

Podcast 281 God Loves Peculiar Families

Steve: I just got back from North Carolina, where I had the privilege of speaking several times and doing the graduation address and meeting a whole bunch of awesome people, from my Uber driver to the lady that sat next to me on the plane. It was a good trip all the way around. At the same time, banging around and taking little connecting flights while wearing face masks in the airport is arduous.

It was a peculiar trip, and that's what we're going to talk about. Not in the sense that the trip was peculiar, but because I met a lot of peculiar people.

Scott: I bet they felt the same way.

Steve: I want to ask you, what that word "peculiar" means to you, after we pray.

Father, thank You for being our Dad, and thank You that regardless of how we feel or what we're going through, You don't change. Your love doesn't change. Your affection for Your people doesn't change, and so we draw near to You this morning. Help us to have ears to hear what You're talking to us about today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Steve: I've done a little bit of homework this morning, and I looked up what that word, "peculiar," means. However what do you think it means? What's the first thing that pops into your head about the word "peculiar"?

Scott: Unusual. Quirky?

Steve: When look it up on the Dictionary.com, that's what comes up as number one and number two for definitions. Strange, queer, odd, uncommon, unusual. But if you look under the Webster's 1828 Dictionary, he says that "peculiar" is an adjective which comes from Latin peculiaris, meaning "one's own property," which is based on pecus, which means cattle. Peculiar is one's own property. Webster's definitions are, number one: "Appropriate; belonging to a person and to him only." Such as, "Almost every writer has a peculiar style." I would say the synonym for that would be "distinct" or "unique." The second definition is "particular." Again, something special or unique. The fourth one is, "Belonging to a nation, system or other thing, and not to others."

Steve: In our culture, I think we agree, peculiar is usually something strange or unusual, something even a little bit bizarre. I fellowshiped with a bunch of peculiar people, and these people were a combination of those two words. They were uncommon, they were unusual, but they were also special.

I think the definition is, yes, a little uncommon, yes, unique, but also special. I'm going to tell you some true events that happened this past weekend. Friday afternoon, I had already given three talks during the day. This was the last talk of the day which started at ten to five. By ten to six, we're wrapping it up, and I can tell that the people had more questions. And I also knew that there were no sessions following me. Dinnertime was next.

I announced, "If anybody needs to go, it's okay." I think I prayed. Then I said, "But, right now, if you want to ask more questions or hang out and talk about what we just discussed, I am going to stay right here." Nobody moved, and we had several more questions. So now it's about 6 o'clock, an hour and ten minutes in.

There were children there who had sat through an hour and ten minutes and were still mesmerized. That is peculiar, especially after a full day, and these kids are sitting there. There is no way, when I was a kid, that I could have sat through these sessions. But these kids are sitting there, these peculiar homeschool kids.

One family eventually stood up – they were in the second row off to my left – and they were walking out of the room with an exit door on the side. As the little peanut, I'm going to say she was five or six years old, pushed the door open she turned around, because I had just said, "Hey, thanks for coming!" And this little girl turns around, and and hollers out, "That was a good speech!"

Wow! It just blesses me sharing this story! I thought, "What an amazing kid!" Affirming me after she sat an hour and ten minutes. Instead of saying, "Where are we going to eat? Man, I'm glad we're gone," she turns around and hollers out to me, "That was a good speech!" My heart just swelled. I thought, "What a special child, and unusual!"

Steve: Another situation happened, and this was the next morning. I'd already met the mom a couple times, as she'd been at the booth and they were using Math-U-See. And these little kids were walking with her through they hallway, probably 7 and 5, and she's got one on each hand. I recognized her, and I started to put the pieces together that these are probably kids that recognize me from the videos.

I stopped, and we exchanged greetings, and I looked down at the boys, and I shook the one guy's hand, and I said, "Hey, nice to meet you! I'm Steve." Then I looked at his little brother and I said, "Hey pal! How are you doing?" He says, "I'm fine, thank you. How are you?" You could have knocked me over with a feather. And I looked at him, and I was still holding onto his hand, and I said, "You are the first kid that ever asked me how I'm doing!" I thought, "Wow!"

I met another family from North Carolina, and there were, one, two, three four, five siblings. And they showed up at my booth, and they stood there, and the first thing that attracted me to them was they had a firm handshake. First of all, handshakes are even rare nowadays – you do all this bumping stuff – but the fact is that, especially the girls – there was a 25-year-old, I think, and a 21-year-old – they shook my hand with a grip. And I commented. I said, "Nice grip!" And they said, "Yeah, I don't like this dead fish stuff," I said, "Me either!"

I got to know them and they are wonderful. After my last formal session, which I was talking about David, and I was talking about coming into His presence with singing, they came up to me and said, "You know, we found a piano in the back of this room.

Would you like to sing some hymns? We play the piano.” And I said, “Yes!” So I went over there with my laptop, and I pulled up my hymn book as a PDF, Hymns for Family Worship, and I said, “Here you go.” So we put my laptop on top of the piano, and we sang several hymns. They sang beautiful harmony, and, oh! My heart was swelling again, because I love hymns, and I love to sing with people who love to sing hymns. I asked them “Where’s your mom and dad?” Because I wanted to go find their mom and dad and tell them, “These are some peculiar children that you have here!” Because not only did they have firm handshakes, but they were five siblings hanging out together – three girls, two boys, and just really special. I could have hung out with them the whole weekend. And then they said to me, “Well, Mom and Dad don’t come.” And I said, “Why?” They replied, “Well, we have nine children in our family, and there’s still a couple at home, and for the last year and this year, we just come ourselves.” So here’s five homeschool kids that take Friday and Saturday to go to a homeschool conference on their own. I’m friends with three of them now on Facebook. They’re special, and unusual. And peculiar.

Friday afternoon, I had a talk with dads. These dads were taking off work, attending sessions on how to be a godly husband and father, investing time in their family instead of their hobbies or their jobs or their latest car. During our session, we got deep. And I’m still praying for one of the fellows that was there that’s going through a difficult time. He’s married, but he came up to me, and he and his son were there together, and he looked me in the eye, and he says, “Man, I’m going through what you went through a couple years ago,” and I’m praying for him. That’s unusual to find dads that will take off a day of work, especially in this climate which we live when the economy’s starting to tank. Those men are special, they are unusual, they belong to a peculiar group.

Then there were moms. Let me take a deep breath so I don’t cry. These moms are particularly peculiar because they, to me, are like a grain of wheat. They are dying to themselves. They are putting their family first, they’re putting their husband first, they’re putting their kids first. They’re following Christ. They’re laying their lives down for those that they love. I honor them.

Graduation was Saturday night, and I was asked to speak. I talked about being peculiar. I said to the homeschool graduates, “Did you guys ever feel peculiar?” Because you know that they do, being a homeschooler. And I talked about how we really don’t fit into our culture, do we? In fact, I started off by reading 2 Timothy, where it talks about, “In the last days, men shall be ... Lovers of self, without natural affection, disobedient to parents...” a whole long list.

I challenged them – be different! Do the opposite! I then read a list of antonyms. They are lovers of God, they’re content, they’re obedient to parents, they’re thankful,

they're grateful. By God's grace, we can be different from the world in which we live. We can be peculiar. Because we are going to stand out.

Then I had them do something based on Proverbs 31. I said, "Do you think you can pull this off?" And they beautifully cooperated. I said, "Okay, graduates, please stand up." And there was about 60 and they all stood up. No shuffling, no moaning or groaning. They stood right up. I said, "Moms, could you please stand up?" And all the moms were in a certain section. And I said, "All right. Can everybody maintain eye contact? I'm not going to ask you to go find your mom. That would be too disruptive. Just maintain eye contact." So they all moved around little bit, and moms were moving, and everybody's waving until they had eye contact. And I said, "Okay, ready?" And then I read from Proverbs 31.

Steve: I read this chapter one day because I was thinking about my wife, and I was wondering, how does she find encouragement in what she's doing? I watch her laying down her life for me and my sons, especially being a homeschool mom. She doesn't have time to have a career. She doesn't have time to be the president of the local garden club or whatever. She can't even volunteer anymore at the crisis pregnancy center. She can't be running the Sunday school program. These are the kinds of moms that have to just say no to good things so they can say yes to the best. I watched my wife do that.

I'll start in the 23rd verse: "Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land." This must mean that her husband's successful. "She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant." I thought about the homeschool mom that's selling essential oils or whatever. Got their own business, photographer like your wife, etc. Then, "Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."

There is nobody smarter than a homeschool mom, especially those that have multiple children, have taught multiple subjects, had multiple kids over a couple decades. These people are smart! They're the ones that need to get the diplomas. "She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness." As I'm reading this verse, I thought, "This is describing Sandi."

Then the next verse was the key: "Her children" – the very ones that she's doing this for – "Her children rise up and call her blessed." So I had all those graduates rise up, look their mother in the eye, and I said, "On the count of three, say, 'Blessed!'" One, two, three, and all those kids looked at their mom and said, "Blessed!" I said, "Now that you're warmed up, let's do it again." And they went, "Blessed!" And I tried to encourage them, I said, "Don't make this a one-time deal. Keep doing it!" I said, "This needs to be ongoing. We need to continue to say, 'Thanks, Mom, for doing what you do, for being who you are. We honor you, and bless you.'"

Then I had the graduates sit down, and I said, “Okay, dads. Your turn. Stand up, please.” So the husbands stood up, I said, “Let’s have some eye contact.” So they looked at their wives, and I said, “Now, repeat after me.” Because this is the Word of God. Proverbs 31 says, “Her husband also, and he praises her. Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” And these men looked their wife in the eye and said that. And I said, “All right, kiss the bride and sit down.” It was awesome! This is what we need to be doing. As we know, this is something that the world will never do because the world is corrupt. The world, the flesh, and the devil are moving in completely opposite directions of God and His people because the world would never take that time to honor moms. We took the time, and we honored them.

In the King James Version, there are seven times that God’s people are called “peculiar.” I’m going to read a couple of them. First time it appears, Exodus 19:5: “Therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people.” A peculiar treasure. But don’t just think of weird, but think of special. Think of unusual. Think of particular. Think of all those words we said before that have to do. Unique.

Deuteronomy 14:2: “Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” Now there’s two thoughts that were introduced there. God has chosen us to be a peculiar people, and we’re not peculiar to be peculiar; we’re peculiar so that we can be close to Him. “Unto Himself.” That’s the rest of the picture. Psalm 135:4: “The LORD hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure.”

Titus 2:14: “Who gave Himself for us” – this is talking about Christ – “that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

1 Peter 2:9: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

Now let me read these same verses in modern translations. None of them use the word “peculiar,” at least all the ones that I checked. 1 Peter 2:9 in the ESV: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession.” Another translation says, “His own special possession.” So when you read the word “peculiar,” or hear the word “peculiar,” remember, we are a people for His own treasured, special possession.

This is what God’s called us to. We have been purchased. We have been purified. We have been called to be God’s own special, treasured possession, and that’s what makes us peculiar.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for calling us. Thank You for purchasing us. Thank You for choosing us. Thank You that we are now a special, treasured possession of Yours, and we worship You. We thank You. We can't even put words to it. Our hearts respond to this call on our hearts. May You make us more and more peculiar. Help us to not fit into this present world, but fit us for eternity, when we can sit with You on Your throne and marry Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.