

Series: Stand Firm

Title: Part 2: The Chosen People of God

Date: October 7/8, 2017

Speaker: Steve Garcia

Big Idea: *Who you are* matters. Your identity drives your decision-making. In his message this weekend, Steve Garcia taught about the new identity we receive when we become followers of Jesus, and how that identity helps us to stand firm in the face of life's challenges.

Passage: 1 Peter 2:4-12

Discuss It:

1. What is your ethnic heritage and how has it influenced you? What else about you is important to your sense of identity (ie., career, relationships, status, education, etc.)?
2. **Read 1 Peter 2:5-10.** In his letter to first-century Christians suffering intense persecution, Peter encourages them to endure based on *who they are* in Christ. Why do you think Peter spends so much time talking about their **new identity** rather than just telling them what to do?
3. In his message this past weekend, Steve Garcia unpacked some of the phrases Peter used to describe the identity of a Jesus-follower in 1 Peter 2. One descriptor Peter uses is "royal priesthood." In Old Testament times, only priests could approach God on behalf of the people, but followers of Jesus have a **new access** to God - that is, we may approach God directly in prayer. How do you respond to the idea that God looks at you as a priest? What does this mean to you?
4. Peter also describes followers of Jesus as a "holy nation." We have a **new citizenship** in the Kingdom of God - a citizenship that transcends and supersedes all other allegiances. Think back to your response to question #1 about your primary identity markers. How easy is it for you to affirm that your citizenship in the Kingdom of God is even more important than that? Do the values of your other identity markers ever come into conflict with your Kingdom identity? How so? How do you navigate that tension?
5. Peter writes that followers of Jesus have been called "out of the darkness into his wonderful light." We have a **new vision**. What issues or circumstances have you been able to see with greater clarity as you have grown more mature in Christ?
6. Peter reminds his audience of their **new story** when he says in verse 10, "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people." Often people worry that their past failures disqualify them from God's future blessings. But as Steve said in his message, "You don't have a *story* before Jesus, you just had a *chapter*." Share about a time when Jesus helped you to turn the page from a dark chapter in your life to a brighter one.
7. **Read 1 Peter 2:11-12.** Steve concluded his message by posing the questions: *Do others see Jesus in me? If so, how? What is the most distinctive part of your faith? The least distinctive?* How would you respond these questions?

Apply It:

- What is the one thing you need to take away from this study?
- What will help you remember it?
- Is there anything that needs to change in your thinking, actions, or relationships as a result?