

The Way GOD Defines Us, Gives Hope

Today's Scripture: **1 Thess 1:1**

1. We Are Part of a Bigger Story

“The designation of the community as Ekklesia suggests that Paul affirms the continuity of the church with Israel” **The Church According To Paul** by James W. Thompson

In the OT concerning Israel

My chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise. **Isaiah 43:20-21**

In the NT concerning the church

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. **1Peter 2:9**

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” **1Peter 1:14-16**

2. We Are United to God Himself

****The Allure of the Seas PICTURE ****

Christ loved **the church** and gave himself up for her. **Ephesians 5:25**

In him you also are being built together into **a dwelling place for God** by the Spirit. **Ephesians 2:22**

‘In him we live and move and have our being’ **Acts 17:28**

From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. **Romans 11:36**

To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood **nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man**, but of God. **John 1:12-13**

We put no confidence in human effort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. **Philippians 3:3,8-9 NLT**