

40 DAYS OF *prayer*

WEEK 3

HIS NOW

John 15:16

God created us to be His possession and for His glory. However, sin separated us from the holy God, and all of us fall short of His glory. But through God's grace, we have been justified freely through the redemption that came through Jesus Christ. Because of what Jesus did on the Cross, we are now reconciled with our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. As joint heirs with Christ, we share the "glory of Christ," which God the Father gave to Jesus. Hence, we are now His! We are His chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, special possessions, sheep, messengers, and masterpieces.

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HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE

JOHN 15:16

Frodo: "I wish the Ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened."

Gandalf: "So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us. There are other forces at work in this world, Frodo, besides that of evil. Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, in which case you were also meant to have it. And that is an encouraging thought."

—J. R. R. Tolkien

This work of fiction by Tolkien illustrates the reality that Jesus explains in John 15:16: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."

We were meant to be His people. We are appointed to bear fruit. He is the One we belong to, and He is orchestrating the sequence and events of our lives so that our lives produce eternal results (fruit that lasts). You are His, and He has given you the time you have to impact eternity. That is an encouraging thought.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Father, we are privileged to belong to You. You are the source of any fruit that our lives produce. When we look more like Your Son than the day before, this is Your work in us. When we impact other believers with love, encouragement, or equipping, You are the source of that fruit. When we give gospel access to the lost and they respond to the truth, You are the one appointing that relationship. May we be led by Your Spirit daily so that all our resources and all our relationships bring glory to the name of Jesus. Amen.

HIS ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

1 PETER 2:5

Do you feel unworthy, out of place, or not good enough? The truth is, we all have feelings and emotions that sometimes make us feel that we are unwanted or unloved. We think having a big title, a million friends, the perfect relationship, or a bunch of money will make us feel worthy and loved. But the sad truth is, none of these things will make us worthy. But don't worry. Because of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, He opened an entrance for every believer to be in the presence of the Father through their faith. Jesus made you worthy!

You have direct access into God's holy presence, and it's not because of who you are or what you have done. It is because God loves you and thinks of you as a member of His holy priesthood. You have been accepted in Christ through your faith. You are now His ambassador, entrusted with the gospel. And you can come boldly into His presence, offering sacrifices of praise. As you live here on earth, you represent another kingdom—God's Kingdom. You are a stone set aside for God's specific project. So, remember—always remember—you are not alone. You are worthy, and no matter what, you are always loved in the presence of God.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank You for choosing me and giving me direct access to Your holy presence. Thank You for making me worthy. I know I can do all things through You, and I know You have great plans for my life—plans to use me to advance Your Kingdom. I praise You, Lord. Thank You for Your love, Your mercy, Your forgiveness, and most of all, for Your Son, Jesus. Please continue to humble my heart to bring others into Your presence, telling everyone they are loved, not alone, and they, too, are worthy. I pray all of this in Your Son's name. Amen.

HIS HOLY NATION

DEUTERONOMY 26:19

Have you ever been the last one picked? Teams are being chosen, and one by one the people next to you get put on their respective sides. With each passing selection, the knot in your stomach expands. *Will I ever get chosen?* On the other hand, have you ever had the privilege of being the first one picked? When you hear your name called out before all the others, your chest swells with pride at the honor you are receiving.

Israel was God's pick. Out of all the nations on earth, God said, *You are the one I am going to use to be on my side and reveal to the world who I am and what I am about.* What an honor! What a privilege! As we fast-forward to the New Testament, in Jesus Christ we find out that we, as the Church, become the ones who are picked by God. We are now the consecrated people who God has chosen to reveal who He is to the world.

What is unique to being picked by God as part of His holy nation is that we are built not to hold on to our position as God's chosen with pride in our own status but to serve and bless every other person and people on earth. Like Israel, we are blessed so that we can be a blessing. Being part of this holy nation comes with the responsibility to bless others and serve out of self-sacrificial love.



REFLECTION PRAYER

God, we thank You that in Jesus, You have picked us and we are on Your team, a holy nation and a royal priesthood. Thank You for inviting us into loving relationship with You. We are so grateful. Help us not to be prideful in our position as Your people, but instead, with hearts full of gratitude, help us bless those around us who do not yet know You. Give us the strength to sacrifice out of the richness of Your blessings in our lives to serve those who are still far from You. Amen.

HIS SPECIAL POSSESSION

DEUTERONOMY 14:2

As an introvert, there are many times I am content to observe and not stand out. I'm happy with serving in the background and blending in. It can be mindless in the chaos; it can be comfortable when everything else seems so drastically changing and radical. It's sometimes even easier that way, especially in this present world when it seems like any opinion or stance you take is both criticized and up for ridicule.

But right now, the truth about God is so blurred. We have a desperate need for people to be different, to stand out. And although the idea of standing out is often not one of the attributes we love as Christians, especially for introverts, the world is rapidly pushing and trying to tell us to stay in its boundaries, to stay to the side.

This competitive, power-hungry world can make you feel like you've been set aside, rejected, and unwanted. But God has way better plans for each of us than that. He calls us to be set apart, which means to be given an assignment or special task, to be a special possession—His special possession. And there is something wonderfully comforting and powerful in the realization that He has personally chosen each one of us to represent Him here on the earth. So, may we stand bold in this truth and feel compelled to stand up and out for Christ, to show His love and mercy to all the world.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear Lord, we are not here to be set aside; we hear Your call to be set apart. Help us to believe in this calling from You, and give us Your strength and wisdom in all our moments to stand out. Help us know that we cannot influence the world when we look just like it. Wrap us in Your holiness, grace, and love so we may remember to whom we fully belong and who we were meant to be. Thank You for always and forever choosing us. Amen.

HIS SHEEP

JOHN 10:27

For most of my life, I have been an incredibly self-confident person—not caring what others thought about me or needing anyone’s approval in my life. Then one day, my world was rocked by something that came seemingly out of nowhere. My confidence was shaken, and I found myself wanting assurance from those closest to me that I would be OK. This was new territory for me, and it was uncomfortable to say the least. I began questioning every move I made.

In one of the many moments on my knees before Jesus, I cried out, asking for help with the insecurity I was experiencing, and I felt him say, “I am your assurance. Your assurance is in me.” I was reminded that as close and reliant as we feel to those around us, the reality is that all we need is Jesus. Throughout Scripture, we see Jesus calling person after person to stop relying on every earthly thing they have—their job, family, title, money—and to just follow Him.

As I got up off my knees that day, I felt a strength and a peace—an assurance—that I knew could only come from Him. And though there have been many times I’ve had to go back to that word and remind myself that my assurance is in God, I’m thankful that He is faithfully there, ready to speak over me again and again.

Listen to His voice. He knows you. Follow Him.



REFLECTION PRAYER

Precious Father, You are our Good Shepherd. You know Your sheep, and Your sheep know Your voice. Thank You for Your faithfulness to love, guide, and protect us. Thank You for speaking to us. Father, help us to recognize and listen to Your voice. Protect us from the temptation to listen to others’ voices that would lead us astray and that might lead us away from what Your will is over our lives. Give us the strength and courage to follow You wherever You lead, even when others don’t approve. Father, You are our assurance and our strength, and we give You praise. Amen.

HIS MESSENGERS

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18

God has given each of us the ministry of reconciliation. In this sense, reconciliation has to do with making peace between parties that are at odds with one another. As followers of Jesus, we have the great and sacred responsibility of helping others come to peace with God. Christ made such peace possible through His sacrifice on the Cross. His part is complete, and ours is ongoing.

Every person you see is a candidate for reconciliation. We regard no one as unworthy of God's mercy or from a "worldly point of view" (2 Cor. 5:16). It is easy to view humanity from a worldly perspective, but we must see them from heaven's point of view.

Recently, a family member was telling me about her neighbors. There was a single mom struggling to make a living, a young couple who had taken in the wife's father, a soon-to-be high school graduate who was excited about his future, and a host of others. As she told me about the circumstances of people's lives, she had one prevailing burden, and it was that they would know Jesus! We discussed how that burden could translate into something intentional. Most of these people did not attend church and were unlikely to do so anytime soon.

I asked, "What if your living room became their church?" We agreed it was a great option for the ministry of reconciliation she had been given. This is the ministry each of us is called to do. Go for it!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Lord, help us to see others the way You see them. Grant us opportunities to bring Your peace to the hurting and hopeless of the world. Use our efforts to bring real and lasting change in the lives of others. We're especially mindful of those we love deeply and who are without Christ in the world. Save them, Lord. Holy Spirit, tenderize the hearts of those on the receiving end of our efforts so they may hear Your gospel and respond positively. We ask You to do this wherever we labor for Your glory and the good of others. Amen.

HIS HANDIWORK

EPHESIANS 2:10

Some Bible translations use the word *handiwork* while others use *masterpiece* for the very same context. When I think about the word *masterpiece*, the first thing that comes to my mind is a jewelry store that displays many beautiful items. There are always some masterpieces of jewelry that are not on regular display but kept in a safe and secure glass box and positioned in a place that makes them visible to everyone who comes to the store. What makes these pieces of jewelry so special? Obviously, they are more expensive and beautiful. The reason they look so beautiful is because the goldsmith took so much time and effort to craft them into a beautiful masterpiece. Each one has to go through a vigorous process to get to the place of perfection.

Our Heavenly Father sees you and me the same way. He does not see our mess, but the beautiful masterpiece that He can make us through Christ Jesus. In the same way that a metal goes through rigorous process to become a masterpiece, our salvation through Jesus Christ initiates the process of becoming a masterpiece in God's hand. Our salvation through Jesus cleanses us from all impurities and sins. As we begin to grow in our personal relationship with Jesus, He sanctifies us and empowers us for His service and holy living. He will begin to unfold His plans in our lives so that He can fulfill His purpose through us for His glory. We are His handiwork!



REFLECTION PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for creating us for Your purpose and glory. Help us to submit to You and walk according to Your direction so that You can lead us into the wonderful plans that You have already created for us. You are the Potter, and we are the clay. Break us, mold us, and shape us to be beautiful and useful vessels in Your hands for Your Kingdom work. Help us to have the confidence and assurance that we are Your handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works for Your glory! In Jesus' name, amen.