

THE BIG IDEA: We're chosen by God to be set apart for God

The Take-Off

As I have prayed over and prepared for this series, I have sensed such a weightiness on it - not a burden, but an expectation that this is one we really need to lean in to fully.

I really believe that the church has faced or is facing (or both) an identity crisis.

With all the events that have come like waves over the last year, it's been so easy to wonder who we are as believers
2 things to remember about that:

1. It's normal to react that way in a crisis
2. It's 100% the enemy's tactic to throw us off about what we know ("Did God really say...?")

So we're going to take the first part of 2021 and remind ourselves of who we are - not just as believers, but even more specifically, as a part of this local body called The Gathering

Who is The Gathering?

I'm glad you asked, but I believe that's the wrong question to begin with.

This is us has to begin with whose we are, not who we are.

Let's start the series with this life-changing truth:

We are His.

1 John 3:1 (NLT) - love the simple statement "and that is what we are"

It's a fact, those who are in Christ are children of God

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV) - God's very own possession

This one fact about our identity is huge!

Let's dig a bit deeper into it by asking, "What does it mean to be His?"

1. We are chosen by Him

- a. Being His means that **we are chosen by Him**
- b. A couple of scriptures for you to remember:
- c. John 15:16 / we are the chosen
- d. Ephesians 1:4-5 / A lot of people get into theological debates about **when** God chose us and miss the miracle of **why** He chose us / He wanted to and it gave Him pleasure!
- e. The vows couples share in weddings that I officiate when they exchange rings include the words "remember that I have chosen you above all women (or men)"
- f. There is such power in being chosen - not because God got stuck with you, but because He wanted you
- g. We've already seen 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV), but let's see one more thing: there is a reason we've been chosen
- h. "That you may proclaim..."
- i. We're not the "trophy" bride of Jesus, we're His warrior bride
- j. We've been chosen for a purpose

2. We are set apart for Him

- a. We know that we're chosen by God to proclaim His praise and testify to light over darkness
- b. Can I do my own Amplified Version of 1 Peter 2:9? "But you are a chosen people...that you may be believed when you proclaim..."
- c. How does that happen? When **we are set apart for Him**.
- d. 2 Timothy 2:19 (NLT) / We're chosen by Him but then we choose to set ourselves apart for Him
- e. This is known as holiness - a lot of people don't understand it - simply means to be "set apart for"
- f. We even celebrate holiness as a culture
- g. [IMAGES - Simone Biles and Michael Phelps]
- h. These are 2 of the most celebrated Olympic champions in American history, but they achieved it by setting themselves apart for training
- i. Simone Biles' typical day:
In the morning, I usually get up between 7:40 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. and then I'll brush my teeth, do my hair, and just throw on my leotard and my clothes and go to the kitchen. I make breakfast, which is usually Kellogg's Red Berries or egg whites, and then I go to the gym that's only 10 minutes away. I have practice from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and then I drive home and eat lunch, which is either chicken or fish so I get the protein. I grab a

quick snack and head back to the gym from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and usually have more routines. After that, I either have therapy at the gym or at home, and then I eat dinner and chill and do it all again the next day.

- j. Michael Phelps' typical day:
- 6AM ~ Wake Up
 - 7AM-9AM ~ Swim
 - 9AM-10AM ~ Weightlift
 - 10AM-12PM ~ Eat
 - 12PM-1PM ~ Nap
 - 4-6PM ~ Swim
 - 6PM-8PM ~ Dinner
 - 8PM-10PM ~ Spend time with fiancé Nicole and son Boomer
 - 10PM ~ Bedtime
- k. Even when he isn't actually swimming, he's visualizing swimming while lying in bed at night
- l. That discipline helped him win the gold in the 2008 butterfly even though he couldn't see for the last 75m when water filled his goggles
- m. Without being "set apart" to the goal, he wouldn't have seen gold
- n. **Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)** / w/o holiness, no one will see the Lord (and no one will see the Lord in us, either!)

The Landing

Our Big Idea is this: **we're chosen by God to be set apart for God**

Let me show you what happens when we do this

Back to 2 Timothy 2, and let's read verses 20 to the end of the chapter

The difference between the cheap and the expensive utensils is the decision to "keep ourselves pure" (v. 21)

We are His. It pleased Him to choose us and it pleases Him to use us. Holiness enables Him to do that.

Let's pray.