

Word Notes Sunday 05/07/15 Living for God

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Texts: 1 Peter 2:9-12

You are different; though you live in this world you are of a different Kingdom. Sometimes we feel that more keenly as Kingdom clashes against kingdom. Peter writes to fellow Born Again Jews, scattered across Roman provinces in Northern Turkey who are experiencing persecution which has already started in Rome and is spreading. How to live out the life to which they and we have been called as they live among the “pagans”? For us today it may be more subtle: how do we square our understanding of God’s Law, His standards with temporal law that shifts and changes, with “progress” that challenges things that once seemed immovable? Things like marriage, where we are increasingly accused of being dinosaurs or worse – bigots! Peter addresses these concerns with some very practical help.

But that’s not Peter’s starting point. Look at Chapters 1 and 2, it’s no accident of composition that Peter first encourages us at the outset to praise God for the new life we have through Jesus. Scripture tells us that without God, without the HS it is impossible to please God. It is out of our identity in Christ, as part of the Kingdom, the result of being born again, that we are released into the freedom to choose God’s way – and through which our hearts are changed - filled with the desire to please Him - and in the power of the Spirit are enabled to please Him.

Peter’s letter interweaves these two themes – the salvation and hope to which they and we are called with practical guidance on the outworking that has in lives submitted to God through Jesus.

So don’t put the cart before the horse! Don’t skip to the middle of the letter and read the Do’s and Don’ts and try to live up to them as a set of religious rules to be obeyed. You can’t do it and you were never meant to be able. God’s people the Jews tried time and again and time and again they failed, veering off on their journey with God into Godlessness and false religion. The learning point from their ups and downs is meant to help us all see that we need a saviour. The messengers God sent – the prophets – were sent to point the way and now through Christ’s freely given sacrifice this gift has been given and offered to them as the gospel was preached.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Have you ever met “royalty” – what did you notice about them that was different? How did they get that way?

Peter calls us “royal priests, a holy nation” – given what you know of royalty and “priests” do you really feel like that? What impact does your Kingdom identity as “kings and priests” have on how you view yourself?

Read Rom 8:15-17, Ex 19:3-6 and Rev 1:4-6 (try KJV, NKJV or MKJV for this last one). Who does God say you are? How did you get that way?

How can you grow in your identity so that more of what you do and say be is influenced by your Kingdom identity rather than your circumstances? (*Hint: Rom 12:2*)

Our words and actions should result from our position – members of a royal priesthood, citizens of a holy nation. That’s not something we can force but it is something we can grow in through getting closer to God, being obedient to him and letting the Holy Spirit loose in our lives. Share and pray for each other in areas where you feel you should grow or face particular challenges.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News)

Encourage one another to live out of your position in Christ not your situation in the world. Be a support and encouragement to those around you and look for the opportunities to give an account for your “other Kingdom” nature.