Who Are You?

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang. Thank you for joining us.!

And so, just a tremendous blessing for that many people to come and spend a focused week under the teaching of God's Word and see what He has to do in our lives.
And so, I just want to thank all of you in the ways that you support our church financially to help offset the cost through our budget for our students to be able to go and enjoy a week like that.
Also, for the many of you that were praying for us before leading up to and during our weeks at Falls Creek, thank you so much for supporting us in that way. Thank you for supporting us as we seek to come alongside the parents and families of our church in pointing their children constantly towards Christ, that they may grow to love Him, cherish Him above all things.
And so, thank you for that. If you're a parent in the room, thank you for trusting your children to us to partner with you in the journey of raising them in the Lord. We are honored to be able to come alongside you in that.
[1:40] And for students, stay awake this morning, all right? Y'all got this? If I can stay awake up here, you can stay awake down there, right? All right. We're going to be in 1 Peter 2, as I said. And I want us to remember one simple truth as we answer the question, who are you and what are you here for?

I want us to remember that God made us who we are to show the world who He is. God made us who we are to show the world who He is.
In 1 Peter 2, we look at this wonderful text that calls Christ the living stone rejected by men, that He is the cornerstone on which everything is built up, that He is the center, the most important thing, the chosen one of God.
And then in verse 9, because of who Christ is, because of what He has done, we find out who we are.
So 1 Peter 2, verse 9, But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of the darkness and into His marvelous light.
[3:11] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Pray with me. Father, we thank You for the truth of Your Word. We pray now that it would do its work, that it would penetrate deep into our hearts, that we would trust more fully in You, live more rightly for You as a result of the work of Your Word.
Teach us by Your Spirit today. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. So the question of who are you is a question about identity. As I said, we look at who we are as a basis of who Christ is, this living stone who creates a holy people for Himself.
And verse 10 asks that question for us. He says, Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people, it says in verse 10. And so the question is, what does it mean, what does it look like to be God's people?
And that's exactly what this text just lays out for us. What does it mean to be the people of God? And so I'm going to give you a few simple things straight from the text to remember as you contemplate, what does it mean to be a church?
[4:24] What does it mean to be a believer? Well, what should I do with my life? How should I live my life? What should my purposes be for today? And the first one is this, that as the people of God, you are a chosen people.

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A chosen people. Some of your translations may say a chosen race. We remember today that our identity is not our skin color.
It's not in our culture. It's not in our hobbies. It's not in our groups of friends. It's not in our jobs. Our identity, who we are, is in chosenness.
The fact that we have been chosen by the great God Almighty to be his people. And it's in that chosenness that we find all of our identity.
We are a chosen people. As I said a moment ago, we talk about the gift it is to live in the United States. And it's true, it is. It's true that every good gift is from above.
[5:28] And the gift of living in this country is a blessing from God. And we need to praise him and thank him for that. But we need to be careful to recognize that our identity is not American.

Far too often, that's how we like to talk about ourselves. Our identity is based on the country we live in, the state we live in, and the people we hang out with and are surrounded by.
But our identity is not in that. I would ask you a question if you would think through this. Are you an American who trusts in Christ? Or are you a Christian who lives in America?
See, it may be a little bit semantics, but it has to do with focus. It has to do with priority. It has to do with what's most important. Do I call myself first and foremost an American who happens to believe in Jesus?
Or do I call myself first and foremost a Christ follower who happens to live in this country? And the way we phrase that in our minds helps us to orient our minds in the right way so that we keep what's most important most important, which is the idea that we are chosen.
[6:50] So choose is actually Falls Creek's theme this summer. And while we were at camp, we looked into what it looks like to choose God, to choose obedience, to choose to walk in him.

Throughout camp, we have a lot of fun too. And one of the things that's become sort of a tradition for our student ministry is something we call our lip sync battle, right?
Pretty fun, right, students? It's classic. There's some pretty good videos out there. Well, this year during our middle school... Sorry, Joey, I'm throwing you out there.
During our middle school lip sync battle, there was controversy. There was controversy because everyone puts their heart and soul into spending 10 minutes to create these lip sync battles.
And in this particular week, we usually give our cooks the opportunity to judge. I don't know if cooks are judgy people, but they are on that night.
[7:54] And the cooks were slow to bring their results in. And so Joey and I quickly talked and came up with who we thought were the winners because the cooks just disappeared.

Evidently, they went in the back room to like talk about it and come up with real judgments. But Joey and I came up with our own and Joey went up to bring the judges' results.
The cooks finally showed up with their results, took them to Joey, and Joey said, nah, you're too late. And true story, right?
It's true. It's what he did. And as we revealed the winners, there were some who were obviously very happy and there were some that were very upset by Joey's judgments.
I sort of took part in them, but he's the one that announced them. So he took all the blame. Then people found out that the cooks actually chose other people, and people got really mad.
[8:59] It's all fun and it's good times, but it reminds me of this basic truth that we all desire to be chosen.

We all desire to be valued, to be looked on as somebody with worth. We want to be chosen. But we look at it often from the wrong people and the wrong places.
We find ourselves wanting to be chosen in our workplace for advancement. We want to be chosen in the classroom for accolades. We want to be chosen in the band for the first chair.
We want to be chosen on our sports teams to make varsity or to become a starter. And none of those things are wrong. But they can't be where we find our true identity.
They can't be where we find our true value and worth. Who we are as a people comes from the basic truth that we are chosen by God.
[10:05] It is God who desires us, God who wants us. Why? I do not know. But he does. I told you at Falls Creek our theme was choose as a camp.

And it comes from Colossians 2, 6, and 7. It says, Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

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It's the idea that we choose God. God saves us and then we choose him. We choose to walk in obedience to him. We choose the spiritual disciplines.
We choose where we will be rooted in Christ by sinking deep roots into his word and into his truth. We choose growth. And yet, really, it is not us who chooses it all, but it's God who has chosen us. In 1 Peter 2, in verse 4, it's that living stone that's been rejected by men in the sight of God, chosen and precious.
[11:12] He himself, by the Father, is chosen and precious. And we are built up in him to be like him. And he chooses us.

Our faith, church, is built on the fact that God first chose us. Are you awake? Can I get an amen? Christ chose us.
If we choose him, it's nothing. But because he chose us, we are allowed to choose him. And remembering this fact helps us to stay humble in our spirituality, to stay humble in our walk with him.
We are a chosen people. Number two from the text is that we are a royal priesthood. Verse 9, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.
Now, this text draws language straight out of Exodus chapter 19, talking about the people of God, the Israelites. And in Exodus 19, verse 6, it says, You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.
[12:19] These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. And so, this is language that was in the Old Testament, originally meant for the people of God, the Hebrew people, the Israelites, that has now been put onto the church today.

And the first word there is royal. The reminder that we are members of the kingdom of God and of the king's family. That God has adopted us, Galatians 4, chapter 5, into his royal family.
That we are princes and princesses of the kingdom. Co-heirs with Christ, Romans chapter 8, verse 17 says. Sharing in his glory. If, according to that text, we first share in his suffering.
This wonderful truth that when we are saved, God adopts us into his family and we get to take on all that it means to be a part of that family.
Many of you know, some maybe don't, that Kayla and I were blessed to be able to adopt our first son, Lucas. Lucas was actually born in Taiwan, in Tainan City.
[13:27] We went and met him in a private Christian orphanage in the northern part of Taiwan. And Lucas was born initially, taken to this orphanage called the Home of God's Love under the name Leong Buon.

They gave him that name because he had to have a name on his birth certificate. And what they told us when we got there is, one of the very first conversations actually we had when we arrived was, what is your son's name?
And we had to immediately give them a name. And they told us, you know, we put down a name on paper, Leong Buon, but that was never the name he was intended to have. It was never God's intention for him to have that name.
What is your son's name? And we told him his name is Lucas Kent Jaggers. Because we knew that from the very beginning, he was intended for our family.
That by God's grace, God had chosen him to be a member of our family. And we were choosing him as well because he is the only thing that we desired or wanted in this life, was our son, who God had created to be a member of our family.
[14:46] And so we went to Taiwan and went to courts and did all of the work to adopt him into our family. It was not an easy thing. It was expensive. It required, oh man, I don't know, 35, 38 hours worth of flights or something like that for him to become a member of our family.

It involved bringing a young baby on an 18-hour flight back home. I mean, if there's anything more difficult on the planet than that, I don't know what is.
We would not be stopped by anything. There would be nothing that would hinder us, nothing that could get in the way, no mountain too high to climb, no difficulty too big for us to overcome to bring our son home and to bring him into our family.
And this is what it looks like when God adopts us into his family. That we as sinners and broken people separated from God really had no right, had no power, but God chose us and sought to save us and to adopt us into his family.

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And there would be nothing powerful enough to stop him, nothing capable of keeping him from fulfilling his purpose, of bringing us in as princes and princesses of his royal family.
[16:13] And he gives us a new name, and he gives us a new heart, and he gives us a new life, and he gives us a new purpose, and he gives us a new eternity so that we get to live differently in his family now with the hope of eternity near him on his throne forever.

This is what it means to be royal. And I think for many of us, we get caught up in the brokenness and the struggle of this life. We see our sin.
We see our struggles. We see life's storms. We see ourselves as broken. And we fail to remember that as children of God, we are royal.
That there are crowns awaiting us. And that we get everything that is offered by being a part of God's family and a part of God's kingdom.
We are royal, but also it says that we are a royal priesthood. Remember with me that the priests had certain functions that they had to do, certain tasks that were theirs, and the priests would do many things like intercede for their people and for the entire world.
[17:27] Priests would mediate the blessings of God to the people. Priests would constantly point people's attention back to God. This is their primary task. And this is what the church is called to do today.

Once we become gods and we become a part of his people, we have direct access to him. One of the great blessings of the priesthood is access to God.
And we gain this access we were created to have. And in Exodus 19.6, Israel was to be the mirror of the glory of God to the nations.
The mirror of the glory of God to the nations. And Israel mainly failed at that. And so Christ came, formed his church, and now today the church is the image of the invisible God to a blind world.
And so for us, knowing that we are chosen, we remember that we are royal members of his family who are called to be a mirror image of God to the lost and dying world around us.
[18:36] When you find yourself too focused on the material things of this life in this world, remember that as a child of God, you have a future inheritance that is unimaginable.

Quit living for the things of this world. None of them stack up to what is to come. All of them will pale. In fact, everything that you possess in this life will be burnt to nothing.
And the only thing you'll have left is your royal status in the kingdom of God. Remember, too, that as priests, not only do we have access to God, but we have a job to do of pointing all people to Jesus.
We are chosen people. We are a royal priesthood. Number three is we are a holy nation. We are a holy nation.
Once God takes possession of you, you become no longer what you once were. You were unholy, sinful, guilty, but in him you become holy. Remember that this word holy means set apart, different than the world.
[19:44] You were not created to enjoy the pleasures of the world over finding pleasure in God. You were not meant to put the things of the world first. You were meant to put God first.

You were not saved so that you could continue walking in sinfulness, but you were saved from your sin so that you could walk in godliness. To be set apart by God means we get to enjoy his presence when the world around us receives separation.
We enjoy his favor when the world receives his condemnation. We receive his purpose when the world lives in vanity.
We become in him a holy people, but not only a holy people or a holy person individually, but it says in particular that we become a holy nation.
This is important because this is not a task that you achieve on your own. It's not meant to be that there are individual Christians walking around all by themselves. Instead, we become a holy nation.
[20:51] It's a corporate thing. People as individuals that belong to each other, that live together, that support each other, and call only one as their sovereign.

Only one flag as their standard. We follow one rule. Like in the United States, follows the Constitution, at least true and right Americans do.
Amen. We as God's nation follow his Constitution. We follow his law. We follow his commands. Because he is the one, only one person that is in charge of everything that exists and is in charge of every little bit of your life.

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He is our one and only true sovereign. And so as a nation of God's people, not the nation of America, but the nation of believers, the holy nation that God is setting apart for himself, the church, we follow his rules, laws, and commands.
[21:59] His laws that we obey aren't meant to be an unnecessary burden. They're not meant to be some burden like the spiritual anarchists that live in our world would try to claim.

But they're meant to be used for our sanctification. They're meant to be used to help us become more holy. They're meant to help us become who we were intended to be from the beginning.
And so we seek to, as a nation, to follow God's laws so that we could be sanctified, become more holy, and in the end, more rightly live for God and mirror him to the people around us.
God has called you, believer, to be holy. God is not okay with you continuing to live in unholiness. Holiness, remember, meaning to be set apart.
He's not okay with you, believer, continuing to live like the lost and dying world around you. He has called you to be different. He's called you to be separate. He's called you to live according to his standards, not the standards of this world.
[23:02] Will you receive the calling of God to be a holy nation, set apart from everything that is this world? Examine yourself.

Repent of your sins and turn to God for his power and his ability to help you live in the freedom you're intended to live in. As a nation of holy people, we need to look also to support and build each other up in every way we can.
When you see a brother or sister in Christ that's wandering and straying from obedience to the Lord, we challenge them and encourage them back. We don't allow the people around us to live breaking the laws, right?
In our country, if we see people breaking the laws around us, it's our job then as citizens to help that law breaking in for the protection, the safety, and the betterment of all of society.
We don't allow people who break the laws around us in this country to go unchecked. And as a holy nation, we as believers cannot sit idly by and watch other believers around us walk into open disobedience to the Lord.
[24:17] But when we see it, we lovingly challenge them back into obedience to the Lord, to walk rightly under his laws, not because we just have to be better people for the sake of being better, but because God is trying to take us, a people made holy by the work of Jesus Christ, and make us truly holy, just as he is holy, working in our hearts and lives as he sanctifies us by his word.

And so we are called to be a holy nation. The next thing is that we are, or you are God's possession. This is the effect of God's choosing us and giving mercy to us.
He then takes us as his own. And materialists out there just want to claim that we are one species of animal above others, evolved like all others. But Genesis tells us that God made us as image bearers set apart from all creation.
And all creation was created for him, by him, and through him, but only humans were created like him in a unique way. Humanity is God's special creation, and he has chosen us out of his creation.
1 Peter 3, verse 18 says, for Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh and made alive in the spirit.
[25:46] This is what it means to be God's possession, that he has paid our price, the righteous for the unrighteous. He has brought us into communion with God to make us right by his work.

Now, some translations put a word in here that don't just say we are God's possession. In the ESV, it says a people for his own possession. Some add the word special, that we are God's special possession.
Malachi 3, 17 comes to mind where it says that the people of God, the people that God would make his own, rather, are his treasured possessions.
If you, believer, are walking in struggle, if depression is an issue for you, and it is for, I would believe, many in this room, if you have a tendency to look down on yourself, to attack yourself, to constantly have a negative view of yourself, to just even, like, put yourself down constantly into this dark and depressed state, I understand your struggle.
It's no fun. Today, I want you to be reminded that as a believer in Jesus Christ, you are treasured by him. Meaning, like, of everything that exists, you individually today are special to God.
[27:17] You are a treasure to God, and he is not going to just idly throw you aside like some random possession. No, you are his treasure.

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And for some of us, we need to begin to see ourselves in that way. We need to be reminded that we are special to God, that we are treasured by God, that we are held in esteem by God, not because of us, but because that's who he created us to be.
And that's how he created us. And the truth is, while we are sinners, and we have messed up a lot, in the end, God is sovereign, he is in control, and his will will be done.
He has created for himself a people, and no matter what sin and struggle and darkness and depression you might have in your life, you are still treasured by God.
Receive that truth and live in it. But not only are you a treasure to him, but in particular, you are a treasured possession. Reminds me of 1 Corinthians 6, verse 20, where it says, you were bought with a price.
[28:29] When you purchase something, it becomes your possession. Understand, God didn't rent us by the blood of his son. He didn't take out a loan with a bank who holds the note.

He owns us. If we are purchased by him, we are his possession. 1 Corinthians 6, 19, just before this, says that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
You are not your own. Some of us believe the lie that is rampant in our society, that you have full control over your body.
This is like the messaging of many on the left. This is the messaging of those who would proclaim things like pro-choice, that you have rights over your own body, and certainly in a worldly sense, you do have rights over your own body, but listen to me.
As a believer, there is a different standard than the standard with which the world lives around us. And I want you to remember that while you may think you possess your own body and own it, you don't.
[29:48] God Almighty owns you if you are a child of God. You are his possession alone. And therefore, what he says you should do with your body is what you should do with your body.

Because he is the one who owns you. He is the one that possesses you. He is the one that controls you. And that doesn't just have to do with what you choose to do in the issue of abortion.
It also has to do with what you do whenever you feel the leading of the Holy Spirit to go share the gospel with someone this afternoon. You are not your own. Christ possesses you.
We have to be obedient in every area because we are not ours. We are his. So when you remember every day that you are God's possession, it helps you to die to self and to live for Christ. You can't compete with God. You can't steal yourself from him. He owns you. So live for him, Christian.
[30:54] Bring glory to him through right and honorable living. Bring others to the knowledge of Christ. Walk not as the world walks. You are not your own.

You've been bought with a price. You are possessed by God. And the last thing that is who we are is that you are mercy recipients.
Who are you? You are mercy recipients. God saw us in our sin and guilt and pitied us. So he poured out grace and mercy on us. At the end of verse 10, it says, once you had not received mercy, but now as the people of God, you have received mercy.
What does that look like? Ephesians chapter two, verses four and five. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions.
It is by grace that you have been saved. The foundation of living as the people that God desires us to be is his mercy and is his grace.
[32:08] Only by God's mercy do we still breathe today. If not for God's mercy, we should all be destroyed. It's because of his mercy that we still breathe today.

And only by God's grace can we live in him today. And so as mercy recipients who rightly understand the gift of God to us, we must also be people who pour out mercy and pour out grace on others, forgiving others just as Christ forgave us, pouring out mercy just as God has poured out mercy on us.
We are, as the people of God, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own prized possession and mercy recipients.
And we are these things, but not just so we can say, hey, look at us, we're awesome. God does not make us all of these things as his people just so we can have some sort of standing in this world that's higher than others.

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Instead, he makes us who we are so that we can be about his purposes, which is this, what are we here for? To declare the praises of him who called us.
[33:26] That is our very purpose. Let's read our text again. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession. Why? That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into marvelous light.

Our full-time job as believers is making God's glories known. That's it. Isaiah 43 verse 21 says that the people whom I formed for myself, that they might declare my praise.
This is the purpose of the people of God to declare the praises of God. And that purpose is twofold. It's one, to worship God, and two, to make more worshipers of God.
It's more than just showing up and singing on Sundays. I love to show up on Sunday and to sing with all of you. It is so encouraging to my heart to sing worship to the Father with my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
But it's more than showing up and singing songs on a Sunday. It's Romans chapter 12 verse 1. Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice to God. Why? Because this is your spiritual act of worship.
[34:41] As we look at who God has made us to be, it causes us to respond by living according to his purposes, by no longer living for ourselves in a selfish mindset, but now living for the God who has made us into everything that we are.

We are a chosen people, but God has chosen others who need to hear of him from us. We are a royal priesthood who needs to intercede on behalf of others, bless others, just as we've received God's blessing, and invite others into the family of God.
We are a holy nation who need to challenge and encourage each other to sanctification and obedience. We are a special possession to God who need to tell others that they also were bought with a price.
We are mercy recipients who should pour out grace and mercy on others as we proclaim the great mercies of our God for us.
This is what God has called us to. And so just to bring it all together, to think it through, who are you? We get this twisted often. You might see yourself as a full-time student who also loves and lives for Jesus, an accountant who loves and follows Jesus, a mom who teaches her kids to know Jesus, an American who trusts in Christ.
[36:09] But today I want you to reverse the way you think about yourself. I want you to untwist your view of yourself. Who are you truly? What is the highest priority of your life and what makes you who you truly are?

Are you a full-time student who goes to church and loves God or are you a Christ follower who goes to school? Are you first and foremost an accountant who is also a believer or are you a believer, a Christ follower who works in accounting?
A Christ follower who raises children to know him? A Christ follower who simply is blessed by God to live in America? Who are you? What is your priority in yourself?
And what are you here for? We receive our identity from God and so our purpose is based on that identity. Therefore, our purposes must be God's purposes.
What is your purpose in your workplace? What is your purpose at school, on your team, in your family? Who has God created you to be and what does he want you to do with your time?
[37:22] Psalm chapter 90 verse 12 in closing says teach us to number our days we may gain a heart of wisdom.

My prayer over you, church, is that you would learn to number your days. Knowing that God has gifted you tremendously, has given you a purpose, but time is short, you don't get to keep waiting until tomorrow.
My prayer for you, church, is that God may strengthen you so that 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 31, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, you would do it all to the glory of God.
Believers in the room, if you are in Christ, listen to me. You are chosen. You are royal. You are a priest. You are being made holy.
You are joined with others as God's people. You are God's possession. You are his treasure. You are a living example of the mercy of God.
[38:31] And you were created for a purpose. And you have breath in your lungs today for that purpose. Today, will you declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

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Bow and pray with me. Bow and pray with me.

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