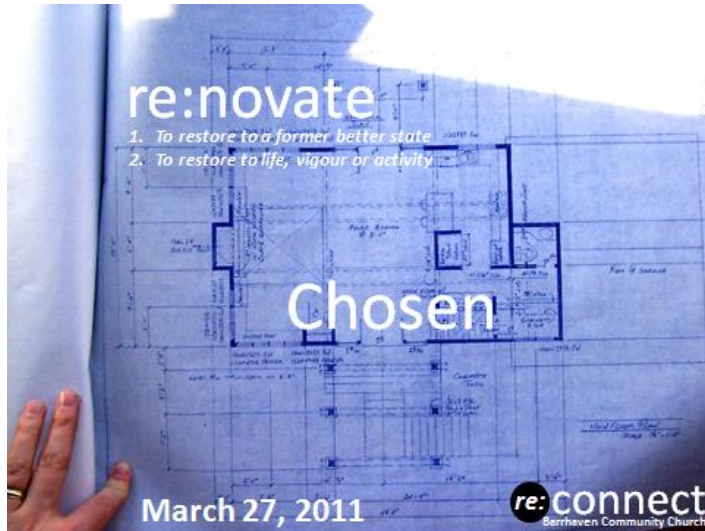


re:novate III: chosen

Reconnect – March 27, 2011



Text: I Peter 2:9-10, Matthew 5:14-16

Key Thought: If you want to grow in God, live like you've been chosen to bring His love to others.

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." (I Peter 2:9-10, NLT)

Intro: chosen, chosen, chosen



- Seems like everyone thinks highly of me these days – in fact, people I don't even know are reaching out to me and letting me know that they have chosen me for greatness
 - Readers Digest has made no secret that I am on their short list for fame and riches
 - Capital One lets me know that they would like me to spend their money, through the providing of a dedicated card to access their accounts
 - Just the other day I had an email from a wonderful individual from across the seas, indicating that they felt I would make an ideal partner for them to retrieve their funds from a worthy financial institution
 - The Liberal party called me yesterday because they felt that my vote would be indispensable in the upcoming federal election, knowing my extensive political savvy

- And I'm waiting to hear from the Montreal Canadiens later today – I'm anticipating a most generous offer from them, considering that they've hit a bit of a rough patch with regards to putting the puck in the net
- It's so good to be chosen! To think that someone, out there, would see me, over here, and consider me such a prize that they would reach out and select me for something! So much for my insecurity and self-esteem issues! Farewell to my memories of Grade 6 gym class! I am chosen!!!

Choosy no more



- It's a bit ridiculous, isn't it? All this choosing talk – meant to make us feel so exclusive, even in the middle of a multilevel marketing campaign or a massive direct mail blitz to us and ten thousand of our neighbours, but they know what makes our ears perk up, what makes our eyes linger on a page one or two more moments – that idea that we have been chosen for something, that someone prefers us over someone else
- It goes towards our pride, it goes towards our fear of others, that they might be getting ahead of us, it goes towards our innate narcissism and ego, it goes to our competitive nature – everyone loves flattery, don't we? It goes towards our bad memories of being the last picked when we were younger – it just hits the spot, doesn't it?
- Afraid that society has just passed you by? That you're a number and not a name? Never fear – someone out there is still ready to choose YOU
- What baloney – and yet, they wouldn't do it if we weren't falling for it
- It's enough to make you choosy about being chosen, isn't it?

Chosen?

- But sometimes, every now and again, we are truly chosen – our hearts do light up – she says "yes", they throw us a party, our couch gets bought on Kijiji, we are recognized, or promoted, or drafted, or headhunted, or recruited
- And it makes you feel like a million bucks, doesn't it? Like you have a leg up on everyone else
- Even if you've been having a rough time of things, even if life hasn't really been going your way – that warm feeling, that boost of confidence, that can be just enough to get you up and over the next wall in your way, especially when times are tough

Peter's chosen people

- The early church leader Peter was writing to people like that – people who were suffering for their belief in God and their commitment to living for Him – people who needed to know that they were special, that they had been chosen, that they weren't "plan B" or in a second tier of wedding invites
- Even though we live in an over-chosen world, I still believe that the real thing makes a difference – and so this morning, as we re:novate, I'd like to take a closer look at how he motivates those in his churches by speaking to them about God's choosing

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10, NLT)

But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession.

- "You" – we read that as individuals, in our individualistic society – "I am" this, "I am" that – but this is written to Peter's readers as a whole – Peter is talking about the church as a whole – all of us, together, as a group, as a team
- And he's using each phrase in this sentence intentionally – "chosen people", "royal priests", "holy nation", "God's possession" – as Old Testament references – to the first part of the Bible
- What we don't always understand when it is read, is the way that God had initially worked in the world, before He sent Jesus into it
- God had *chosen* a people for himself, that being the nation of Israel – they had started out as a large family, and God had made them into a nation – and He *chose* that nation for Himself in order that they would show Him off to the rest of the world – that the other nations, the other people groups around them would see how incredible their God was and turn to Him
- God's people were meant to be *royal priests* – those who would stand between God and the rest of the world, and introduce Him to people – they were meant to be a *holy nation*, a society that would, by virtue of its goodness, show the rest of the world what they were missing – they were meant to be *God's possession*, to belong to Him and have an incredible relationship with Him as their Father and King – again, so that others would be drawn to God
- And if you understood the background to this as you first heard it, then you were amazed that you would be invited into something that you normally had to be born into



- III. – Royal wedding – right now everyone is talking royals again, with William and Kate’s wedding coming up at the end of April – with everyone scrambling for invitations, a place at the table, to attach themselves to royalty, however faded an institution
 - To be royalty means to have a special position, special access by birth to wealth and power, by your DNA
 - And yet the neat thing about this wedding is that Kate is a “commoner” – she isn’t royal by birth, she doesn’t have the DNA – but because William is “inviting” her into this family, she will become one of them – her status will change, she will receive a title and become royalty
 - Of anyone in England who ever dreamed of becoming a princess, well, that’s her – a true Hollywood story sure to come
- Peter is trying to get his audience to understand how different they are now – what they have been called to – a new role, of mediating between God and people, of showing off God’s goodness in their lives and being connectors between God and others who don’t have the same connection with Him
- They have a new privileged status – instead of being just one more person in a long lineup at the bank counter, they are now connected to the CEO – and all kinds of doors are opened to them

As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.



- ROM experience – old style museums as a kid, where you could look but not touch, where there was always a red velvet rope separating you from the stuff that you were there to see – and you never questioned, even if at times you were ready to hop the rope

- Contrast that to museums today – we were at the ROM, the Royal Ontario Museum on March break, and it was so different – everything was interactive, everything was touch and feel and experience, and everything was oriented to learning
- It's 100% different – and which method are you going to learn more? Which was is going to provoke a greater passion in you for knowledge and science and history? Velvet ropes or buttons to push and flashing lights and motion?
- The difference is in the demonstration – the interactivity – instead of hoarding information, the intentional giving it away to the masses
- Well, we are called “to the masses” as well – not to just hide his goodness, or keep it in small regular Sunday meetings and carefully tied down the rest of the week, just in case someone would find out
- He brought us out of darkness – out of spiritual wandering, or ignorance, or hostility – into the light of His love
- And as I may have mentioned in a Lentidote email this week or last, there's something about light – not the artificial kind, but the natural kind – the warmth, the colour, and the way that it boosts you to have it on your face in the springtime – that kind of light is the light that God has called us into – the kind that brings you life and hope – and that's the kind of light that we need to spread

“Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God’s people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God’s mercy.” (I Peter 2:9-10, NLT)



- Identity – how do you get your identity? What do you get it from – your confidence, your self-esteem, your sense of who you are, how you see yourself –
 - From people that you love – and then as you get older, it's people that you admire and want to emulate – and we can get way off track trying to be someone that we're not
 - But ultimately, if you find yourself again, you want to gain your identity from people that love you, as opposed to people that could care less about you or just want to try to manipulate you
 - So who loves you, baby?
- Love and adoption – it's important for children to believe that they were always loved, that they were always special, no matter what – it provides that firm foundation for the rest of their emotional lives, even if it might only have been true if love is just a feeling that we have

- But when an adoptive parent comes along everything changes – or at least, has the potential to change, if the child will embrace the parent just as the parent is willing to embrace the child
- It is a whole new identity, it is more than just a feeling – those on both sides get to experience what love lived out looks like – and that is what God has done for us, and that is what we are called to pass along to others as a result of this new, privileged status

Key Thought:

TAKE IT HOME:

If you want to grow in God, live like you’ve been chosen to bring His love to others.

“You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. – Jesus, in Matthew 5:14-16, NLT



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Conclusion:

[show video – Toy Story 3 – the Claw]



- The little green men go from being a nuisance to being instrumental – first they are chosen, then they are able to help choose others, to be rescued – to make a difference in the lives of those who love them, who know them, who are a part of their lives

- I want you to consider that clip – consider life’s conveyor belt and where it leads without God – without someone to call you out of darkness into the light, without someone to choose you and rescue you and walk with you every step of the way
- It’s great that you and I have been chosen by God to be a part of this incredible group of people – to be able to show just how amazing and incredible God is
- But we shortchange God if we fail to take advantage of the new position that we have as his representative, to be able to pass this life on and connect people to God
- we shortchange God if we consider ourselves like an old-fashioned museum exhibit instead of a newfangled interactive demonstration
- We shortchange God if we minimize our identity as His children and forget or deny whose we are, who has bought us with a huge high price
- Sometimes maybe you don’t WANT to be chosen – you don’t want the responsibility or the burden or the extra bit in your life – maybe you were happy before something ever came along
- But our memories are so selective, we forget what it was like, perhaps, before God became more real to us, before we knew what it was like to have him with us every step of the way, in our minds and in our hearts and in our lives by His Spirit
- This new life, this new place, this new destiny – all of it isn’t just for us to hoard, but it’s for us to give away – we’re on the joystick, operating the claw – who can we help and reach out to?

Response: prayer