

Doxological Evangelism 1 Peter 2:4-12

So far we have talked about the identity of the church. There I emphasized that our identity as the people of God called out by His Word must precede everything else. Last Sunday I spoke on the character of our community, a kind of Graceville. Rather than simply using the word, my challenge to us was that we become a community of grace in actuality. This morning, as I conclude this series I want us to now consider our duty. Exactly what mission is the Lord calling us to embrace? It is that question that this passage from 1 Peter will help us answer.

Scripture Reading

Walking down the aisles of HEB or Wal Mart one is confronted with an amazing variety of options to delight the stomach, amaze the eyes and satisfy even the pickiest eater. Options abound! It is the nature of our consumer nation. We are a nation with hungry appetites for gadgets, gizmos, food and flare! And, as economics go who can argue with such opportunity and delight?

Even so, as I said last week with such a culture of consumerism surrounding it is impossible for us in the Church to not be affected. It is understandable that churches would begin to think in terms of what will attract. What will be the “attractor factor?” Such a culture has not only tempted us to market the services our churches provide, it has led us even to try to market Jesus. Driven by the apparent successfulness of marketing strategies, people reason why not make Christianity about what it can do for you. After all, consider all of wonderful fruits that we tend to think come from living a Christian life

- Successful, wealthy and debt free
- Married and relationally secure
- Beautiful and independent
- Moral and obedient

You fill in the blank. Each of us has thought, “Isn’t Jesus the means to my “best” life? By “best” we mean some version of the American Dream. Yet such consumer oriented approaches to Jesus radically upend his Lordship. No longer is Jesus Lord. Like all successful companies understand, the consumer is Lord. What the consumer wants, the consumer gets. **Today we live in a time in the history of the church where we say Jesus is Lord, but we really act as though we are.** We keep Jesus around because of what we think he promises.

And, **when Christians have become Lord in the church the mission of the church is bound to change.** No wonder we have made Christianity to be the **means to my earthly satisfaction;** I am now in charge.

Nevertheless, Peter would challenge such notions with these verses. The great reason to embrace Christianity is not so that we can **get what we want as though God had made a bargain with us and put prosperity on sale for all those who get “sold-out.”** Rather, it is to **give God what He deserves. In other words, it is worship.**

Christianity is not the means to worldly prosperity; it is the end of it of using God as a means to any end. Christianity replaces all such dreams with a **theo-centric or God-centered vision of life! He now becomes the center of our world. He is no longer a means, but the end! He becomes the reason for all in our lives.**

How does such a God-centered vision affect the mission of Redeemer?

1) Worship Is the Purpose of the Church!

When Peter writes in verse 5,

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (5)

Here Peter refers to our **primary function** or mission as Christians: as those who have become a holy priesthood made alive by the powerful working of God we are to offer **spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**. By this Peter means that the whole of our lives are to be a doxology! The word doxology simply comes from two Greek words: doxa, meaning glory and logia, meaning words. Doxology means the offer of words to the glory of God. In other words, the whole our lives are to be lives of worship where we glorify the God.

Such a conclusion is further confirmed when we consider the titles God gives us. In verse five we are called *holy priests* and in verse nine, *royal priests*. Both of these titles call to mind our function as priests of God in the church of Christ—to lead the people of God in worship. Yet unlike the OT where only certain people could become priests and offer the animal sacrifices, now **all the people of God can offer the sacrifices of their worshipping hearts**.

I am reminded of a story someone from our church told me. It seems that after moving into their new home they were robbed, just like my family a few months ago. Several items were stolen including their crystal glasses. Weeks later they found themselves antiquing in a hill country town and stumbled into a store which had their very glasses. This was not a case of matching crystal; these were the actual glasses that had been from their home. Immediately the man began to explain his situation to the owner of the store to no avail. The owner explained, if he wanted those glasses he was going to have to buy them back. Of course, this meant buying them twice. Oh, the absurdity of it. Yet that is exactly what he did. They were twice bought and so twice as special!

As Christians we should consider our lives “twice bought.” We were made by the handiwork of God who created us for his good pleasure. Yet instead of honoring him as the Lord of our lives, we spurned him. We gave ourselves to other, lesser gods. Yet he was not deterred. As chapter one, verses 18 & 19, reminded us, by the blood of Jesus we were ransomed and made alive from our former selves. **By creation and redemption, we owe God our absolute allegiance!**

How can we not adore the one who has given us life?

At Redeemer, we say that we want to worship God’s greatness. This is what we mean. **We want to adore the one who has given us life**. We want to **see him rightly** and we want to **savor him truly** for all that he is for us in Jesus Christ! While we certainly receive the gifts and graces of the Gospel in worship, **worship is preeminently about giving to God not getting from God**. **We come to sacrifice the praise of our lips, not to get toys for our sacks or hearts as it were**.

Key point: The question we must ask ourselves is this: Has my life been so upended by the grace of the Gospel that a worship-centered life makes sense to me? In other words, do I want to worship and give God his worth because I have now seen him and I have now savored him? Upon reflection, **doxology is the only way we can relate to God**.

As a church do we reflect such a Gospel-bought priority? Are our lives soaked with the knowledge God so that when we are squeezed his praise is what drips from our lips! Is this the attitude that we bring into McAllister every week? Is the attitude that we take to our Bibles studies and prayer times?

2) Witness Is the Purpose of the Church!

Yet such doxology is never a private affair. Peter envisions not a church cloistered off from the rest of the world as if it were some special group preoccupied with their unique hobby. This

organization is not akin to the local fly-fisherman association. Rather, he envisions a community that is front and center in the culture which is serving up a real and hopeful alternative. It is clear that Peter envisions the church to be in the world because in verse 12 he assumes that we are “among the Gentile.”

Furthermore, the purpose for such close proximity to non-believers is also clearly seen in verse 12,

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Here Peter teaches us that our witness has as its goal the doxology of the nations! The great purpose of witness is worship. **But for such worship to take place, our witness must be not only the sacrifice of our lips, it must be the sacrifice of our lives—a life well-lived.**

- **We not only worship with our lips, our witness is a transformed life that tells a story.** As Francis Schaeffer said, “The greatest apologetic is a changed life.” No one can refute a life that is now different and few things are as compelling to a non-believer to become a worshipper when they encounter true change. What kind of story is our life telling?
- **We not only worship with our lips, our witness is a transformed life that invites participation (6).**

This is what I mean by evangelism. Worship is more than what we do with our lips and so is evangelism. Doxology is about worshipful lips, but also worshipful lives. And when that doxology is public it has a powerful, evangelistic affect. People are changed because they have witnessed worship!

How should such a conclusion affect us here at Redeemer?

3) This Is Salvation (2:7)

There is one final aspect of the mission of the church that of which we should never lose sight—our delight. Salvation is the basis for such a missional outlook for the church. Worship and Witness have as their motivation the blessings of one’s salvation. Far from sacrificing our delight, worship and witness are the mechanism by which we taste and see that the Lord is good (3)! This is our honor according to verse 7. Here Peter uses this interesting word to refer to special privilege that those who belong to Christ enjoy. In some translations it will be read as precious. Regardless, the point is the same. Our missional responsibility is no burden because of the delight that we share in the Gospel of our salvation. No responsibility is too great for our Lord who has purchased so great a salvation.

You see, doxological evangelism makes sense to only one kind of person—the person in whom salvation has truly taken root. By extension we could say that the only kind of church where such priorities make sense is the church where Jesus Christ is seen as the great liberator of hearts from themselves. Only then would we want to give ourselves to our Lord and lead others to that very same devotion.

Only salvation makes doxology and evangelism make any sense! Otherwise, worldly prosperity would make a worthy end. Yet in light of the treasures of grace, our lives must be called to a grander purpose—the purpose of worship of our great God and the witness to our great God!

This morning sermon’s is both an exhortation for us to find our true purpose as worshippers and witnesses to fame and glory of God. But it is also an invitation to those who have compromised their convictions or who never had any convictions concerning the Savior of the world. Come and

give yourself to the only one who is worthy of your complete and total allegiance. For he alone possesses salvation and he alone can compel your heart and life to a new and eternally satisfying purpose.