

Called Out and Sent In

Understanding who we are, having a clear grasp of our identity, impacts how we live. Followers of Jesus throughout history have discovered they have a “double identity” – they are *called out* and *sent in*. But called out of what? And sent in where? The answer to those questions shape Local Church St. Pete in every way.

The church is not a building.

The church is not a weekly meeting where we gather to do spiritual things.

The church is not a place for you to get your fill and be on your way.

The church is not an optional add-on you get when you become a Christian.

“Church” (ekklesia) simply means “meeting,” “assembly,” “gathering,” “called out.” God has always had a people set apart for His glory, reflecting His character to a watching world.

God created the world and mankind to display His glory (what’s glory?).

Adam and Eve, who were supposed to reflect God’s glory eventually, failed to do so and rebelled against him. The people of Israel did the very same thing thousands of years later.

In Christ, God came to save – in other words, He came to redeem, restore and recreate in Jesus *a people for His own glory!*

These people (made up of every nation) have received the life of Jesus and the power of the Spirit – they’ve received a new identity in Christ.

These same people are given a new purpose – a call to display God’s character to a watching world – testifying with their lips and their lives the grace and love of God expressed in Jesus.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10 we find out we have a “double identity”

- We are called out of the world to belong to God.
- We are sent back into the world to witness/ declare the praises of God.

1. The called out people of God

“**A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.**” What are these terms about?

Peter is taking titles that belonged to the nation of Israel in the OT and he’s assigning them to the church of the NT.

Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 43:20-21 (Deut. 4:20, 7:6; 10:15; 14:2)

Peter weaves these titles together indicating that the NT church (as a corporate unity) is to be understood as THE called out people of God.

We are God’s unique possession.

Called out = understand who you are. This is about identity.

The power and motivation behind living a transformed life is found in knowing our new identity in Christ.

Everything is connected to this. Who we are is the basis for how we live!

This new identity in Christ is holistic...intricately connected to all of life!

How we live grows out of who we are, who we are is seen in how we live.

Understanding who we are involves understanding *whose* we are.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The idea here in 1 Peter 2:9 is that God has written over us “mine.”

We are His possession. *Toy Story! Woody doll = “Andy” on his foot

God purchased us. Accepts / welcomes us in. He separates / calls us out.

What are we called *out* of?

- Called out of a radical individualism that ruled our hearts.
- A narcissism (love for and obsession w/ self) that continues to invite us inward until we’re completely distracted by our own agendas and lives. What happens is that our lives easily shrink to the size of our lives making our problems all the larger and blocking. Has a way of distracting us from what we’re called to!
- Called out of a life dominated/ ruled/ governed by sin.
- Called out of hiding. Shame. Jesus covers our shame, clothes us in His righteousness.
- Called out of hopelessness and despair.
- Called out of trying to earn our acceptance before God and others.
- Called out of trying harder – doing more – and believing it will somehow outweigh all the wrong we’ve done.
- Called ***out of darkness***.

Out of darkness? **Eph. 5:8-16; 1 Thess 5:5; John 8:12**

The nation of Israel was brought from the darkness of Egypt to the glory of God at Mt. Sinai.

We too have been brought out of a kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son. ***Colossians 1:13-14**

1 Peter 2:9 Peter goes on to basically say, “*You’re given this title, this role for a reason – there’s a whole lot of purpose attached to it!*” “**THAT we may DECLARE the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light.**”

Declaration is what we’re called to.

I’ve heard it said, “*Worship is our response to what we know about God expressed in and by the things we say and do.*” Declaration involves making statements, literally – pronouncements about the One who has done the unthinkable! He’s rescued us. Cleansed us. Who do we declare these praises to?

1. To **God!** = bringing praise to His name.

2. To **others** (both followers and those who don’t follow) = pointing them to His beauty. Declaring *the Good News!*

This declaration is the sole responsibility and distinct privilege of *the church*.

Peter goes on to say in **V10**: “*ONCE YOU (not you singular but you plural – very important because this is not an individualistic call. This is a collective call and when we do this together we’re obeying the call)...YOU were NOT a people (you can’t be a people on your own),*

but now you ARE THE people of God! Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Like the nation of Israel we were at one time NO PEOPLE and HAD NOT received mercy – in fact we were under the deserved sentence of condemnation for sin. But NOW we've been given the highest privilege in the universe! WHY? The undeserved grace and favor of God!

This passage was originally written to a suffering, persecuted and rejected people – persecuted by the world BUT accepted by God!

If I could only remember this! I want keep this in the forefront of my mind. Plaster it across the inside of my eyelids. Tattoo it to my heart. If I could somehow get this to stick - WE are the called out people of God!

Valerie's Gram passed away years ago unexpectedly.

Valerie went up to Michigan to be with her family. When she got to her Gram's house she was able to quietly walk through every room of the house – she said she looked in every drawer, opened every cabinet, went into the basement, opened the refrigerator, everything – there wasn't a corner of the house she didn't enter or a door she didn't open. Why? She wanted to remember.

She wanted to soak in the sights and the smells – the sounds.

“I want to remember with the hope of NEVER forgetting.”

I want us to remember with the hope of never forgetting.

2. The sent in people of God

FIRST, we're sent “into his marvelous light” 1 Peter 2:9

Everyone who has trusted in Jesus has ongoing access to God.

Every believer is given the privilege to enter the presence of God. = Relationship.

SECOND, we're sent into the world with a message to declare.

What do priests do again? Point people – *bring* people to God.

Taking people by the hand again and again – pointing them to the greatness and glory of the one true God. God is not silent. He's made himself known! Defined himself for us – we don't come to the table with our definition of God. He presents who he is and in doing so we begin to understand who we are.

We have to fight to preserve this “double identity” of the church.

This vision can easily be lost/ forgotten.

The temptation is to either withdraw/ retreat (isolating / separating) OR blend in / compromise (the ‘trap’ of complacency).

If we're not “a set apart – holy and distinct people of God” then we'll have nothing to say! BUT if we're not deeply involved in the world – entering the pain and suffering of those around us then we'll have no one to say anything to!

1 Peter 2:11-12; 17 There's a clear call to remember we are strangers and aliens – we'll be aliens until Jesus returns.
UNTIL then we're to keep ourselves from sinful desires “*which war against our soul.*” AND where are we to do this? IN a corner? NO!
V12 “*Among the pagans = Gentiles (the nations!)...*”

Peter links the witness of our lives with the witness of our lips!

John 20:21 Jesus was “sent in” and so are we.

John Stott: “*He (Jesus) did not stay in the safe immunity of His heaven. Instead He emptied himself of His glory and humbled himself to serve. He actually entered our world. He took our nature, lived our life and died our death. He could not have identified with us more closely than he did... And now he calls us to enter other people’s worlds, as he entered ours... And this without compromising our Christians beliefs, values and standards.*”

You and I have mission set before us. We are not spectators. We are participants. We’re learning of the early church in our series in Acts. They paved the way – it’s our turn now! (Home, school, work, neighborhood, friends)

College students: My prayer is for you to see the unique place God has you *right now*. Don’t despise this season of life. Yeah, it comes with plenty of awkward moments! BUT you have a unique opportunity that so many students before you have ignored or simply never understood. The mission is before you!

Local Church St. Pete, the way you relate within the specific relationships God places in your life reveals a lot about the influence He’s having on you. What relationships has God placed you in, and are those relationships reflecting Jesus’ influence over your life?

Jesus wants to make His name known through you. Do you believe this?
Called out. Sent in.

I know - I agree - I believe We can acknowledge these things are true. We can agree (intellectual head nod) with everything said here today. Belief = a personal transfer of trust and reliance from yourself to Jesus.

This about understanding the connection between who you are (your identity) and how you’re called to live (your purpose).

You are the called out and sent in people of God.

Now then, expect God to empower you by His Spirit.

Local Church St. Pete is a community of people humbled by the grace and love of Jesus. Disciples who make disciples to impact the city of St. Pete for Jesus.