

WD January 20, 2025

“One-of-a-King”

One of a kind. That’s the kind of label that is applied to unique things. Things like the famous golden mask of King Tut in Egypt; the Eiffel tower in Paris; Mt Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota; or the Biltmore House in Ashville, NC. These are things and places you can only see in one place—they are one-of-a-kind.

One-of-a-kind is also a label we may use for certain people. Recently I was watching a little video about Barnum Bailey’s unique group of people. Charles Stratton, known as general Tom Thumb: Discovered by Barnum at age four, Charles Stratton performed for 40 years until his death in 1883 at 45. At his tallest, he stood roughly three feet. Then there was Chang & Eng: Born in what’s now Thailand, the conjoined twins (called Siamese twins due to their birthplace)—by the way it is said that they had 22 children between them. Not to mention the bearded lady, Annie Jones, Among others. Today we may even apply the label of one-of-a-kind to those like Albert Einstein, or to the Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin.

One-of-a-kinds stand out. They are unique and they hold special attention because of their uniqueness. They may fascinate us. They may even frighten us. But they stand out.

No one stands out like Jesus. When it comes to the relationship God’s people have with their Savior there is nothing else like it. This is the point of Isaiah 43 which starts right off by saying, “But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.’” God and His people are the greatest oddity the world has known. That’s because the world is sinful and cannot understand it; foolishness to some and a stumbling block to others. But this is what we have, you and me. We have a one-of-a-kind Savior who instead of being the conqueror everyone expects--of all things dies for our sins, only to bring Himself back to life so whoever believes in Him will share in that resurrection.

It’s Romans 6 stuff. We are Baptized into his death that we may die with Him and then be raised just as He was. And that too—Baptism is one of a kind. The Lord’s Supper is one of a kind. The Lord’s teaching is one of a kind. Love your enemies, become a servant and you will be great, forgive one another. The world would call us freaks and oddities, but the Lord looks at us as a prize, a treasured possession—or as Isaiah 43:4 reminds us, “precious and honored and loved”.

Isaiah 43 describes a one-of-a-kind relationship that God has with His people. There is none like it. Throughout Isaiah 43 is the reminder first and foremost that there is none like the God of Israel. Verse 10-12 points out that there is no God but God alone. V10 no other before nor after; more importantly—the Lord says, *anihu*, “I am he”. Literally, “I am”—the very same I am of the burning bush. I am is who Jesus describes himself to be several times in John’s Gospel. God is ever present, timeless. V11- “Apart from me there is no Savior; V12- “The Ancient of days, no one else has power to reverse what God can do. He has no rivals. And what He will do is save His people. Because He is the Lord Your God, the Holy One of Israel. He is only One who can do anything for this fallen nation and for this fallen world.

Isaiah 43 follows a scolding of Israel in last verses of Isaiah 42 which is a judgement pronounced upon Israel which has become blind and deaf to the Law and to the Word of the Lord spoken through the prophets. A thorough rebuke includes the destruction of Judah and the end of the Temple at the hands of the Babylonians. Then in Isaiah 43 the tone abruptly shifts in verse 1 with “But now” to describe how God will save His people not just from their enemies but ultimately from their own sinfulness. Sin is why the Savior had to come. He is the only one who can remove sin. More importantly, He will be with Israel and personally see to her salvation.

Our one-of-a-kind Savior establishes a one-of-a-kind relationship. The world calls God’s people “freaks”. Lots of things are said about Christians and the Church, some of it deserved but Isaiah 43:1 tells us, “But now, this is what the Lord says---” Your sin is removed.

“I have called you by name; you are mine.” Vs 1 attaches this declaration with redemption. Fast, forward to our own baptisms. Our names are called out at our Baptisms. Romans 6 tells us that our Baptisms tie to the cross and to the resurrection. Our names are called out in an act of redemption when we are Baptized. The One of a kind, who redeems, calls us His. “You are mine” reveals that we are not just our own but people who belong to the family of Jesus. And that is what distinguishes us from this world.

To the world we are freaks. Yup! We are messed up. We look like all other human beings. We are addicts, sexually immoral, lazy, hypocritical, too ready to call the Hammer to solve our problems, masters of excuses and justifying our actions, selfish, self-important, self-seeking, misguided, masters of artificiality, and able to hold a grudge with the best of them. Most of us stink at being Godly people. We want to be one of a kind like Jesus but in reality we are too often like the rest of the world. But the part that makes us freaks—to believe in Jesus and trust Him with our lives and our future and to turn away from our sin and follow His Word. Faith in Jesus is our distinguishing mark.

All this makes us One-of-a-King. The most unique thing about us in this world is that we belong to the Lord. Because Jesus is one-of-a-kind, we are One-of-a-King.

Pastor Matt Woods
John 3:30