God declares His rightful eternal claim on His people.

Furthermore, verses 10-11 tell us, *He took care of His people, He protected them as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, encourages its young to fly, hovers over them in case they need help, spreads its wings and catches them if they fall, and carries them up high on its wings, so the LORD alone led His people.* What amazing attention He gave to His "portion"!



Today, we are also the Lord's portion... His chosen ones. His priceless ones. Scripture tells us that repeatedly. Deut. 7:6; Deut. 26:18; 1 Sam 12:22; Isaiah 43:4; Isaiah 62:3; Zech 9:16; Malachi 3:17; 1Peter 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9... just to name a few!

We can also ponder the grace-filled fact that the Creator-God of the universe "from the beginning chose you for salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13). And before time began, He desired to make you His own. (Eph. 1:4)

The extraordinary reality is that, through no merit or worthiness of our own, we have been chosen by Him! We are "beloved by the Lord" and enjoy the benefits of being part of His family. This glorious and astounding truth should fill our lives with gratitude and humility.

His choosing is the source of our identity. Peter tells us (1P 2:9-10) that we are chosen, precious, called to live in His marvelous light, redeemed as God's own possession. He has set us apart for His purpose. We are treasured and are of such value that His own Son's blood was the price He paid for us.



No matter how others view you, God values you so much that it was His choice to love you and to make you part of His family. Remember your real identity... His portion.



Following a Clear Path

I was born and raised Catholic. I married a Catholic and baptized my daughter Catholic. I could say an impressive Hail Mary prayer and could recite the seven sacraments without even thinking. I was not familiar with the Bible. I was only familiar with the Catholic doctrines. I had been to several funerals in this church including my father and brother but did not find any satisfaction in death but it was all I knew.

My favorite Aunt Jeanne Alexander was Presbyterian and an active member of Memorial Park Church. Her funeral was held in her church and was conducted by Doug Pratt. I didn't know what to expect since I had never been to a Presbyterian funeral before. When Doug was talking to the congregation about how Jesus was there to escort Aunt Jeanne to her heavenly home, I started to cry; I started to sob.

My understanding of death from a Catholic perspective was the person dies and the soul goes to purgatory and has to be prayed out to get to heaven. Purgatory is defined by Merriam Webster as "as intermediate state after death for purification, where souls destined for heaven are cleansed of the effects of sin through temporary suffering". What a dark image of death that always gave me. Imagine what a glorious image I had of Jesus escorting my favorite aunt.

It was such a beautiful image for me to think of Jesus having an active role in seeing her home. As Doug was speaking, I felt a warm sensation run through my body from head to toe. I couldn't stop sobbing. My loyal Catholic mother elbowed me and told me to get control of myself, that was not how we acted in church. I couldn't stop; I was feeling the Holy Spirit warming my body and awakening me.

I was very intrigued with this Presbyterian point of view.

A couple of years later, my daughter enrolled in the MPC preschool. I was spending more time in this church and was being pulled to attend regularly. But what would my Catholic mother think? I was torn between churches. What was I to do? I prayed and prayed asking for God to open my heart and assist me in making my decision to show me a clear path.

One morning I woke up at dawn and was walking in my neighborhood when I came upon a flock of turkeys. These turkeys were blocking my way. As I approached them, they didn't run away. They separated and created a path for me to walk through. They actually watched me as I walked by.



Once again, I had that warm felling flow through my body. I had been praying to God to create a clear path and here it was. My heart was so happy. There was my answer. I started attending Memorial Park Church and became a member of the church in 2004. My mother was very supportive and knew that it was the right thing for me. I have been involved in the church ever since and have served as a deacon. I enjoy deepening my relationship with Jesus and shining his light in all that I do.

Blessings,
Lynn Sosovicka



Summer Bible Study Jesus, Our Savior Who Prays

Thursdays June 4 through July 23 at 10AM
in the Edinburgh Room.

Prayer was of utmost importance to Jesus. We see that clearly in the gospels. In this study, we will consider 13 specific prayers of Jesus that are recorded in the gospels and see how they teach us to pray.



A prayer for today...

Lord,
I worry because I forget Your wisdom; I resent because I forget Your mercy; I covet because I forget Your beauty; I sin because I forget Your holiness; I fear because I forget Your sovereignty. You always remember me; help me to always remember You and all that You are.
Amen

From *Songs of Jesus* by Timothy Keller, July 3; Psalm 78:11

Come Thou Fount

Robert Robinson; traditional melody

*Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's redeeming love!*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.*

The writer of this hymn, Robert Robinson, was a headstrong and troublesome boy living a life of hardship and poverty. His dad died when he was 8 years old, and he became more unruly. When he turned 14, his mother sent him to London to be an apprentice to a barber, to instill some structure and sense of responsibility to his life. But he continued to be a troublemaker in London, and in fact, became a leader of a gang of defiant, rebellious young men.

When he was 17, he took his gang to a revival meeting where evangelist George Whitefield was preaching. Their intention was to disrupt the meeting and to mock "the deluded Methodists." But God works in mysterious ways and does not give up on people. Whitefield preached on the text from Matthew 3:7, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" These words pierced Robert's heart like an arrow. For weeks, he could think of nothing else. The Lord had begun to work in his heart although Robert's heart was not truly changed for another 3 years.



On December 10, 1755, Robert found what he described as "full and free forgiveness through the precious blood of Jesus Christ." The once willful youth now burned with a desire to know and serve God. He traveled to as many preaching services as he could, soaking in the words of the finest gospel preachers of that day.

Robert became a self-taught minister himself. Two years later, at the age of 22, he penned the words to this hymn to accompany his sermon for Pentecost Sunday. The first stanza is praise and adoration. The last two stanzas were his spiritual autobiography.

Later in life, his faith wavered and he grappled with periods of doubt. According to a well-known story, late in life, he had wandered from the faith. One day he was traveling by stagecoach and encountered a woman who was singing this hymn. Not knowing to whom she was speaking, she told the distraught man what an encouragement the hymn was to her. Ironically, she asked him if he liked the hymn. His eyes filled with tears and he replied, "Madam, I am the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then." She gently reminded him, "Sir, the 'streams of mercy' are still flowing." And the Lord used this encounter with his own hymn (and the willingness of a believer to speak a word) to restore him to faith.

Almost 270 years later, it still speaks to the universal Christian experience of joy in salvation as well as the ongoing struggle against our sinful nature. Robert's life is a reminder of the truths he penned, and his words continue to resound in churches around the world reminding us that no matter how often we waver in our faith, the Fount of every blessing calls us back and tunes our hearts to sing His grace.



Around the House- The leftover letters reveal this month's Scripture

M	D	W	A	S	H	E	R	O	N	N	O	I	S	I	V	E	L	E	T
I	F	P	C	C	S	O	U	P	M	U	G	S	O	V	A	S	E	E	H
C	T	O	B	U	H	R	D	E	B	E	Z	I	S	G	N	I	K	X	R
R	E	O	O	T	T	E	E	E	L	T	E	L	L	I	K	S	A	E	O
O	N	L	X	T	I	L	S	T	O	L	U	P	A	S	A	A	B	R	W
W	M	T	D	I	L	O	E	T	S	U	I	I	O	B	T	A	T	C	R
A	U	A	N	N	C	O	Y	R	O	I	R	R	Y	T	T	O	H	I	U
V	U	B	I	G	A	N	C	G	Y	F	N	R	G	B	P	U	T	S	G
E	C	L	I	B	N	C	N	K	R	E	D	A	V	K	P	A	E	E	S
E	A	E	R	O	D	Y	T	Y	E	N	H	R	C	L	S	R	L	B	I
T	V	T	R	A	Y	S	E	N	U	R	E	O	A	E	A	G	B	I	Y
P	R	A	Y	R	D	R	E	A	E	C	R	N	R	W	R	A	N	K	D
S	R	U	P	D	I	P	L	L	L	C	T	U	S	T	E	O	L	E	R
A	S	O	I	C	S	A	T	I	A	S	T	S	A	C	T	R	I	C	E
R	E	O	T	N	H	W	N	R	I	C	A	E	A	T	O	R	S	O	G
M	V	T	H	A	T	E	A	H	I	L	S	L	O	T	W	E	A	M	N
C	L	O	C	K	R	J	N	P	G	E	P	M	L	K	E	H	S	F	A
H	E	A	G	I	E	E	D	V	V	E	A	I	O	I	L	S	N	O	H
A	H	G	M	I	L	E	G	O	R	N	U	E	O	O	S	A	T	R	A
I	S	Y	K	P	M	O	L	I	U	Q	R	R	T	E	R	W	Q	T	N
R	K	O	U	A	E	S	F	D	R	Y	E	R	S	T	B	H	E	E	A
M	O	A	R	E	S	S	E	R	D	F	D	E	R	K	N	S	T	R	N
C	O	F	F	E	E	T	A	B	L	E	E	O	A	W	N	I	T	A	A
O	B	G	T	E	K	S	A	B	D	A	E	R	B	O	D	D	X	X	B



- AIR FRYER
- ARM CHAIR
- BANANA HANGER
- BAR STOOL
- BATHROOM SCALE
- BOOKSHELVES
- BREAD BASKET
- CANDLE
- CANDY DISH
- CANISTERS
- CHEST OF DRAWERS
- CLOCK



- COFFEE TABLE
- COMFORTER
- COOKIE JAR
- CROCKPOT
- CUTLERY
- CUTTING BOARD
- DISH WASHER
- DRESSER
- DRYER
- EXERCISE BIKE
- FIREPLACE
- FOOTLOCKER



- FRAMED PICTURES
- GLASSWARE
- GRILL
- KINGSIZE BED
- LAMP
- LAPTOP
- LAUNDRY BASKET
- LOVE SEAT
- MICROWAVE
- OTTOMAN
- PLANTS
- POOL TABLE

- QUILT
- RECLINER
- REFRIGERATOR
- SKILLET
- SOUP MUGS
- TELEVISION
- THROW RUGS
- TOWELS
- TV TRAYS
- VACUUM
- VASE
- WASHER

