

I remember years ago my family going on vacation. We visited the beautiful escape of Puerto Rico Mexico. Now for those of you who have done a lot of traveling you know that the experience of a good vacation doesn't come unless you choose your vacation carefully. That's exactly what we did.

There's a lot of preceding work that needs to be done before a successful vacation can be taken. For months, there is the planning phase. There's the phase where you're systematically choosing the destination.

I remember, we would get online for hours and simply hunt. We would look for pricing that was affordable, beaches that were beautiful, and an experience that was eclectically cultural.

There are a lot of considerations that have to be made when planning vacations. You have to plan what you're going to wear, how much your budget is...you even have to rearrange your every day life at home—like work and family—in order to make room for that blessed week or two that you're going to spend away. One will find that if there is not careful planning ahead of time, there will inevitably be a greater likelihood of unwanted surprises along the way.

How many of you have had those unplanned expenses arise on a trip or a vacation?

We all have.

That's life. Things never go as planned, and there's always something unexpected that tries to squeeze its way in there. However, even though this is always the case to some degree, some simple and careful foresight can be of great service. Bypassing travel woes, airplane fairs, and on the ground tourism faux pas can be kept to a minimum by simple utilization of some easily pre-planned management.

We don't just do this with vacations, we do this with life. Even if you're a fly-by the seat of your pants, in the moment type person, you still have to plan somewhat to be that way. There's certain tools or gear you have to equip yourself with or forgo when undertaking any kind of life adventure.

And we do this because God made us this way. God made us to be creatures that would reflect His image. He made us to be creative, but also to be calculated. A small bit of calculation can help us in choosing our next step.

We can parallel our life's journey to these vacations or planned elements. In some regard, if we don't know where we're going, then we aren't going to know how to live RIGHT NOW.

There are many people who are simply coasting in life because they're living their life from forward to back—beginning to end. This isn't bad necessarily, but if we have no idea of where we want our life to end up, then we won't be effective in living in the now.

You wouldn't want to spend thousands of dollars on a vacation and wind up on some mucky landfill-trashy island, that is known for it's insect life—now would you? You wouldn't want to work long hard days at the office, accumulating wealth, assets, and a portfolio and wind up finding that it was all for not. Would you?

The problem is, is not that people aren't planning. All of you are planning. The things is, is most people are not planning in the right way. We've got the wrong destination in mind, the wrong future, and the wrong purpose. But it is very clear in scripture that this is not God's plan for our lives. God communicates crystal clear His purposes, His agendas and His logical conclusions for our life. Those of you who are out there looking for your meaning, your purpose, your use...God doesn't keep it a secret from you.

What we have to do is not live life front to back, but back to front. We have to look at how we are to END in God's scheme and than reverse engineer our lives back to the now and determine how we're going to live now.

EG: Take your tombstone for example. If you want it to read that you were a "Family man—you loved your wife, and you were a man of God; upholding the highest integrity and faith in all things..." If this is what you want your life's conclusion to be, then you have to adopt some life practices in the now. You're going to have to cut back some time at work. You're going to have to forego some expensive comforts that sometimes are awarded to career men. You're going to have to forego some partnerships that may advance you financially, but are simply dishonest. If you want to love your wife, and raise your kids in a way that honors God, then you are going to have to put some things in place; date nights, vacations, camping adventures, times of teaching and training your children etc.

In this way, we can see our end result causes us to be intentional about our NOW.

This is how 1 Peter 2:1-12 is going to run. I believe that Peter is going to give us our goal 1st. He's going to paint for us the picture of what God wants of us, and then he's going to reverse engineer it and tells us how to get there. If you will, Peter is going to describe your vacation spot to you, and then he's going to lay the foundations for how you are to arrive there.

1 Peter 2:1-3; "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

Here we are given the picture. Can you imagine your life with out malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, or slander of **Any kind**? How many of you hold things in your heart toward others that you're not proud of? There's those days when others cut in on us in traffic and there it is **malice**. How many of you have been deceitful...you've bent the truth, told a white lie, or misled something just a bit to make yourself appear in a better light? The truth is we all have. We're all hypocrites. Not just Christians, which so many

people love to label us as such. We all are. Everyone says things that they don't follow through with. We've all made promises that we haven't kept. We have all talked a bit more proudly about our abilities than we ought, only to find ourselves humbled when people were able to see the real us come into play.

And how many of you have envied? Broke one of the 10 commandments? You've coveted, and wanted what someone else has? We all have. Look at cell phones, computers, cars etc. You know why they are increasingly developing, and there's always a need for the next big thing? ENVY! It's you—it's me. We drive the consumer market. They sell to us, and they exploit our envy.

And this is why Peter calls us babies'. He tells us to turn away from these itty bitty cravings that don't and will never satisfy, and he encourages us to grow up in our salvation.

And here we go...

Here's the principle. Peter says that we are to grow up in our salvation. But he's talking about an end here, a conclusion, a goal. How can we grow up into it unless we gain a glimpse of what we're growing toward? Then he goes on to say "Now that we've tasted that the Lord is good." What's good? What have we tasted?

I mean Peter has gone into our salvation a bit in chapter 1. We've talked about this in the past weeks. This is why Peter uses the word "Therefore" in vs. 1. He's drawing us back to what was said previously. And in chapter 1 Peter detailed the sacrifice of Jesus' death and resurrection. He detailed how we are dealt with sufferings and how our salvation is an eternal hope, but the landscape is not painted clearly enough in Peter's mind. Peter doesn't think we get it all that clearly yet, because Peter is going to move into more benefits, and he is going to describe a greater Vacation package if you will. Peter's going to paint a picture for us of the Kingdom, and Christ's work on the cross.

Remember, we've just tasted it. We're still in the milk phase, and now Peter wants to hand us the meat. Also remember, that we're being led by a teacher of experience. Remember Peter? He walked with Jesus. He heard Jesus teach. He saw Jesus' miracles. There are only 11 other men that lived throughout history that had such a close view into Jesus and His works. Peter, in walking with Jesus should have been an expert in salvation. Yet we see time and time again that Peter wasn't. He constantly misunderstood Jesus. Why? Because he didn't understand Jesus' goal. Peter was entitled. He thought he deserved something for following Jesus. Peter was stubborn and proud and thought He was Jesus' teacher. Peter was arrogant and immature when he denied Jesus' words in telling him that he'd deny God three times. Yet he did it anyway.

And Peter was the one who would always raise royal cane when Jesus would explain his mission on earth. Peter could not accept that Jesus did in fact come to die. And in misunderstanding his mission, Peter got the means, **THE NOW**, all wrong. And this same thing can happen to you and I as well. If we don't get Jesus' mission and His ends

nailed down, then we too are going to become disillusioned and lost within the means—**THE NOW. We need to listen to Peter. We need to listen and heed his wisdom because he's a man who knew failure in this area well!!!**

Therefore, this teaching is going to be cyclical. We're going to come back to the sanctification and purified life of the Christian at the end of the message—vs. 1-3, but we can't start here. We have to look at verse 1-3 as our goal. But how do we get there?

Our natural flesh doesn't desire God, and we don't naturally depend on Him. Our natural bent is not to move away from hypocrisy, envy and the like. Our natural bent is to move TOWARD these things. We're naturally prone to depend on ourselves and our abilities. SO....we have to understand vs. 4-10 before we will WANT to OBEY vs. 1-3. The following verses are going to describe Christ's identity as well as yours and mine.

1 Peter vs. 4 reads; "As you come to him, the living Stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—."

This imagery and language is pivotal because Peter is alluding to all believers as being a foundational part of God's house. You'll remember, that God used to reside in a temple made of stones, but in II Cor. 3:3 he tells us that by Christ's sacrifice, God takes up residence in the human heart—we are His temple and place of residence. So Peter is making an argument for our union with Christ. **We are now the vessels through which God works through and lives within.** That means through our believing in Jesus, that Jesus deems it right, acceptable, and permissible for people to access His glory and His character through you and I. Vs. 5 says that, "you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Hold this thought as I build on it a bit...

The priests in the Old Testament offered sacrifices. These sacrifices symbolized a payment for sin for the people. After the sacrifice was made, the people would ceremonially wash in the water basin known as the laver. This symbolized their cleanness before God. Now, the priest would also have access to the inner part of the tabernacle. Here he could feast upon the shewbread—symbolizing the Word of God. He could be illumed by the lampstand—symbolizing the Holy Spirit and how He teaches us to understand God's word, and he could offer prayers and commune with God.

Through this practice, once a year he would enter the Holiest place to pour the atoning blood over the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant on a day called Yom Kippur. Hidden within the ark, were the 10 commandments, the budded rod of Aaron the High Priest, and the manna. The 10 commandments represented a perfect standing before God, which no human other than Jesus has been able to follow. The budded rod of Aaron represented our righteous standing as believers before God the Father. Because of sin our status of standing blameless before God was broken, and thus the priesthood had to be

formed to stand between God and us. Lastly the manna symbolized God's provision as he provided miraculous food from heaven to sustain Israel in the dessert.

In Peter alluding to our new status before God as a holy priesthood in Jesus, he is telling us of Christ's accomplishments. Christ perfectly obeyed the 10 commandments, thus He became our priest able to stand before God. Therefore, the manna, or the provisions of heaven are at our disposable through Jesus. This includes the forgiveness of our sins through Jesus' perfect sacrifice. Now this is huge when we think about this in light of Christ living in us and through us.

With Jesus living in us and through us we have access to His life. This means we can have Him live through us. Therefore, in love, He upholds the commandments through us, and for us. He cleans and washes us and gives us the ministry of coming before His throne with confidence. We are now free to commune with Him through His Word, and He teaches us all about His nature. Thus we can reflect His character.

Now, think about this responsibility in light of vs. 1-3: "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

We can most definitely see how the LORD is good in this. He's given us back what we deservedly LOST. Through our malice, deceit, etc. we lost the kingdom. We broke the 10 commandments, we lost our confidence before God, and we lost the right to share in His kingdom and provisions. But God!

God stepped in and restored us. Not only that. He lives in US! This is huge to us ridding ourselves of fleshly destroyers like envy, or slander. If we see our high calling, as vessels of God, we will be all the more inspired to use our bodies' and lives wisely. If we think that lust, addiction, and fleshly gratification like greed and envy are all there is—that's the goal—then we'll act like it. But when a greater destination is drawn out for us—a greater vacation spot—we'll drop our old plans and take up new ones willingly.

BUT...

Notice Peter said men rejected him. Men rejected Jesus. This vision of Jesus and ourselves was rejected, and has been rejected by us. It's our propensity.

Humans, remember, we said last time were the self-appointed, self-proud, self-indulgent and self-convinced assessors of Christ and His worth. And they ascertained after close examination that Jesus was an unworthy stone and they crucified Him. He was unfit to be the cornerstone of the religious house which they assumed that God would want to build. And so Christ was rejected by men, continues to be rejected by men and yet it says in verse 4 He was chosen and precious in the sight of God.

The answer to why people don't willingly lay down their old stuff and move past their simple milk in regard to Jesus, is because they don't regard Him as the "Stone" that holds everything together. They don't regard Him as precious.

Here Peter quotes Isaiah; that Christ was not only an elect stone as well as a living stone from verse 4, but a precious cornerstone. Precious, an interesting word, that Greek word is used in Luke 7 and verse 2 to speak of the centurion's servant, you remember, who was sick and it says he was precious to his master, it means valuable...it means valuable. It means irreplaceable. So Christ was not only a stone elect but a stone irreplaceable.

And may I suggest to you right here at this point that we have here what I believe to be the bottom line characteristic of a true Christian? And I have mentioned this to you in previous messages and here's the text I've mentioned. If you want to find out if a person is a true Christian, it starts here. To you who believe Christ is...what?...precious. A true Christian will be marked by affection for Jesus Christ. He loves Christ. That is a privilege given to him, to enjoy that love, to exhilarate in that love, to rejoice in that love, to abound in that love. That is a privilege. It is characteristic of every true Christian to have a great affection for Jesus Christ. He becomes precious.

Listen to what He said in John 8:42, "If God were your Father," in other words, if you were truly a child of God, "you would love Me." That's the bottom line. That is the bottom line. The way you identify a Christian is not have they made a past decision, but do they have a love for Christ. If you were of My Father you would love Me...that's basic. In John's gospel chapter 14 from verse 15 on, "If you love Me you'll keep My commandments." And then verse 21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father and I will love him." You see being a Christian is all about loving God, loving Christ and obeying Him.

Verse 23, "If anyone loves Me he'll keep My Word and My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him." Then verse 24, "He who does not love Me does not keep My words." And you can see that salvation, obedience and love are all the same. You can speak of a person as a Christian because they believe in Christ. You can speak of a person as a Christian because they as a characteristic of life obey Christ. Or you can speak of a person as a Christian because they love Christ. That's basic...loving Christ.

It is clear to see that if we don't deem Christ as precious, or love Him, then we will naturally fall into the sins mentioned in vs. 1-3. This is crucial, because in our fight against sin, we can't start with sin, we have to start with savoring. We have to savor Christ. If we taste that He is good and recognize Him and all His benefits, then envy and the like will hold no place.

Did you get that? This is the point I'm trying to make. You can't start by trying to defeat sin, unless you know the tools by which to defeat it. Your identity as a part of God's priesthood—his worshippers—his home—is the only foundation you have. So defeating sin has nothing to do with your "power or willing" it's has everything to do with His

power and willing within you. Therefore, to defeat sin, you have to SAVOR His work. To defeat sin, you have to savor HIM.

For these fleshly things tend to erode our lives, where as Christ being referred to as the *akrogoniaion*—Cornerstone—refers to a stone that keeps all angles straight. In other words if you want a building or a life to align, then you have to first set Christ in the foundation. He will cause the building's progress to align as it moves along in its construction. Without Jesus, things will erode and crumble. He's not only needed, He's a necessity.

Vs. 6...

"Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone." That is taken from Isaiah 28:16...Isaiah 28:16. The stone he has in mind is Christ. Christ called in verse 4 a living stone is here called the cornerstone. He is a living stone in the sense that He is the foundation of His spiritual house upon which we are built as living stones. He is a living stone in the sense that He is a risen from the dead stone, and thus is alive. Now we find that He is not only the living stone foundation but He is the cornerstone. A very important truth. In fact that text of Isaiah 28:16 is also quoted by Paul in Romans 9:33. It was a very familiar and a very important Old Testament text. It spoke of the Messiah. It spoke of the coming Christ. And it promised that when the Christ came He would be the cornerstone to fashion the new temple of God, the new house of God.

"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed, he who believes in it will not be disturbed." Or literally, you know what the Hebrew says, "will not be in a hurry."

What do you mean? Here's what he means. Will not be in a hurry— run away out of fear because his God has failed him, that's the idea. You'll never be confused. You'll never be ashamed. You'll never be disappointed. And you'll never have to run in fear because your God has disappointed you.

By laying His life down, Christ simultaneously removed your shame. He's removed all fear. It happened in one fluid motion and a single act. Now get this...

You know why we envy others...Shame and Fear!

You know why we slander, and are hypocrites...Shame and Fear!

You know why we deceive and lie...Shame and Fear!

We have an innate desire to "save face." We want others to believe we are better than we are, so we crave the hottest fad that will make us look cool. We make fun of those who are less cool than us, so that we can look cool. We lie and deceive so that we can look cool...making ourselves into the image before men, as the image we'd want them to perceive.

Deeper still...we lie and deceive and do all these things because deep down we know there is something wrong. We're not cool. If we believed we were all right, we wouldn't need to add all this stuff. It's because deep down we sense our sin that we continue to try and cover it up. It's SHAME!!!

We're still so ashamed of those things that lie deep in our hearts. You don't have to tell someone they're a sinner for them to know it. They already know it. By sharing with them their sin, you're putting a name to something that they already know, and you're calling it out of them. Often times they, and you have repressed it so far beneath your "saving face" and appearances that you up and convince yourself that it's not there anymore. But it is.

Without Jesus—our necessity—you are a law breaker—the 10 commandments. Without Jesus—our necessity—you have lost access to God—the priestly role. Without Jesus—our necessity—you have lost Kingdom provision—manna.

You have willingly separated yourself from freedom, His benefits, and greater still—HIM...

Now.....with this said.....Are we...are you, getting closer to wanting to WILLINGLY give up your baby like ways?

You see I don't have to tell you to give them up...I just have to present you with something better—Jesus—a better vacation.

The Virgin Islands, rather than the dangers of the Congo.

Are you feeling that pull to come out of your sin? Are you feeling the nudge to lay down your life—your shame? You should be. You're getting a better product if you want to use marketing language. Jesus. I'm not convincing you. He is. This is His word opened to you and inviting you in. Jesus is inviting you to be part of a better story. Granted, following Jesus is not a quick sell, because Jesus demands a life of sacrifice. However when you see what you're giving up—your shame, your fear, and you see what you're gaining—His perfection, His leadership—the sacrifice pails in light of the reward.

You're not only getting Jesus, you're getting His leadership and this brings a whole new dimension of blessings. Vs. 7 "Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.'"

The capstone. That means, wherever you go in the building He's on top. This is paralleled with the thought of RELIGION. Wherever you go in religion some man/women/or thing has been placed on top, and the one problem with that is, that men/women/or things have the same problem you have. They, or it, have fallen short of the 10 commandments, the priesthood, and the manna. They can't meet the standard.

Jesus comes into this mess and says “you didn’t believe me, but remember I am the missing piece.” I’m the cause of all the brokenness, not by initiation but by absence. Jesus causes every horror in the world not by his participation, but by our willing denunciation. This is how verses like Isa. 45:17 can capture God saying “I cause evil.” This is how He does it. It’s like a magnet pushing away another magnet. Christ is moving on the world in love, and His love is inspiring the chosen to draw to him, because their magnets are faced correctly, but his love is also pushing at the rebellion. As He moves in love, others jump in rebellion. For without love’s pursuit you can’t have rebellious retreat.

So Christ is on a mission to reveal His “Capstone” status to people. Sadly even the church rebels against this. So many people in the church today are saying no to eldership, deaconship, church government, discipline, discipleship, orderly worship and the preaching of God’s word. I agree that these rejections have been caused by abuses for sure, but we need to realize that these things also have righteous origin and right description in the WORD of God.

I’ve met many missionaries and Christians who say they follow Jesus as their capstone, yet reject His Word as inherent. Ridiculous. Impossible. They reject leadership and elder models. They reject church discipline, orderly worship, and the preaching of the word. In one sentence they’ll say they are under Christ’s leadership and yet they deny and rebel against the very systems that Christ labored to establish.

These things are not to be rejected but welcomed. Satan seeks to pervert these things and divert us in our walk with Jesus. We don’t need to fight against these things, we need to fight for the righteous upholding of these things. When we’re authoritarian in our leadership, we remove Christ. On the opposed, when we say “it’s just about Jesus” and nothing else—implying that His system and church through human authorities isn’t good—we remove Christ’s capstone leadership as well.

Churches, biblical eldership, and right discipline and discipleship were put in place by God to keep you safe. Christ leads his church like a decorated general. He loves his troops, and he forms His battalions, his forces, and his battle plan in such a way that will advance His army and protect His soldiers.

My caution is to those in leadership and those following. If you’re not leading, with a reverence for Christ as your capstone, then you’re destroying those around you along with yourself. If you are not submitting willfully to Godly authority and serving with your whole heart as a follower, then you are destroying those around you along with yourself.

Go back to verse 1-3 where it calls us to grow up in our salvation. These verses refer to us as babies, and what do babies need...parents!!! Babies need leadership, guidance, and training. Like sheep, we are not that smart and we need Jesus and His wisdom to guide us. This includes setting up our churches, homes and communities in the way that He lays out. So when he says to you—BABY—“the father is to lead the home, and the

women to be the helper,” just listen as if it is your parent telling you vegetables are good for you. When Jesus says to you—BABY—“men and elders lead the church in integrity, and teach, admonish, discipline and rebuke openly and regularly”—don’t fight. Just do it.

We as leaders need to be brave enough and humble enough to place enough confidence in God’s word to lead well. Sometimes this means saying things to people that for a time may hurt or refine them. And this always means to lead in love and servant hood.

We as followers need to be open to humbly growing in our frailties by accepting God’s rule through human leaders, and accepting their correction as coming from God Himself. This is crucial to us growing away from our sin. **We need to embrace Christ’s indwelling in us, along with His capstone leadership. This will determine how we act and where we go.**

Peter then moves into vs. 8 where he refers to Jesus as “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” Listen to what Jesus said in Luke 20 verse 18, “Every one who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls it will scatter him like dust or literally grind him to powder.” And why does this happen? Verse 8 says, “They stumble because they are disobedient to the Word.” What Word? The gospel. They’re disobedient to the gospel. Unbelief and disobedience reflect the same unsaved state. Faith or believing and obedience reflect the same saved condition. One writer says, “Christ is the great unavoidable, you will come to the rock, you either come to Him as an elect precious cornerstone or you come to Him as a stumbling stone and a crushing rock of offense.” He is either the cornerstone or *the petra skandalon*, the barrier rock against which men are crushed. And why does He become a rock of judgment? Because men reject the Word, they don’t obey the Word. What is the Word? The gospel message. “And to this doom they were also appointed.” They got exactly what their choice demanded.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes Jesus is foolishness to Jews and to Gentiles, because the Jews seek signs and wonders and the Gentiles seek knowledge, learning and worldly understanding. This is true today. There are some of you who are prone to Jewish thinking and Jesus makes you stumble. You struggle with faith, so God’s gotta’ always be performing in some kind of miracle, wonder, healing, or something of this nature. You are chasing signs and you’ve lost your first love—Jesus.

You Gentile thinkers seek to understand everything. Jesus crushes you as well. You like bible trivia, hard facts, and spreadsheets, evolution. You love theology, which we all should, but you misuse it and make it central. You lack faith, and you’re trying to save yourself by seeking to have everything make sense. You have lost your first love—Jesus. You’re not seeking to know Him, you’re seeking out of selfish motives to cover your shame with how well-learned you are.

This is why Christ tells us that he makes us fall. He interrupts our current course, our current planning, and our current way of thought. We all have vacations, destinations,

and goals and aspiration for which we strive. We all have a mission or destiny that we believe is ours. But like the recipients of Peter's letter, you may or may not be thinking of your destination in the right way, thus you may be heading somewhere that is not too desirable.

God, through Peter interrupts you today. Vs. 8 says, "They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for." This word "Destined" is used in Acts 13:47 to mean "Apportioned for." It means to lay up in the heart, resolve in the mind (Lk. 1:66). In Mt. 5:15 it's used to explain how God sets a person in a particular order or place as to His choosing. And I think this is an important piece to add to Christ's leadership, and the previously taught fact about the indwelling of Christ. For those of you who are leading your life, and determining your course, you may be surprised that Jesus has a very different destiny for you. If you continue on in your rebellion, you'll wind up in a vacation spot you didn't plan on. It's a lot hotter there than you would have hoped.

It's this! **By His leadership over you and in you, Christ has destined, apportioned and resolved in His mind to do something with you.** It's something very specific. If you miss His working in you, or you miss His leadership over you, then you will miss His destiny for you. You'll get caught up in where you're going and this will drive you to envy, deceit, and all the not so pleasant characteristics mentioned in vs. 1-3. You'll join the cutthroat game of pursuit like everyone else and you'll miss God's destiny.

But God's destiny is very different than a mere direction or course. I want to make it personal. Now we come to you. You may be wondering about your destiny. You may even be searching God's heart to find your purpose. You may or may not be confused about it, but I assure you, that most of you are probably misled. For in vs. 9-10 God clearly gives us our destiny. It's one and the same for all of us.

Listen up. For the answer to your questions about life are going to be summed up in one statement:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Your destiny was and is to be a chosen child of God. This means you and your place in history is not an afterthought. Your destiny is to be a royal priesthood—meaning suitable for a King. This refers to your salvation as your destiny. You were made to be a Holy Nation and a people belonging to God. You were destined for God's ownership; His deed and title over you. You were destined for His covenant and commitment to you. When God came to Abraham and said "I will" bless you, "I will" make you a great nation etc...this commitment didn't have YOU at the center. It had GOD. HE WILL! It had

nothing to do with what “YOU WILL”, it has everything to do with HIM. It’s His promise, and His word.

And HE says that you are to declare His praises, for He’s brought you out of darkness and into His marvelous light. Notice something here. These are not statements of DIRECTION or DESTINATION. These are statements of being. God’s destiny for your life is whom you become, not where you are going. He’s got that part all wrapped up. He wants you to focus on the type of person you are becoming; a person of PRAISE and WORSHIP.

You know where your destiny is based:

“Once you were not a people.”—but now you are.

“Once you did not receive mercy—*eleeo means to hold back your deserved affliction, alleviate your suffering and debts*—but now you have.

You have been brought from death into life. This was your destiny. This is your calling. Your calling is to allow Christ to live in You, to Lead you, and to redeem you, and others in the process. This is who you are. Did you catch that? You worry like me, so much about where you’re going and where you’re going to end up. What does this bring?

Shame...you didn’t do what you thought you would?

Fear...will I get there?

Did you catch the cycle? We’re back to the NOW HOW SHALL WE LIVE part of vs. 1-3. We are to abstain from immorality, sinful desires and the like; we are to crave spiritual milk. As it was stated at the beginning, this is a hard command to obey unless you see that you have something better. BECOMING IS BEHOLDING. Meaning, if you don’t see God’s plan and his destiny, you won’t have any desire to become it. You need to see the vision. You’re going to keep WANTING to waste yourself on fruitless passions until you see something more pleasurable.

In this way I’ve presented you with better things to lust after. Lust is not bad, just misdirected. Don’t lust after what others have. Don’t cover your shame by trying to follow others. Lust after Jesus and His character, leadership and infilling...desire that.

Vs. 11-12 tells us that “people will see your life”—evangelism. They’ll see not your defensive posture against sin, but your OFFENSIVE posture toward God. They will not even be able to accuse you of wrong doing when they observe your righteously lustful life. And they’ll be drawn into their destiny through observing yours; “they may glorify God on the day He visits us.” WORSHIP.

Do you see how this offensive pursuit toward God is more motivating than our defensive degrade away from sin? We see that Christ is BETTER, and that’s why we’re persuaded to follow. Our war with sin is not trying not to do something. That’s just self-willing—

that's an attempt to glorify yourself. "Look how strong I am." No, seeing Christ as better will cause depending. Depending on Him.

When you see yourself in this light, there's a respect in which you've already become like Christ. Because of His blood, He sees you as beloved, chosen, loved, and holy. You've been set in heavenly places. You're a citizen of heaven. There's a NOW and NOT YET to your completion. But if you don't understand what God has made you already, you will become like Christ for the wrong reasons and in the wrong ways. You'll strive. You'll work to try and be like Him—and you'll fail. If you know you're like Him already, you'll rest. In a posture of rest and completion you can live free; out from underneath your performance-pressure you are free to obey the great commandments: LOVE!!!!

LOVE is obliterated with Works-performance sanctification. You're not concerned about anything but your own place in heaven. You can't truly care for someone else. LOVE is also obliterated if you don't get a picture of Christ. You're going to live by rule number 1 "YOURSELF." You'll think your desires, your flesh, and your sin are the most satisfying things, and you'll strive after them—Selfish. To fill your need. In both cases people and God become a way to achieve your ends and your pleasure.

If you recognize that HE's your end and pleasure and it's already done, you're free to receive, serve and bless others with no thought of how they might benefit you because you're already full. In this way, by submitting to His leadership, His indwelling in you, and His destiny through you, you'll conquer sin.

That's what it means to taste of his deep spiritual milk and riches.

“NOW THAT YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GOOD—NOW THAT YOU'VE TASTED WHAT HIS LEADERSHIP BRINGS TO YOUR SHAKY LIFE—NOW THAT YOU'VE TASTED THE POWER OF HIS INDWELLING SPIRIT—“
repent of your life of sin and follow Him.

REPENT OF YOUR SHALLOW DESIRES. YOUR WEAK ENVY. YOUR VAIN DECEIT. IT HAS NO PLACE IN OUR HEARTS, WHEN WE GET A GLIMPSE AT WHAT CHRIST OFFERS AND AT WHO CHRIST IS.



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