

This Sunday Barry preached from Numbers 6 concerning the law of the Nazarite. Now Barry reminded us Sunday that as the new Israel all of what God was doing with Israel as a nation is now fulfilled in us (Exodus 19:4-6, 1 Peter 2:9), so that all of God's people, including you and I, are Nazarites. And at the heart of this law is God's purpose for his people to be a people set apart for him. We are God's holy nation in whom and through whom he is carrying out his purposes in the world by our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Barry pointed out three things in this text that were really a blessing and defined what it means to be set apart as the people of God. First is that we are a people called away from a life consumed by the pleasures, ease and comfort of this world. This is what is at issue in the command to not come in contact with anything that was produced by the grape. It wasn't a legalistic rule but a means of calling his people away from a life consumed by the pleasures of the world. Secondly we are a people who are called to fully devote ourselves to God's purposes in the world. This is what is at the heart of the command to not shave the head or touch a dead body. Again these are not legalistic rules but a way for God to communicate to this people that they are a people of life and not death and that all of their strength is to be used for his purposes. Thirdly all of this is covered by atonement. God has atoned for all of our sin through the sacrifice of his Son, freeing us to be, in all that we do, a people who are set apart for God. All the sacrifices pointed to this work of God which he fully accomplished in Jesus. It is because of what Jesus did that we are free to be a people set apart for the Lord to carry out his purposes in the world.

As you gather this week consider these questions together:

1. What does it mean to be holy, to be set apart by God?
2. What are some of the things in our culture that pull on us and seek to draw us away from God's purposes in the world? Starbucks coffee maybe☺?
3. What does it mean that God has called us to be a people of life and not death?
4. How does knowing that all our sin has been atoned for help us as we seek to be a people who are set apart, who seek to carry out God's purposes in the world?
5. What else was helpful to you in Sunday's sermon?