



## WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE OUGHT WE BE?

2 PETER 3:3-11

Peter warns us “scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.” <sup>5</sup> For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, <sup>6</sup> by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup> But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition (destruction/condemnation) of ungodly men.

<sup>8</sup> But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up [literally: its works will not be found]. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Peter 3:3-11, NKJV).

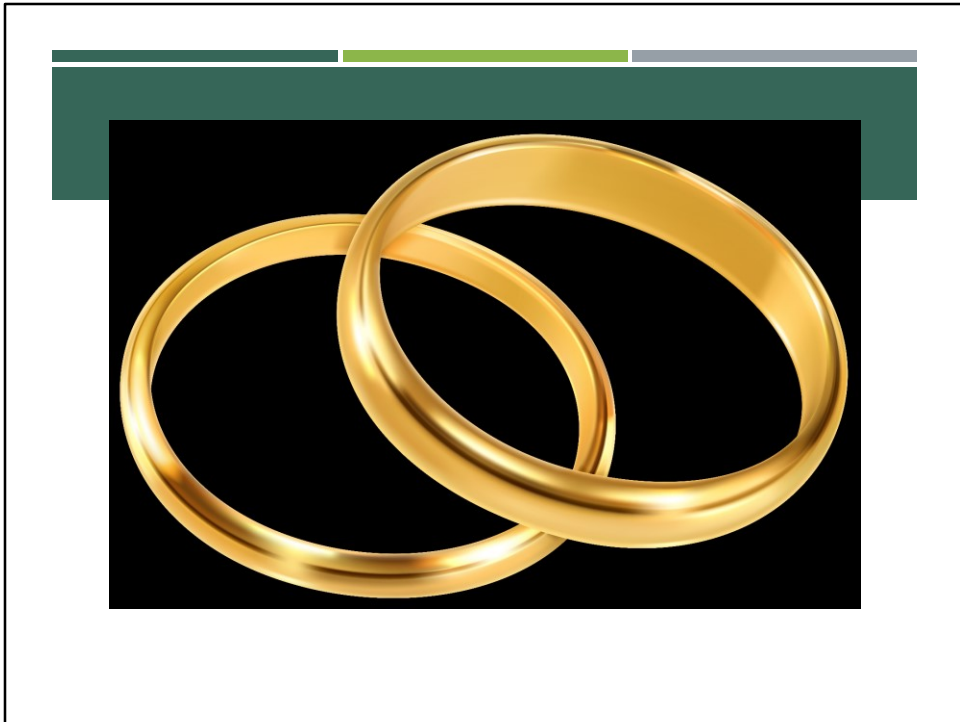
Peter says, “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?” (2 Peter 3:11, NIV). Another way of saying this is what ought to characterize us today since in the future all will be destroyed. We think about the people we are today, in the world we are in today. In Acts 2:40, Peter speaks of his

time as a “corrupt or crooked generation.” In Philippians, Paul exhorts the believers how to live since this is a “crooked and perverse generation” (Philippians 2:15). Hebrews 3:10 says that God “was angry with [the] generation [of Israel in the wilderness] ... [because] their hearts [were] always going astray, and they [did] not [know His] ways.”



Yesterday, roughly 3000 years ago, when Israel followed God out of Egypt and into the wilderness, sounds like today. Through all the generations, things have not changed. We still live in a crooked, corrupt, and perverse generation. In addition to the pressures of a less than prosperous financial living for many of us, we hear the doom and gloom forecasts in terms of climate and energy and food supplies for a growing world population, increased anxiety and depression, while basic morality and courtesy have been turned upside down.

picture from Sweet Publishing / FreeBibleimages.org.



Biblical values such as marriage are becoming more and more obsolete, while living together without a marital commitment is commonplace among heterosexual couples. And homosexual couples want the right to have a so-called marriage recognized as valid (whatever that means . . . considered not a sin?).

Picture from <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/rings-jewellery-wedding-gold-marry-2634929/>



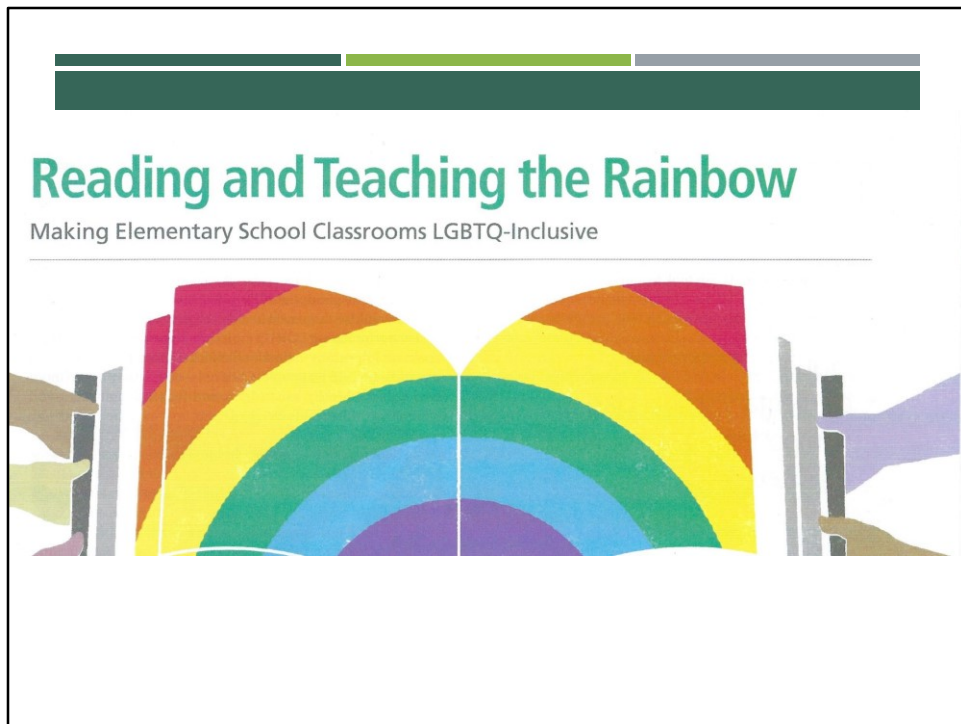
Our younger generations are blazing new territory in a world of electronics, with affects showing up in brain development and lack of relationship and communication skills and an inability to work or sustain attention to a task. Adults are disconnected from their families/children by their own addictions to electronics. Entire lives are placed on social media as though life is a soap opera for common consumption and comment. The messages that enter homes through electronics do not align with Paul’s counsel to think on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy (Phil 4:8). In fact, they are often quite the opposite with messages that laud sinful lifestyles and selfishisness, and make spiritism and demonic evil look attractive and enticing.

Picture from <https://www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-photography-electronic-devices-icons-image27272027>



The continuous distractions of social media and gaming affect our children's education as well. And speaking of education, the public school system of our country exerts a lot of influence in our families' lives when we enroll our children in their schools. This picture shows the motto of a public school painted in the teacher's lounge. It's meant to be warm and fuzzy, giving you a sense of security that this school will take as good care of your child as you do. This may be true of their physical safety – but what of their spiritual well-being?

Personal photo



Schools will indoctrinate our children with messages that we may not even know about. This is the title of an article in the Spring 2019 American Educator journal. Written by two women who identify themselves in the article as “queer-identified women ... who now work in universities as teacher educators” who “help elementary school teachers integrate LGBTQ-inclusive practices into their teaching:” expanding representations of LGBTQ people, questioning gender and sexuality categories and “questioning representations within LGBTQ-inclusive texts.”

I personally know of one child who came home from kindergarten early in the school year with the new idea of homosexuality planted in his mind. And this is not some far-off, big city school. It was a school local to us in rural Minnesota.

## ISAIAH 2:6

- **Mindfulness meditation** encourages focused breathing while guiding your attention to the present moment.
- **Visualization** focuses your mind on the path and pattern of your natural breathing.
- **Guided imagery** encourages you to focus on a happy memory or story that will take your mind off your worries as you breathe.

Another example is from the Marzano research program for schools that is quite popular across America right now that includes information/instruction for teachers about using meditation in the classroom. And although the handbook acknowledges that meditation is from Hinduism and Buddhism, it claims that meditation is “not religious.” Yet a teacher can use “guided meditation” in the classroom to put thoughts or ideas in your child or grandchild’s mind.

This is from a blog (March 2017) about Marzano practices:

Schools “are incorporating mindfulness as a means of improving performance, psychological health, and well-being. ... young children [practice] deep breathing with their stuffed animal “breathing buddies,” mindfulness has become mainstream ... We recommend that educators teach and practice mindfulness strategies with their students on a regular (daily) basis. These strategies include: 1) mindful meditation, 2) mindful breathing, 3) body scans, 4) yoga poses; and 5) unplugging from technology and enjoying silence. (Marzano Research, March 2017 blog, <http://mkt.solutiontree.com/l/77002/2017-03-22/3bm5sl>).

These are eastern religious practices being promoted with our children, about which Isaiah 2:6 says that God “abandoned [His] people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs.” And especially with “guidance,” in this self-induced



hypnotic state, our children can have any number of thoughts planted in their minds.

Our young are vulnerable prey when they spend more hours in a day with strangers than they do with their own families, and hardly any time with the church with the decline in church involvement. Those strangers, whether they be teachers or peers, are forming our children's belief system and character. And in today's culture where God is erased, that is unlikely to be a godly belief system or godly character.

## WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE OUGHT WE TO BE?

**As believers,  
we know things that others do not.**

The draw of the world is extremely powerful because it taps into our natural sinful inclinations. We see more and more of our young people, who we have taught and trained in God's ways, choosing to be among the scoffers Peter told us about. They walk away from the Lord, submerging their sin guilt, denying there even is a God so they don't have to acknowledge their sinfulness, until there is no distinguishing them from the world.

And that's if our young even make it to birth. The powers of evil are angry and trying to destroy mankind any way possible. We see it very clearly in laws that allow infants to be destroyed – murdered - up to the point of birth. Evil is progressing step-by-step to reach the place where no life will be protected, including yours and mine. Our world is degenerating to a savage wickedness that bows to the will of the devil. It is prophesied in Scripture.

Revelation 12:11 tells us the believers “overcame [the accuser, the devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

**As believers, we know things that others do not.** That gives us a special responsibility. It is also the strength we make use of to bring glory to God with our lives as individuals and as a church, as we grow and as we share Jesus with others.

So in a world like this, what kind of people ought we to be?

## WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE OUGHT WE TO BE?

- The *ekklesia* – the “called out ones”
- Assembly of believers
- Matthew 16:16

Let's begin with the kind of people we are:

We are known as the church of God, the *ekklesia*, “the called out ones,” called out of the world to be the established assembly of those who believe the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the son of the living God, who is the king of the future Kingdom of God on earth (Matt 16:16).

So, as Messiah's church, Peter asks “what kind of people ought we be?”

The kind of people we *ought* to be is necessarily (unavoidably) related to our identity as the fellowship of the blood-bought who believe.

WE OUGHT TO BE ...

## A people of truth

Jesus –

the way, the **truth**, the life (John 14:6)

Our fellowship is founded on the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, the future king of the kingdom of God. So we ought to be people who live according to that truth, and according to all God's truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." As people of truth, we live according to the ultimate truth, Jesus – his model, his commands, his expectations.



**WE OUGHT TO BE ...**

**A people of truth**

Living according to reality leads to  
Purpose and Productivity

Truth also means we ought to live according to reality. We know the foundational truths or realities of existence – who is the Creator God, our make-up as humans, what life is about and for, what is expected of us as believers, that the real battle is for righteousness over sin, life over death eternally. We can live with purpose and productivity on God’s behalf because we know what is real and true. We needn’t wander aimlessly in life or wonder what we exist for or try out various religions or causes or drugs for meaning in life.



WE OUGHT TO BE ...

**A people of truth**

Shine light of truth  
on dark deceptions of enemy

We ought to be people who recognize deceptions of the enemy, the lies that hold the world in bondage and can even capture the faithful. Truth is the power that shines light on dark deceptions of the enemy. We shine the light of truth in the darkness, enabling people to escape from the path that leads to death.

God's truth is the word of life, and along with the blood of Jesus, is the power of the people of Jesus' church.

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### **A people of faith**

■ 2 Peter 1:3

■ Romans 3:22; 4:24; 5:1

The truth only benefits if it is believed and trusted. God through “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). We ought to be a people who appropriate the benefits of the blood of Christ by faith.

Faith is the key that provides access to “the righteousness of God” which is “through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe” (Rom. 3:22). Righteousness is “imputed to us who believe in [God] who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead . . . [we are] justified (declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 4:24; 5:1). As a result, we are no longer a people under wrath and condemnation because of sin.



## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### A people of faith

- Fully convinced
- God is able
  - Gives life to the dead
  - Calls things that don't exist as though they did
- Romans 4:17, 21

So we ought to be a people who live by faith, a faith like Abraham's that is "fully convinced that what [God] had promised He was also able to perform." And that our "God ... gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom. 4:17, 21).

As people who have been justified or declared righteous in faith, we ought to be:

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### A people of gratitude

- Colossians 1:12
- Romans 1:21
- 2 Peter 1:3
- 1 Corinthians 10:10
- Philippians 2:14-16

A people of gratitude.

Paul exhorts us to “[give] thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light” (Col. 1:12).

According to Romans 1:21, when we do not glorify and thank God, our thinking becomes futile and our hearts dark. When we do not thank God, a subtle shift occurs whereby we stop recognizing God as the one who “has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3) and begin to think we have control.

We ought not to be a people who complains. Paul uses Israel in the wilderness as an example and says we should not “complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer” (1 Co. 10:10). Complaining indicates that we are not grateful to God for what He has provided for us at that moment. There is clearly a difference between wanting to change unfavorable circumstances and complaining. In one case, we take our concerns to God and invite Him to bring about change. In the case of complaining, though, we continually focus on negatives in such a way that we offend God or dismiss His power to bring change.

In Philippians, Paul exhorts us to “Do all things without complaining and disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you

shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life" (Phil 2:14-16).

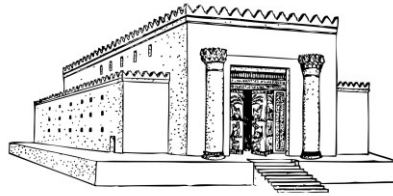
There is an inverse relationship between faith and complaining and a direct relationship between not complaining and becoming blameless.

So with growing faith we ought to be a people of gratitude.

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### A people of holiness

- Temple of God - I Corinthians 3:9, 16
- Spiritual house, holy priesthood –  
I Peter 2:5
- Ephesians 2:19-22



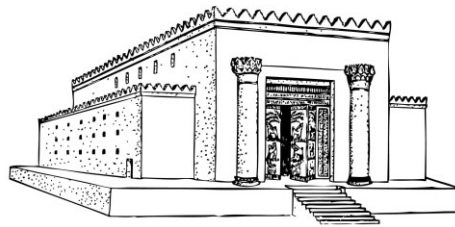
Peter asked “what manner of persons ought you to be *in holy conduct and godliness*” (2 Pet. 3:11, emphasis added). Holiness and godliness were basic characteristics Peter expected of the church. We may not often think of the word “Holy” associated with ourselves because we know we fall far short of the holiness of God. Yet we are called God’s building, the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:9, 16), a holy place. We, “as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Also Ephesians 2:19-22: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### A people of holiness

- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- 2 Peter 1:5-8
- James 1:3-4
- 2 Peter 3:18
- 1 Peter 2:12



As a holy people, the temple of God, we are people who are concerned about our character development, not guided by fickle emotions, changing circumstances, or what our girlfriends or the guys at the office say. Even our ordinary, common experiences are opportunities to be increasingly transformed into the image of our Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). We “add to [our] faith virtue ... knowledge ... self-control ... perseverance ... godliness ... brotherly kindness ... love. For if these things are [ours] and abound, [we] will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8). This brings purpose and fulfillment in life. We know “that the testing of [our] faith produces patience” and patience or “perseverance must finish its work so that [we] may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” as we become more like Jesus (James 1:3-4, NKJV, NIV) .


Peter instructs us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Grace is the unmerited favor granted to us by God, favor that we can never earn or deserve. It is a gift given by God out of His love for us. That grace is the forgiveness of our sins, which we don’t deserve, and the declaration of righteousness that we could never attain on our own. Peter expects us to mature as we experience the great and powerful meaning of our salvation, “having [our] conduct honorable among the Gentiles ... that they may, by [our] good works which they observe, glorify God” (1 Peter 2:12). Unbelievers will be attracted by the holy temple of the church.

Holiness should characterize our conduct.

**WE OUGHT TO BE ...**

**A people of love**

- John 13:35
- 1 Peter 4:8
- Matthew 5:44-45
- John 14:21, 23, 24; 15:10, 13



Since Jesus said the two greatest commandments have to do with love, we ought to be a people of love.

Jesus said, “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Peter instructs “above all things have fervent love (not fervent condemnation or fervent criticism) for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins’” (1 Pet. 4:8). Others will know we are disciples of Jesus by our love – love for God and Jesus, love for one another in the church, love for those who are lost, love for our enemies. Love that stands out in a harsh and unloving world.

Then there is the “greater love ... [that] lay[s] down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). Jesus says to us, “love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons [and daughters] of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:44-45).

Love for God and Jesus is closely related to obedience to them. Jesus said, “He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me ... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word ... he who does not love me does not keep my words ... if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love” (John 14:21a, 23a, 24; 15:10).

Picture from <https://pixabay.com/photos/love-valentine-romantic-heart-3091214/>

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### **A people of obedience**

■ 2 Peter 3:14

■ Romans 8:28

And so, we ought to be a people of obedience.

Peter instructs us to “be diligent to be found ... without spot and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:14).

Paul states we ought to live as obedient slaves to righteousness, restricted to the righteousness of God, even unable to be disobedient. This becomes possible as a result of the interplay between God’s grace and our faith (and a pretty active conscience).

We believe that God is bigger than anything we face in life. He provides, guides, changes circumstances, and causes “all things [to] work together for good to those who love [Him], to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). Bad things become good or have purpose in God’s plan, under God’s oversight.

So we can obey Him without question, without relying on our limited knowledge and wisdom about people and situations. This requires humility before God. Sin is a result of pride – whether it be thinking that “I deserve this” or “I know better than God” or simply “I want this and it doesn’t matter what God says.” Pride can enter our hearts in a subtle way and it takes continual effort to root it out. As humble people, we can be obedient people.



The continued effort and practice of obeying regardless of our own inclinations causes us to grow in the holiness that should characterize us.

To enable us to be the obedient people we should be, we ought to be: People of Prayer.

WE OUGHT TO BE ...

## A people of prayer

Luke 18



Prayer is a great demonstration of faith. Jesus told us the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18). She went to the judge day after day, pleading her case, annoying him by showing up once again until he ruled in her favor. I used to think this parable meant I should be annoying God with my requests until He grew weary of hearing the same old thing from me. But now I think this parable is telling us that if we stop praying, it means we do not have faith that God is able or willing to affect the situation we're praying about.

Prayer tells God:

- We love Him
- We want relationship with Him
- We want Him involved in our lives
- We know He cares about us
- We know He can affect our lives and futures

If we are not praying, as individuals or corporately, we lose a mighty connection with the Creator of the universe. We sacrifice the power of God involved in our lives.

We ought to be a people of prayer.

Picture from <https://www.kisspng.com/png-praying-hands-prayer-man-silhouette-praying-782453/>

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### **A people of the Kingdom**

- A chosen people
- A royal priesthood
- A holy nation
- His special people
  - 1 Peter 2:9-10

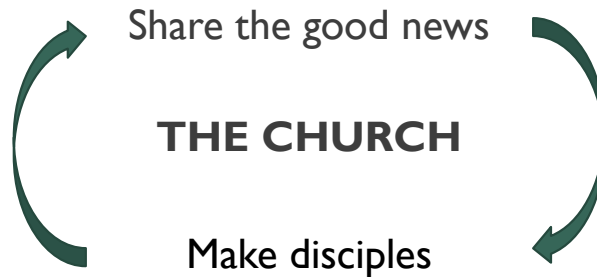
Of course, we should be people of the Kingdom.

We find ourselves back at where we began with faith. Our walk with the Lord began with faith that Jesus is the Anointed King of the coming kingdom and to whom we owe allegiance, as citizens of that Kingdom.

We only exist as a people, as a church because of Jesus. His sacrificial torture and execution was to form his church, made up of those of us who have appropriated the benefits provided by his death. Our identity is bound up with Jesus. The church cannot be separated from him. "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that [we] may proclaim the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light, who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### **A people of the Kingdom**



Jesus is our head, our captain, our king. He directs us, the church, who are his hands and arms and legs and feet and mouth in the world today, his ambassadors to share the good news of salvation and make more disciples for the growth and continuation of his church to share the good news to grow the church and continue to share the good news in an unending cycle of operation until his return. He gave us no other plan of action.

Our lives are encapsulated in the phrase “seek first the Kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33). This means our choices, our lifestyle will be different than those not of the Kingdom, and the effects for the Kingdom will be of primary importance in our decisionmaking and use of resources.

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

**A people of truth**

**A people of faith**

**A people of gratitude**

**A people of holiness**

**A people of love**

**A people of obedience**

**A people of prayer**

**A people of the Kingdom**

What kind of people ought the church be? It will be a fellowship of people who are characterized by truth, faith, gratitude, holiness, love, obedience, prayer, and the message of Kingdom. This, when wrapped in our testimony about Jesus and the Kingdom, can hold out hope and life to those in bondage to sin in this crooked and perverse generation.

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### **A people of repentance**

- 2 Peter 3:17
- 1 John 1:9

But it is true, that as individuals and as a church we fall short of being the people we ought to be. We have moments of weakness and times we disregard God's ways. We let ourselves be guided by our emotions or man's supposed "wisdom" or our own ideas. Peter warns us to "beware lest [we] also fall from [our] own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. 3:17).

So finally, we ought to be a people of repentance. Repentance initiates our individual walks of faith as we recognize our sinful condition and confess we fall short of God's glory and righteousness and acknowledge our need for a Savior. At the beginning of our walk of faith, we repented in our faith and were baptized. We turn away from whatever keeps us bound in sin, rejecting it, avoiding it. But things creep back in or our natural responses get us in trouble and so we acknowledge our failure and repent again, leaning on the promise that "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

### **A people of repentance**

- Revelation 12:11
  - Blood of Christ
  - Word of their testimony
  - Did not love lives even to death

Revelation 12:11 says that the believers overcome through the blood of Christ – which is appropriated by faith in the truth. The believers overcome by the word of their testimony which is demonstrated by gratitude, holiness, love, obedience, prayer, and living for and promoting the Kingdom of God.

And some of us may be called up to make the ultimate sacrifice of our lives in the effort to overcome evil. But even if we don't give, each instance of repentance and rejection of sinfulness in our lives is like a little death. We die to some aspect of our will or character in order to grow in holiness and purity and truth and love and obedience. We do not love a life of sin so much that we will not die to it.

## WE OUGHT TO BE ...

- Philippians 2:15
- I Peter 1:13-19
- I Thessalonians 5:23-24

Paul says we are to be “children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life.”

1 Peter 1: 13-19 - Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup> But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup> for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” <sup>17</sup> Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup> For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

This is only brushing the surface some of the characteristics of the people we, as individuals and corporately as the church, ought to be in a dark, perverse and corrupt, and adulterous generation, but may we be diligent to grow in who we ought to be and put these characteristics in play as we face the issues of our day, the issues of the corrupt generation we live in.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole



spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it (1 Thess. 5:23-24).