

WHO ARE WE, ANYWAY?

A PEEK INTO GOD'S VIEW OF US

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Imagine yourself as a pitiful orphan child sprawling in the filth along a crowded street in Bombay. You're barely clothed in rags found in the trash, covered with vile sores, and dying of malnutrition and disease. When you die, no one will hardly notice, much less care. You're completely helpless to do anything about your condition. Your situation is hopeless.

As you're contemplating your inevitable death, a Rolls Royce stops at the curb. The richest man in the country steps out, and calls you to come to him. You remember with terror that you had often cursed that man and even tried to spit on him once as he walked by you. But in spite of that, you try to crawl toward him. He stoops down, takes you in his arms and gently lays you in his car. He takes you home, nurses you back to health and adopts you as his own child.

He even takes his own son's riches and shares them with you. You suddenly find yourself in the finest clothes, eating from the most sumptuous table, and living in the most lavish mansion in the country. You slowly come to realize that you are heir to it all, along with His own son. And His son delights in sharing everything He has with you.

You also come to realize that you had nothing to do with your new situation in life except to respond to his invitation. You did absolutely nothing to deserve all that is yours. In fact, you were an "untouchable." So you cannot possibly feel the slightest pride in who you now are, only eternal gratitude to your new Father and to His Son, who did everything for you.

Does this sound familiar? Yet it's so easy to forget! This is the very picture we see in Ephesians, Chapter two. It speaks to us gentile Christians, calling us to never forget what we were without Christ. Not only that, we're encouraged to fully enjoy and appreciate who we are now because of all He has done for us. We reject the slightest hint of pride, and are filled with gratitude to our Father and His Son who have done it all. Let's consider this thrilling account and pray that our Father will enable us to fully understand and appreciate what He has done for us.

First, let's contemplate our miserable, hopeless condition before our Father picked us up and adopted us. Here's how He describes us:

We were dead in our transgressions and sins, we followed the ways of this world, and of the prince of evil, the spirit who still works in those who are disobedient. We lived to gratify the

cravings of our sinful nature, slaves to its desires and thoughts, objects of wrath. We were the "uncircumcised," the "untouchables," separated from Christ, alienated, foreigners, without hope and without God. We were aliens, with an insurmountable wall of hostility between us and God. No hope, nothing to hold on to, nothing to offer of ourselves.

While in this miserable, vile state the Heavenly Father came to us, stretched out His loving hands and took us to be His own. Let's consider what we have become because of His rich mercy and love:

We were made alive together with Christ His own Son. We received God's great love. We were saved by His grace and raised up with Christ. God has seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. We became His very own workmanship to serve Him with good works, which He prepared for us ages ago. We've been brought near to God through His Son's blood. We have Christ Himself as our peace. We are reconciled to our Father and have access to Him by the Spirit. We are now fellow citizens with God's people, members of His very own household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and are actually a part of the holy temple in which God Himself lives in the Spirit. And in the coming ages He will use us as a showcase for the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness toward us in Christ.

He reminds us that all of this is totally His doing, not our own. He did it as a gift. And He says that this work He has done is so great and so wonderful that Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all involved in it.

If only we could fully experience these staggering truths at the deepest level of our being. Amazing things would happen to us. First, every filthy rag of pride and self righteousness would be stripped from us. In fact, our self centeredness would be replaced by the deepest imaginable gratitude and praise to the One who has done so much for us. Boasting of ourselves would never even come to mind. On the other hand, we wouldn't dare to discount or slander who we are, for that would be to scoff at the richness of His mercy and grace. We would realize that to malign ourselves is to put down our Father and His Son.

For who we have become in Christ is a dramatic testimony of who He is according to this passage: rich in mercy, having great love, having a grace that is so rich it can't be measured. He is our peace, our cornerstone, our indweller. Who we are is eternally bound up in who He is. As His workmanship, purchased by Him with the greatest imaginable price, we can humbly appreciate our incredible worth to our Father. Our only reasonable response is a life focused on Him, bent to serve, devoted solely to Him.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich?" 2 Corinthians 8:9.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:1,2.