

Lesson 4 in Unite, Renew, Revive Series

Theme of Lesson: Renew

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God’s own possession. You have become this people so that you may speak of the wonderful acts of the one who called you out of darkness into his amazing light. Once you weren’t a people, but now you are God’s people. Once you hadn’t received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” I Peter 2:9-10 (CEB)

A church may face an identity crisis. We can be a ministry, mission, movement, or even a museum. First Peter was written to churches scattered across Asia Minor that were going through an identity crisis. Peter is reminding them what it means to be a Christian and stresses the importance of being the church.

Question: What is “church”?

Question: What words would you use to describe Parkway?

Paul uses the term “chosen race”, not meaning an ethnicity, but echoing God’s words to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6b: “The Lord your God chose you to be his own treasured people beyond all others...” God took the initiative to establish the relationship, the same loving initiative by which God sent Jesus.

Question: How can we respond to God’s choice?

Question: How do we express the idea of grace to the “un-churched”?

Paul also calls us a royal priesthood and a holy nation. To be holy is to be set apart for God and to live differently than the world. We are God’s own possession. Acts 20:28b calls us “...God’s church, which he obtained with the death of his own Son.”

Question: How do we function in the world, but not of the world?

Question: How does Parkway show that we belong to God?

We enjoy many privileges in Christ, but those privileges bring responsibility. We are saved to serve. We are called to share the gospel.

Question: What does it mean to move from darkness to “his amazing light”?

Question: Why do we gather to worship?

To help us understand the privilege of our identity in Christ, Peter reminds us that once we were not a people, but now we are God’s people and we have received his mercy. Mercy precedes grace and makes it possible.

Question: How can Parkway invite others to join us?

Question: How can our campus help us to be more inviting?