

Every Nation, Tribe, and People

Scripture Reading — Revelation 7:9-17

There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language. — Revelation 7:9

During graduate school I found a job parking cars. A private club near campus had an -extra small parking lot at their California address, so club members needed to routinely double-park their late model Jaguars and BMWs and vintage Cadillacs. After parking, they left the keys in their car. It was my job to move a car if it was blocking another car's way out.

So day after day I sat in the parking lot, soaking up sunshine in a folding chair. All the while local bankers, investment gurus, judges, and politicians met inside. I didn't think about it at first—it was a job within walking distance to my apartment and school. It was great! But the club was, at the time, male only. And, as far as I can tell, it was white only. One day protestors gathered to object that they were excluded. Big city decisions were being made inside, but only certain people could enter.

Many people look at church the same way—as if it's a club for certain kinds of people. Maybe it seems reserved for “good people” or those who are “respectable” or religiously polished. If so, that means there's no room in the church for most of us.

But, thankfully, that is not true of the church of Jesus. Look closely at the picture of the church in today's verses—it includes a dazzling variety of the redeemed and baptized! The church consists of the forgiven, not the perfect!

Prayer

Lord, our eyes are made blind by sin. Open them up by your love and grace. Help us to see people the way you do. Amen.

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