

Sep. 3, 2017

# Kindling Gospel Urgency

1 Peter 2:1-12

We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in allthings to the glory of God in the joy of all peoples.

LTS: Psa. 141

Every year we look forward this Lord's Day in Sep. to talk about what's coming up in the next ministry year.

## Our fallible, Dependent Plan

- New Website [www.cbcbfortworth.org](http://www.cbcbfortworth.org)
- New Bulletins
- Started college ministry
- Started reaching out to TCU, looking for ways to reach out to other schools as well
- Encouraging increased involvement at Rivertree School (Terrence & Julie Butler)
- Volleyball court, basketball
- Missions conference in February 16-18
- Steve Lawson coming next year (Institute for Expository Preaching, June 18-20). We are also trying to confirm him to Preach that Sunday.
- BCDC next year, Stuart Scott has agreed to come help us with the Oct. conference.
- New elder (at least 1) Russ Darr
- Men's retreat (bring your sons 14+) Oct. 13-14
- Uganda mission trip - Next Summer
- New Church Office building to replace the ole Burns Building.
- We are also working on the church's Doctrinal Statement, attempting to sharpen and clarify...

We hope you are excited about these things as we are, but there are more important things to talk about this morning, so please open your bibles with me and turn to 1 Peter chapter two. At the beginning of each ministry year I think it is helpful for us to refresh on our stated purpose for existence as a church. That statement is on the back of our new bulletin, so if you don't know it you can read it. Let's say it together.

We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ

in all things  
to the glory of God  
in the joy of all peoples.

I want to talk to you this morning about “Gospel Urgency.” As we await our Lord’s return he has given us an exciting mission to fulfill. It’s wonderful to meet together every Lord’s Day morning, but the Christian life is about more than sermons, Bible studies, and fellowship. God has also called us to reach the lost of our community with the life-changing message of the gospel of Jesus; the same message by which each of us were saved. But how do we do that and what keeps us from it?

The primary text we used in the formation of our purpose statement is right here in 1 Peter 2. Let’s take a moment to read 1 Pet. 2:4-12

Read 1 Pet. 2:4-12

## **I. Motivation for Gospel Urgency:**

Now, because the centerpiece of our time together will be the Lord's Supper this morning, I need to significantly abbreviate the exposition of this text. But let’s use the time we have to work through it.

Using Israel’s O.T. temple worship as rhetorical model to build upon, Peter rehearses the spiritual privileges all Christians have, owing to our relationship with Christ. Let’s briefly consider these privileges one at a time.

### **1. Vital Union with Christ: (Read v. 4-5)**

- A. Peter is thinking of the temple of the Lord. The first step in building such a grand structure was to lay a perfectly crafted cornerstone.  
“The cornerstone of a building was extremely important because it sets all the proper angles for the building. It is like the building’s plumb line in that it sets the horizontal and vertical lines of the rest of the building.”<sup>1</sup>
- B. To the church, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. Here in verse 4 Peter calls him “a living stone” because the church is not built upon a dead prophet but on a Living Savior. Jesus Christ is risen!
- C. One characteristic of this stone is that it is “rejected by men,” but “chosen and precious” to God. That phrase (chosen and precious) is repeated in v. 6.  
O beloved. Don’t fret and worry when the world rejects you. It

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *1 Peter*, p. 121

rejected Christ also! And like Christ, you are “chosen and precious” in the sight of God.

- D. Those of us who belong to Christ are like (5) “living stones.” Christ’s resurrection life has become our life and now we together are being built into a “spiritual house,” that is, a house where the Spirit lives, the dwelling place of God! In the O.T. it was the Temple, but now God’s spiritual house is the church!
- E. The church is formed when the Living Stone (Christ) is joined together with many living stones (Christians) to form the household of God - the church.
- F. This is a foundational teaching because all the other spiritual privileges believers have from God are based on our union with Christ (Jn. 15:1-11).

## **2. Fruitful Ministry Through Christ: (Read 5)**

- A. The church is not only the new temple of the Lord, as it were, we are also “a holy priesthood.” In other words, we minister before God in a variety of ways that honor and glorify Him. Typically, in the N.T. These ministries are called spiritual sacrifices.
- B. For example, Rom. 12:1 “Offering your bodies as a living sacrifice” (Probably a reference to leading an upright life<sup>2</sup>); (Heb. 13:15) Praising God; (Heb. 13:16) Doing good to others (Heb. 13:16); sharing what you have with others (Heb. 13:16); Leading people to Christ (Rom. 15:16); Loving others sacrificially (Eph. 5:2). Prayer (Rev. 8:3). All of these basic Christian duties are considered by God to be acceptable sacrifices. To do them is to engage in fruitful ministry. To do them is to fulfil our ministry as holy priests who represent God to the world.
- C. So the second privilege is Fruitful ministry.

## **3. Eternal security in Christ: (Read v. 6)**

- A. The privilege here is that whoever comes to this “Living Stone” in faith for salvation will never be put to shame (or “disappointed”).
- B. The word for put to shame means humiliated. Peter is saying that it is not foolish to fix your hope on Jesus Christ. On the final day when all will face judgment before God, those who believed in Christ will not be disappointed or humiliated. As Schreiner says, “They will not

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<sup>2</sup> BDAG

experience the embarrassment of judgment but the glory of approval. The phrase “will never be ashamed,” therefore, is another way of saying they will be honored.” Whoever believes in Jesus now will be honored then!<sup>3</sup>

- C. This, my friend, is ultimate security! People have all kinds of ideas about how to make themselves acceptable to God. Most are hoping their good deeds and good intentions will earn them God’s favor. But if that is your hope, you will indeed be humiliated on that final day. You will have reason to be ashamed.
- D. Beloved, the world wants to shame you out of your faith in Jesus. But the only ones who will be honored and accepted by God in the end are those who have fixed their hope completely on him. To trust in Christ is to have ultimate security.
- E. Peter emphasizes this in verse 7, “So the honor is for you who believe...” But for those who refuse to believe, the stone (Jesus Christ) that they rejected God has established as the cornerstone. But to them, he is a “stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. Why (8)? Because they disobeyed the word (i.e. the gospel), as they were destined to do.”
- F. But you, beloved, are people of divine privilege! You have
  - Vital Union with Christ,
  - Fruitful Ministry in Christ,
  - Eternal Security in Christ,
  - Furthermore,

#### 4. A new identity because of Christ (9)

- A. You are “a chosen race.”
- B. Verse 10 says, “Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people.” We have a new identity. We are the elect of God.
- C. In Ephesians chapter 1 Paul says that “He chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy [set apart for Himself] and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption as son’s through Jesus Christ...”
- D. If you ask, “When did God start loving me? God answers, “Before the creation of the world.” And at just the right time He adopted you and made you his own, and gave you His name. You who were once called children of wrath are now called children of God.

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<sup>3</sup> Schreiner, T. R. (2003). [\*1, 2 Peter, Jude\*](#) (Vol. 37, p. 110). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

E. The is the privilege of a new identity in Christ.

## 5. Divine Authority Under Christ (9)

- A. Christians make up NOT only a holy priesthood but a royal priesthood.
- B. As a royal priesthood, believers represent the King of kings and Lord of lords in this world. We minister His truth in a wicked and perverse generation. We are not like those whose ideas of True & False, Right & Wrong are like wax figurines that can be bent, shaped, and messaged into whatever form is most agreeable to the world. NO! In Christ, we have the authority to say to this world that Right and Wrong have a fixed point in the universe that never changes. It is the infinite being and character of God!
- C. And we are not like so many religious leaders who declare to the world that all religious roads lead to heaven. NO! We boldly declare that “No one comes to the Father but through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son!
- D. To be sure, ours is a derived authority. It comes from God and is not our own. But as a Royal Priesthood we are called to proclaim the truth of the King no matter what others may so confidently and foolishly declare.
- E. This, beloved, is a great privilege and weighty responsibility. But O how God loves and blesses His people when they serve Him faithfully.
- F. We have the privilege of divine authority in Christ.
- G. And finally,

## 6. An Exclusive Relationship with God in Christ (9)

- A. On top of all the other privileges Peter says we are “a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.”
- B. In other words, we are a people who are set apart for the Lord to enjoy His special presence and favor.

7. Do you see it beloved? We are a such privileged people!

- Christ has united Himself to us.
- Christ bears His fruit through us.
- Christ sovereignly secures us
- Christ adopted and provides for us
- Christ has shared His authority with us.
- Christ has secured an Exclusive Relationship with the Father for us.

8. These are only a sampling of the excellencies of Christ. There is so much more! And we would do well to search them out in Scripture, meditate on them, let them fill our hearts with joy, and let them accomplish God's intended purpose in our lives.

9. God desires for us to respond to all of this in a certain way. Do you realize that? While we remain in this world God wants us to respond to His grace in a specific way. In fact, Peter tells us what it is in (v. 9) "So that we all (the church) may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

9. Outward expression of worship and praise of Jesus should be the most natural thing in the world for followers of Christ. As subterranean heat warms the geyser causing water naturally to erupt, so the love of God warms the heart causing praise to overflow from our lips.

10. My friends, this is what we were made for.

Isaiah 43:20–21 God says: I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, <sup>21</sup> the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.

Psalm 96:3 The Psalmist commands: "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!... Splendor and majesty are before Him Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name; Bring an offering and come into His courts. Worship the Lord in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns;"

11. The growing knowledge of how privileged we are in Christ should produce in us what I am calling "Gospel Urgency." That is, it should move us to be ever on the lookout for opportunities to share with people how marvelous Jesus is in the hope that it will open their hearts to the gospel.

- My friend, how is it that you can have such joy in the midst of your cancer? And you say, "The source of my Joy is the unshakable hope I have in Jesus Christ. He has promised me eternal life and I believe Him. And I can't wait to see Him.
- Dear neighbor, how is it that you and your church friends keep bringing meals to our home while my wife is ill?" And you say, "You know, Christ has loved and cared for us so many times when we were in need, and we know that it pleases Him when we show the same love to others. It really is our pleasure to serve you.

12. You may say, "Well, that's not really sharing the gospel." And you would be right. But consider this, I heard a statistic recently that said over 90% of the those who trust

Christ were introduced to Him by a friend who demonstrated the love of Christ and/or invited them to church?

13. You know what? You don't have to be a theologian to declare the excellencies of Christ. You don't have to get specialized training in evangelism to declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

14. His mercies – His grace toward us – should cause us to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things in all things to the glory of God in the joy of all peoples.

15. That is our motivation for Gospel Urgency

## **II. Reformation of Gospel Urgency**

1. Why do so few people possess this kind of gospel urgency? Why do so few look for opportunities to talk to others about Jesus?

- Perhaps because you have never heard it explained like this and now you're ready to get after it!
- Often times, however, it's because the love of Christ that would otherwise motivate us to love, serve, and speak to others has grown cold.

2. You know, one of the dominant themes of this passage of Scripture is Holiness. But how does holiness fit with the idea of proclaiming the excellencies of Christ? And for that matter, what is holiness.

3. We might say that holiness is having a life that's morally pure. To be holy is to separate yourself from the world and stop doing the sin you love. Certainly, both of these fit well into the definition of holiness. But would you like a simple and comprehensive definition of holiness? How about this.

To be holy is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. This is the holiness that pleases God.

4. And Peter presupposes these two aspects of holiness (Loving God and loving people). For example, he assumes his readers love Jesus. Speaking of Him in 1:8 he writes, "Though you have not seen him, you love Him. And though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory..."

5. Do you want to restore that sense of gospel urgency that you had the day you first believed? Rekindle your love for Jesus. And let the knowledge and experience of His love re-ignite a love for people.

6. Peter talks about several kinds of holiness in these first two chapters.

- A. Child-like holiness: (1:13-15)
- B. Loving Holiness: (1:22-23)
- C. Hungry Holiness: (2:1-3)
- D. Sacrificial Holiness (2:4-5)
- E. Hate-defying Holiness (2:11-12)

7. Do you want a deep sense of gospel urgency? Do you want to be effective in helping people come to Christ? It starts with holiness.

- A. Rekindle your love for Christ.
- B. Let the love of Christ rekindle your love for people.
- C. Let your love for people open opportunities to proclaim the excellencies of Christ.

8. I suspect the 2018 ministry year could be the finest, most joyful and fruitful year we have ever had as a church. Want to be a part of that? Then resolve to fulfill God's purpose for your life!

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