

Wyoming Church of Christ Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2008

Ex 19:1-6; Titus 2:11-14

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Theme: Body Life (4) "Whose we are"

Ps 24:1 says: The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. KJV

**The earth** is the Lord's, and everything in it.

The world and all its people belong to him. NLT  
**Does belonging** to God make any difference? – to our security, behaviour, relationships, motives or purpose?

Would we expect us, the body of God's people in Christ, to be any different because we are his?

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> "**Body Life**" talk entitled "Whose we are."  
In **Body Life (1)** 3 Principles for a harmonious body life.

- (i) We need each other
- (ii) Resolve privately in person, ready to forgive
- (iii) Act ASAP

In **Body Life (2)** Unity of Purpose 1 Cor 1:10

In **Body Life (3)** love - recall loving in different ways. As we become more whole we can love in all the ways.

Quote G. Cann: "God's love for me and my love for others are two halves of one whole. Likewise: acceptance"; forgiveness. The Church is a body.

The Scripture: **Exodus 19:1-6** reminds us that as God's chosen people, the descendants of Abraham who entered into a special relationship with God – a covenant relationship – were chosen to be priests of the covenant to all nations – his own treasured possession. **Setting at Sinai prior to receiving Pentateuch.**

Looking more closely at **Ex 19:1-6a** we see:

**v.4 God's protective care** and deliverance of his chosen ones

**v.5 God's heart to be in relationship** – covenant with all

**v.6 the role of His chosen** as priests to the whole earth.

God had a purpose in taking these people, who now knew what it was like to be set free – and gave them the role of bringing that same freedom to all the nations as they too, enter a secure covenant relationship with God. God had promised Abraham, **"I will bless** those who bless you... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Gen 12:3

God's purpose has always been that all the world, all the nations, all tribes & cultures, may be His.

Cf Ezek 18:32

So are you His? Or rather, are we His?

In relationship with, surrendered to, owned by God?

Only Christ was able to perfectly adhere to the Mosaic Covenant. BUT, Heb 9:15 tells us that **"...Christ is the** mediator of a new covenant..."

It's just a bit over 8 weeks 'til Christmas. Hear the Christmas story in a nutshell from **Titus**

**2:11-14**—

"the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself **a people that are his very own** ...

As the body of Christ, do we know whose we are?

We are a people that are *his very own*.

Whose **ducks** are these?

This is the question that was asked by our guest as we drove her to the beach when some ducks were crossing the road.

Cathy Fiam is the leader of Women's Ministries in Churches of Christ in Papua New Guinea. A few churches in Sydney got together to sponsor her to come to World Convention in Brisbane in 2000. Julie was driving Cathy and some friends to Narrabeen Lake. Cathy had never seen ducks, precious egg laying, food producing ducks, without an owner before.

In Indonesia a few years later, we began to understand **Cathy's question:** On more than one occasion we saw a duck-herd gently guiding a flock of ducks along the side of the road.

In so many ways the body life of the church is like a flock of ducks in PNG or Indonesia. Each duck is part of the flock. *And* the flock is owned – every duck and duckling. Likewise the church, the body of Christ is owned – purchased at infinite cost.

His very own - this is the Church, His body - a people belonging to God.

Peter summed it up:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **a people belonging to God**, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

<sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; 1 Pet 2:9 ff

Back in verse 4 Peter says "As you come to him, the living Stone ...**you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house** 1Pet 2:4,5

Have you come to Jesus, the Living Stone? Are you being built into a "spiritual house" growing and serving the body using your Spirit given gifts?

In our individualistic affluent Western culture we tend to forget that the body of Christ, the Spiritual Temple is *community*.

Jesus taught us to pray "**Our Father...** "Forgive *us our* sins..

Opportunity for community prayer: Monday 6:30.7:00 & 7:30am

Paul teaches us that the gifts of God are given to the saints – that is you and me - for the building up of the body, "so that the *body* of Christ may be built up" *Eph 4:12b* ("Spiritual gifts" – future "Body Life" talk?). We are His body.

As we work toward the re-articulation of our identity as the Wyoming Church of Christ let us remember *whose we are*. Let's remember the 3 principles, the injunction to be united in purpose, to love as we have been loved, & that we are His.

Horatio Spafford was described as a man of unusual intelligence and refinement, deeply spiritual and a devoted student of the scriptures. As a successful New York lawyer he invested heavily in real estate around Lake Michigan. In 1871 the great fire of Chicago destroyed almost everything he owned. Shortly prior, his only son had died. Desiring a break for himself and his family, he planned a trip to join close friend and evangelist, D L Moody for a campaign in Great Britain. Being detained at the last minute his wife and 4 daughters sailed ahead. However crossing the Atlantic, their ship was struck by another & sank. His wife cabled from Cardiff a message beginning, "Saved alone". In deep grief, Spafford sailed to join his bereaved wife. En route it is speculated that in the area where his daughters had been lost he penned the words to the hymn – "When peace like a river ... , when troubles like sea billows roll" – but returning to the theme of the redemptive work of Christ that allows us to know *whose we are*, so much so, that no matter what trials may come, we may with him say, "It is well with my soul."