

Possessed

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10, ESV

Possession usually has a sinister ring to it whenever we hear of it whether it is fixation on possession (possessed by our possessions) or, the more diabolical sort, demon possession. In saying that God chooses us, Peter insists that we are possessed or owned by God—not in a coercive or manipulative fashion but loved divinely as God's very own dears. Since we have been created in God's likeness, we have been infused with God's goodness from the very beginning though his likeness has been tainted and marred badly by our sins. Only the coming of God's dearest to take our place could ever erase the ugliness left by sin for wrongdoing is simply wrong. We were never intended to live in a world where our value is judged by performance, talent, beauty or possessions. God sent Jesus into the world to save every person—not just those who are like me.

Being possessed by God means that we are called to a level of excellence worthy of Jesus' sacrifice. Humanity has lost sight not only of how good good can and ought to be but also how hollow and cheap life becomes without it. Living life on the cusp of the next good moment has replaced true goodness. Now the common person expects to live in mansion-like luxury, bask in rich vacation spots and possess only the best. In part, our homes have increasingly become our castles to protect us from the hustle of 24/7 jobs demanding so much of our lives that our need for escape has increased nearly to the breaking point. In a society trying to escape the possession of our souls coming from the corporate sector, is it any wonder that so many resist being possessed by God, religion or church? They see church as trying to take over whatever part of their lives they have leftover so they guard their leisure-time very jealously for it is the only part of life over which they still exercise some control.

On the whole, it is hard for us to imagine that what God offers is for more beautiful and good than what we can make from our own creations. It is difficult for us to imagine that God wants to give us so much more as we live in a world which seeks to take what we have at nearly every turn. Nevertheless, God-possession and demon possession are as opposite as night and day. Demon possession seeks to control and drain whereas God-possession seeks make us divine—not divine in the sense of becoming little gods but to enrich our souls so that we become good through and through. Put simply, God wishes to increase our value, make us rich and adopt us into his family with all the right and riches only he can afford. He does not call us to enslave us, but he calls to serve on the side of goodness.

God has chosen us to be a people filled with mercy and grace to enlighten the world with his goodness so people everywhere will come to see what God made them to be and made them to become again through Jesus Christ. We are God's people called to do God's work. Just as Jesus did not come to domineer over us so we have been called to serve. God's people turn the other cheek, go the second mile and love those who hate them. This world is not as it ought to be, and God calls us to change it by living as Christ did. Our possessions do not possess us, leisure-time does not fuel our sweat and occupation does not consume our souls. God calls us by his love to learn what true love is so we can love others as well as ourselves the way we ought. Only God and his love for us can fill the infinite void in our lives, and we must share what we have found with the whole world.

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