

The Church's Purpose//1

Peter 2:9-10

the power of grace creates the promises we have in Jesus to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

Have your Bible's turn to 1 Peter 2.

So, there is one question that is asked that will forever grab the attention of the greatest philosophers and the most curious three-year-olds. That question is "why?". If you took a philosophy class in college, you may have read somewhere or heard someone ask, why do we exist? If you've been around a child any period of time you've probably asked the question over and over again after giving what you think is a great answer. Daddy do you love me? Yes. Why? Because you are my daughter. Why? Because God gave you to me. Mommy because he thought I would be a good dad and if you ask me why I'm here more time I might not be one! We've been there, right?

So, when we go to ask you today why does the church exist, how would you answer that? Some would say the church exists to sing songs and praise God. Some would say it's a great place to use your gifts to serve each other. Some would say it's a great place to meet and encourage one another. Some of you hear that and say "if that's the case, here's mine?" Amen?

So, I pray that what we will talk about today will not only help you understand why the church exists, but will also cause us to praise the Lord together.

Let's read the text. It says, **1 Peter 2:9-10 (ESV) — 9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Our observation today is that *the power of grace creates the promises we have in Jesus which pushes us to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus.*

As we look at this today I will be upfront and honest in saying this text is directed straight to those who have a relationship with Jesus. With that being said, if you are in here today and you don't know who Jesus is, I don't want you to check out because you will see that this passage, as much as it is for Christians, is for you as well.

In fact, my hope is that you will see the beauty of what it means to belong to Jesus and have your hearts gripped with a desire to live this in your own life. That is my prayer for us today.

Three things for us to see today: the promises we have in Jesus; the power of grace; The purpose of the church.

1. The promises we have in Jesus

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,

Peter is using this section of scripture to encourage the persecuted church in Asia Minor and he does it by pointing them to specific sections in the Old Testament when God worked in the lives of

of Israel. Now Peter is doing this because from the gate he is these promises that God laid out for Israel, are ours as well in What are they?

1 Race (I am chosen)

ase "a chosen race" echoes Isa. 43:3, which announces that mself is Israel's only savior, who will deliver his people from xile in Babylon.

osen group of individuals who all stem from a common e, in the case of Isaiah, that lineage was Abraham. However, eter is doing here is using this same thinking to apply it to who are found in Jesus. Our common lineage? The fact that re sinners and saved by Jesus.

osen race belongs to God, why? Not because of anything that d, or how attractive they were or how much money they had t school they went to, no, they were chosen because God d "this is who I wanted."

ly are we chosen by God, we are a new race. This chosen race e up of those who are not of the same nationality. That that if you are a follower of Jesus you have brothers and in Iran, Iraq, Syria, North Korea, at the border, in Raleigh, in lle, so on and so on.

I am unapologetically a black man and proud of it. I am fully and wonderfully made and my wife praises God for that. ' However, I belong to a race that is greater than my own. My y is that I belong to the race of the chosen people of God. esn't mean that I ignore who God made me or who God ou. That means that I see your skin color, I see the struggles

you wrestle with, I lean into it with you, and help to seek reconciliation on your behalf because we are family.

That's the beauty of the diverse church that God has called ch people from every tribe, tongue and nation.

If that is true, then one implication is that the makeup of local churches should reflect the diversity of peoples living in our communities. God chooses the un-alike. People who would nc been friends because of their ethnicity, age or socio-economic background are built into the church and made into a family.

That is good news for each of us because inside of every persc desire to be chosen. We all had mini anxiety attacks in middle school when it came to being picked on teams. Nobody wante be picked last and even as I mention this some of you are remembering that time when you were picked very last. That We want to be chosen.

Some of you thought that if you compromised your standards you allowed him or her to have sex with you that they would c you and they didn't and it left you with a broken heart.

Some of you thought that if you cut corners and kissed up to t boss that you would get that promotion but someone else wa chosen over you.

Your spouse left you because they decided to choose another or a life of being single instead of digging in their heels to worl the marriage.

We all want to be chosen so badly and some of you will be

ointed that you will never be chosen here. If I can encourage
th something today...**God wants you**. He chooses the ones
ant to be chosen and the ones who desire to choose other
over Him.

n and shame that you think are too great that you are
rassed to let anyone in on. God knows it, and He still wants

ery sermon, I prepare I was listening to music and Willie
s song "I Choose You" came on. If you don't know that song,
missing out on a classic! Willie goes through the song listing
ny reasons why he is choosing this girl to be his. Like Willie,
oooses us. On the flip side, we have nothing to add, no solid
accomplishments and yet through Jesus, God decided to
: us!

e a chosen race! We are a new race made up of many
ties, chosen by God on the basis of His love and born again of
shable seed!

n't stop there. In fact, the next three are direct quotes from
: 19 when God makes a covenant with Israel at Mt Sinai.
ontinue to look at these promises...

il Priesthood

prehend this, we need to understand the role of a priest in
t Israel. A priest had special access to God on behalf of the
. They would pray to God for the people. They would offer

4. Jobes, [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand

sacrifices to God for the people, and they would deliver messa
from God to the people.

In order to do that, the priest was to be sanctified and set apa
from the people at large for their ministry to God, with who th
had special access.

Now catch this, in God saying that the people themselves are
the priests, He is stating that as a whole, the entire nation of a
Israel was to be set apart from the nations of the world to ser
God through obedience to the covenant with him.

But now Peter declares similarly that collectively Christian beli
are to perform that same function with respect to the nations
among which they are scattered.

By obedience to the new covenant in Christ's blood (1 Pet. 1:2
they are to be sanctified and set apart from the peoples of the
world.¹

But what must not be forgotten in this is how now there is acc
God. The priest was able to meet with God, interact with God,
what was given to him by God and present it to the people an
that is true then we must remember that this is true for us as

As a priest, you have direct access to God! If that's true, why a
not making the most of that intimate relationship with Him? T
God of the universe who created everything allows us to com
with Him and we sorta shrug our shoulders at the idea. We re
word of God as if it's a chore, we speed through our prayers. I

Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 161.

we because I'm guilty of it too. Why do we do this? Many of us tend to just go home after today and instead of turning on the lights, we just go before the Lord and be with him, no other reason than because we can do it with no boundaries.

is on by saying that we are a...

Nation

be a holy nation," Peter continues, building on the new-covenant theme and he is stating that even though they are a part of the culture of their time, they belong to a new nation constituted by God's covenants in Christ.

The designation of believers as a holy nation reinforces the concept of holiness and sanctification. It refers not so much to their moral behavior but to their calling as a people set apart for God, and it carries with it a calling to moral quality. Ancient Israel's holiness as a nation was derived from the holy King of the universe, who had cut a covenant with them, binding them to himself as his chosen nation and his special possession.

The words "chosen," "royal," and "holy" are adjectives that describe the nature of the relationship of Christian believers to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.²

To be a holy nation. When speaking of holiness here, we need to understand it in two ways:

First of all, we have a positional holiness. We are holy because God

said we are. God is holy, and whatever God says is holy, is holy. That's what we would call a positional holiness. That means that we are not everything that we want to be, or one day will be, but because God said it, it's true.

We are set apart from everything and everyone else. We're set apart by a holy God. We're separated by His designation; we are called out of an unholy nation to be a holy nation. That's what it means when we say there's a positional holiness that's true. You're holy based off what God Has said. This is not a green light to go ahead and do whatever you want to do.

You see, the Bible also talks about a practical holiness. That has to do with your behavior. Jesus, in John chapter 17, when He prayed for us, He prayed that we would be sanctified by truth. And then He said, "Father, Your word is truth." So, every time we open our eyes to the truth and every time we hear truth, that is God's way of increasingly making us holy. When we hear the declarations of God, we change our behavior, we change our language, we change our attitude. We know that our behavior can match our description of what God said about a holy nation.

In 1 Peter 1:15-16, just the previous passage, it says this: **"But you who called you is holy..."** That's God... **You also be holy in all your conduct...** He says you must be holy in all your conduct, **"...since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"** Question for you to consider: Does your life look holy like the one who is calling you to be holy? To ask it a different way, do you look like your daddy?

From time to time my wife Rachel will tell me how someone w

1. I. Jobes, [1 Peter](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand

Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 161-162.

or has said to her “ooh, those babies look just like they
You just carried those kids.” We got some strong genes in
Lain Dynasty. They look like me because they belong to me,
ir daddy! Shouldn’t we look like the one who we belong to?

It’s about perfection because we live an already not yet. We
ng to mess up, a lot! However, if there are areas in our lives
we see areas of unholiness, we’ve got to crush it, because it
sistent with who our daddy is.

leads us to our final promise...

1. The power of grace (I belong to God)
atement is an allusion to both Exod. 19:5 and Isa. 43:20–21,
God refers to his holy nation in the context of the exodus and
the Babylonian exile, respectively, as the people out of all
oples of the world that God claims for himself.

When promises are ours in Jesus, then we are God’s possession.
think so much of our lives would change if we rested in this.
nderstood that we are God’s possession, that all of us, not
e we a chosen race, not only are we a holy nation, not only
all these things that we’ve covered, but we are a possession

means God is protecting us. God is watching over our steps.
for our joy and for his glory. We are being protected in ways
we can’t see.

When being walked through valleys in a way that is gracious and
ous and loving, and we can’t see. We are his possession. We

have found from the Scriptures that God is a jealous God. He is
saying, “I’m jealous about you. I am jealous for you. I am jealous
the glory of my name be manifested in you.” He is for us.

Family, if you are in Christ, you are a chosen race, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession. This isn’t a
“maybe sorta” thing. He says **YOU ARE**. This is a promise and that
promise only comes about through Jesus Christ.

Which leads us to our second point...

2. The power of grace

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received
mercy.

Before you can claim the promises that are yours in Jesus, you
remember where you came from. Because when we remember
where we came from we can appreciate the power of grace even
more.

Peter continues with his Old Testament excursion by referenc
what was said in Hosea 2:23. If you are not familiar with the
prophet Hosea in the Old Testament, I would encourage you to
it because it’s an accurate description about the nation of Isra
how they acted towards God. In fact, it’s a picture of how we
towards God and yet He remains faithful to us.

You see, God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute named

and Gomer, even after marrying Hosea, would continue in profession. Leaving Hosea and being with other men. God told Hosea to know how He feels when the people of Israel don't love God regularly.

Eventually happens is that Gomer leaves Hosea to be with another man who abuses her and eventually in chapter three she is taken to the marketplace to be sold. And then God speaks to Hosea in chapter two and this is what Peter is quoting.

19 And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the truth. **21** "And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD, I will answer for the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, **22** and the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer for Jezreel, **23** and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.'" **Hosea 2:19-23**

So this to Hosea and then He turns to Hosea and says, go and get your wife and what does he do? He buys her and brings her back home and he says, you will not cheat on me anymore, you will belong to me and I belong to you.

So He tells Hosea to redeem their relationship why? Because that is the plan intended to do with His people. "I will have mercy on those people who have no mercy. I will make those "not my people" to be my people. Peter here has the audacity to say that this is taking place now.

In Jesus Christ, God stepped into the marketplace and bought us back. We belong to Him and He belongs to us.

One of the highlights of my job is getting the chance to officiate at weddings. At this point I've lost count of how many weddings I've done but I can tell you this, and this isn't tongue in cheek, literally every wedding I have officiated, the bride is always the most beautiful person in the room.

I mean, they are flawless. Their makeup is on point, their hair is perfect, they are beautiful. Want to know what's interesting about that?

What many of you may not know about the bride leading up to the wedding, she has trial runs on her makeup and her hair. Seriously my wife is a cosmetologist and so she does this quite often for all of the weddings I officiate. They schedule appointments weeks or months earlier to figure out how to be the most beautiful bride on their special day. Everything that isn't perfect, they learn to cover up.

Why do they do that? Clearly they believe they have the imperfections or they wouldn't go through all the trouble. So why do they do it? So that when their groom sees them on their wedding day, no matter what they look like in reality, he sees them as the most perfect person ever. In that moment he can not waver and say that I belong to her and she belongs to me.

Guys, because Jesus went and died on the cross and took the wrath of God on Himself, His sacrifice covers every imperfection we have. There is a reason why in Matthew He calls himself the

room. He is waiting for His bride. And because of His blood
ing our imperfections, He will see us as perfect and Holy and
e to be received by Him. All based on His grace.

in you ever committed? Covered. Every lie you ever told.
d. Every addiction you've run to after saying you wouldn't
re. Covered. Every secret you are ashamed of? Covered.
By the blood of Jesus. That is the power of grace.

s grace of Jesus that enables the promises we talked about
to become a reality for us. It is by grace that we are chosen.
grace that we are a new people. It is by grace that we have
to God as priests. It is by grace that we can become a holy
. It is by grace that we can belong to God fully. It is by grace
u are now reconciled. Jesus stepped into the marketplace of
and our shame and HE **CLAIMED** us to be His!

know Jesus this is the part where you stop and say to yourself
e hymn writer said "And can it be? That thou, my God, should
me?" Am I dreaming this? That I am this loved, this cared for,
erished that He would want a relationship with me? This is
ment where you put the pen down from taking notes and lift
yes to heaven and say thank you God for sending Jesus to die
so that I could know you and be known by you!

do not know Jesus can I encourage you with something
These promises, this love, this dedication can be yours if only
ould believe in Jesus.

not do anything to earn this love. You cannot live a life

worthy enough for this love. You cannot clean yourself up first
come to Him, no he takes you as you are. If you believe in His
sacrifice for you on the cross you simply get this love as a gift.
may think, is it that easy? Yup! It is. It is that easy. It's here that
ask, what's the catch? There isn't one.

However, when you do come to know Jesus, He gives you a ne
purpose in life. You see we find our purpose in what we do an
we know and how much money we make or what people thin
about us.

When you come to know Jesus He gives you a purpose that er
you the chance to tell everyone about Him. The one who save
and loved you and called you from death to life.

This purpose is for all of us and it brings everything to a head.
third point today...

3. The purpose of the church

Why were the promises that we have through Christ given to
For a purpose. What is that purpose? Let's look at the second
of verse 9...

**9b. , that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called
out of darkness into his marvelous light.**

Guys, He made us a chosen race, **so that...**

He made us a royal priesthood, **so that...**

He made us a holy nation, **so that...**

He made us a possession for Himself, **so that...**

We weren't His people now we are, **so that...**

We did not have mercy, now we have it, **so that...**

bold proclaim the excellencies of God! For making God known to all nations. Our purpose as proclaimers of God is tied to what He has commanded us to do.

our purpose! We have been given a mission of verbal proclamation. We are to make much of God—to pursue his fame. The phrase “excellencies” refers to, “a manifestation of power characterized by excellence—‘wonderful act, powerful deed, wonderful deed.’”³

When we proclaim, then, is God’s excellencies displayed in his powerful deeds. Specifically, Peter links God’s excellencies with his work in calling his readers out of darkness and into “his marvelous light.”

As a holy nation and royal priesthood, then, we have been chosen by God as his special possession in order to proclaim his glorious name and salvation. We are people who have been brought out of darkness into light, and now seek to display that light to those still in darkness.

This has always been the purpose of the church. Jesus commanded his disciples to be his witnesses all the way back in Acts 1:8. Why? To tell the truth about him! And the truth about Jesus is that He is supremely excellent! Nothing has changed in our day: as a royal priesthood and holy nation, the church is called to proclaim the excellencies of God’s marvelous saving act in Jesus.

Why are we moving to Nashville, TN. Guys, does it look like I love country music? NO! But I enjoy telling people about Jesus and I believe that with the significant growth and trajectory of

Nashville that there are people there that we need to carry the excellencies of Jesus to.

Question for you today? Are you carrying the excellencies of Jesus anywhere? Is the gospel of Jesus so dear to you? Are you so blown away with the idea of being called out of darkness into the marvelous light? If not, why?

If we’re honest, I think a lot of times it isn’t that we don’t understand the call to be obedient in sharing the truth of Jesus. We would say that we suffer from what Paul Tripp calls Awe amnesia. We have lost the awe in what Christ has done for us that in turn forces us to forget our purpose.

I believe that lie that I deserve to be a son of God. I believe that lie that somehow I earned this standing. I believe the lie that I’m somehow good enough and when I believe those lies I lose sight of the truth of the gospel. That I couldn’t earn this and I didn’t deserve it. Do you find yourself there sometimes?

I heard Pastor Spence say it this way one time, that when we are called to live as God says, it’s often an indicator that we don’t see as God sees.

Listen, when we remember the goodness of God and everything that He has done for us we can’t help but reach out to others and say “Hey man, come and see this! Look at what God has done

Listen to me, the most convincing thing about the Christian faith is God and who He is and what He has done. When people see

³ Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, page 681.

ning different in my life, my response should never be, “yeah me.” no it should be “look at the God who has changed me! you see is all glory to God!”

How can you proclaim the excellencies of the God who called you out of darkness into His light?

How do you think it starts with remembering that you were once in the darkness? How do you begin with. I don't know if I can't stress this enough. Listen, it's not saying you remember your past to get into this dark spot of darkness. It's saying, “I was once in the darkness, I can't believe I did that” mentality. Listen, who the Lord has set free is free indeed. If you trusted Christ, you are free from the bondage of the past and it can no longer condemn you anymore! Praise God for that!

How do you experience freedom from condemnation? We don't deserve that? We are all guilty of sin. We have all fallen short of the glory of God. But we have received it and for that reason, it should force us to look to the Lord in worship for what He has done for us.

How do you start with remembering but it also requires us to live our lives in a way that is going to point people to Jesus. Will you make excuses? Yes. Will you mess up often? Yes. But through the power of the Holy Spirit, we fight to live our lives in such a way that when someone asks why we aren't living like everyone else, it gives us a reason to speak of our status as a holy people set apart by Jesus' blood shed for us.

How do you live? It means we also need to use our mouths. Yes, live a life of thanksgiving for what you have been called but speak about what Jesus has done for you!

Romans 10:14 paints the picture for us when it says **14 How will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?**

You must use words. Peter goes on to say in chapter 3 to be ready to give an answer to the reason of the hope that you have. If you can figure out a way to communicate that, ok...but Peter and most of the apostles scripture is clear on this point. We proclaim the excellencies of God by telling of what He's done.

Question, who in your life needs to hear about the excellencies of Christ and what is keeping you from telling them? That is our purpose church.

The power of grace creates the promises we have in Jesus which pushes us to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Pray

