

Jan.12, 2020

Proclaiming Christ's Excellencies

Various Scriptures

Vision Sermon before Keith's Church Plant

B.I. "We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things, to the glory of God in the joy of all peoples."

LTS: 1 Peter 2:1-10

The role of serving as the preaching elder of Calvary Bible Church comes with a significant benefit: I not only get to preach God's word week after week, but once a year I also get to stand before this body to talk about vision for the future. Usually, we do this at the beginning September because it marks the beginning of a new ministry year. But on the years when we approach the launch of a new church plant it seems best to do it early. So, today is what we have traditionally called vision Sunday. That is, today is the day that I get to tell you about what the elders believe is the direction the Lord would have us take in the year 2020.

We all know that there are a significant number of people who are new to Calvary Bible Church, and we hope that all of you will be with us for a very long time. So, it makes sense, I think, to go back to basic; to refresh on some of the Scriptures that make up the foundation of our vision for this church. We have actually been doing that for the past several months by strategically preaching and teaching certain foundational doctrines. One of the most recent was a seven-part series on the church.

Calvary Bible Church was founded on a high view of God, a high view of His word, and a high view of the church. And now, 25 years after the founding of Calvary Bible Church, our foundational commitments remains unchanged. And I can tell you that in the years ahead we will remain committed to these values because whenever we exalt God, his Word, and his church we actually fulfill an higher mandate – the Goal for which we were created; namely that in us Jesus Christ would be seen as preeminent.

In coming years, therefore, you can expect more preaching and teaching that is designed to inspire within your souls a high view of God, a high view of his word (especially the gospel), and a high view of his church.

By now I suspect most of you have seen or heard us recite our church's purpose statement, but it has been quite a few years since we took the time to refresh on the biblical underpinnings of that statement. So, this morning I want to take us back to that foundational statement (which we have on display in the hallway outside these doors) and unpack the Scriptures behind it. Let's begin by reciting the statement and then we will dig into the Scriptures. Say it with me, now.

“We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
 In all things
 To the glory of God
 In the joy of all peoples”

There are no wasted words here. Every phrase is shaped and refined to communicate a rock-solid biblical mandate for Christ's church, and each is derived from Scripture. Let's look at it one piece at a time.

I. We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ...

1. Turn with me to 1 Peter 2. The first phrase of our statement is extremely important for us because it clarifies what we are supposed to do. Husbands and wives, do you know what God's highest goal for your marriage is? Dads, do you know what God has called you to do in your workplace? Moms, do you know what God has called you to do at home? Children (and teenagers), do you know what God wants you to do when you are sitting in class or playing games with your friends or eating your cereal in the morning? Peter makes it clear for us right here in the text. But let me start with some context.

2. In verses 1-6 of 1 Pet. 2, the apostle pictures for us a new temple of the Lord. It's a temple made by God Himself NOT of rock dug out of the earth, but of the people who have rested all their hope for eternity upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We are (as Peter says) “living stones” that are built upon the great cornerstone who is Jesus Christ.

Read 4-6

So, God is building a new temple and we, his people, are the stones with which he builds.

3. In verses 7-8 then, he describes those who reject the cornerstone.
4. Finally in verse 9, he explains why God has chosen to use us as choice stones for His spiritual house, His temple. Peter writes

Read v. 9

5. Beloved, do you really understand why God created us and saved us? We exist to “proclaimed the excellencies of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

A. BTW: Paul says the same thing in Col. 1.

B. “He “[that is, God the Father] has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

6. In the O.T. the temple of the Lord its priesthood and sacrifices and everything related to it were established by God to set His glory on display for the world to see, and wonder at, and delight in. Today, the temple no longer exists, so God’s people are now endowed with the high privilege and responsibility of calling attention to the glory of God by the way we live in this world. We who have found God’s salvation in Christ alone now live as a kind of a royal priesthood dedicated to proclaiming the excellencies of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

7. This is why God put us on earth!

A. We have not been placed here to moralize our culture.

B. We have not been placed here to accumulate earthly riches and comforts.

C. God didn’t put us on earth so we could make a name for ourselves.

D. Rather, He placed us here to proclaim to the world that Christ is Excellent above all things! Or (as we are learning in our study of Colossians) that in all things Christ would be preeminent.

- E. When in Psalm 8 when David looked into the heavens and saw that seemingly infinite blanket of stars, he said what we should say. “O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is your name...”
- F. You want to know how to make an impact on the world even if you are not a gifted evangelist? Simply resolve to view every circumstance as an opportunity to show people that Christ is gloriously excellent!
- G. We do this every time we give God praise for the glory of a sunrise, or a forest or a river or the sea. When we look at something that God has made and say, “Wow! Isn’t God good!” we proclaim his excellencies.
- H. When we explain a decision by saying, “I have concluded that the Lord would be pleased if...” we declare the excellencies of Christ.
- I. When a child willingly and cheerfully obeys his parents even though he doesn’t really want to but just because the Bible says he should, or when he prays, “Lord thank you for my mom and dad and my brothers and sisters,” he proclaims the excellencies of Christ.
- J. Whenever we deny ourselves the pleasure of sin in a moment of temptation, we proclaim the excellencies of Christ.
- K. Beloved, this is why God created us! So “we exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ.”
- L. Second, notice the occasion of proclaiming His excellencies. When should we do it? At church? In family worship? When we feel good about life?

II. In All Things:

1. “We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ *in all things*...” You see, the attitudes of the Christian heart are supposed to be governed by the truth of God’s written word. And one of the fundamental truths of Scripture is the

reality that God is absolutely sovereign over all things. In Rom. 8:28 Paul says, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

2. So no matter what our circumstance, no matter what news from the doctor, or the outcome of the biopsy; no matter what happens on Wall Street or in our bank accounts; no matter how deep the disappointment or how staggering the betrayal, we can respond in a way that declares “Christ is excellent in all things!

3. This is an essential N.T. truth.

- A. 1 Thes. 5:18 the command is, “In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”
- B. Eph. 5:20 we are told to “always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;”
- C. Phil. 2:14-15 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.” Why “Lights?” Because our lives radiate the glory and excellencies of Christ.
- D. 1 Pet. 4:11 “Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever.
- E. So, we exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ, in all things. Now, **what’s the goal?** What do we hope to accomplish by viewing every circumstance in life as a platform for proclaiming Christ’s excellencies? Our goal is two-fold.
- F. First, we do it simply to glorify God.

III. “To the glory of God.”

1. “We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things, to the glory of God.” Again, this is why God created us. The Westminster Confession declares that the chief end of man is... to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
2. But too often God’s people lose sight of our purpose. We think the chief end of man is to be happy without circumstances. But God created us to live in the joy of imaging forth the glory of Christ regardless of our circumstances.
3. This is why the apostle Paul wrote (2 Cor. 5:9) that he always made it his ambition, whether on earth or in heaven, to be pleasing to the Lord. It’s also why he exhorted us (1 Cor. 10:31) that “whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
4. I wasn’t kidding when I said that Christ’s excellencies can be declared simply in giving thanks for the daily blessings and disappointments of life. Even mundane things matter to God!
5. But then again, the big things matter as well. In the really big picture of history, what we see is that in the last day, everyone will declare the excellencies of Christ. Paul said (Phil. 2:9-11) “that God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that EVERY tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
6. So you see why our purpose statement says: “We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things to the glory of God.” We want to ensure that everything we do has a Godward focus rather than self-focus.
7. And that Godward focus propels us beyond our comfort zones and into the world, if we will trust His word and His Spirit. And that brings us to the last phrase of the statement:
8. So, our **the goal** of proclaiming the excellencies of Christ in all things is The glory of God. And as we pursue that ultimate goal, there will be fruit – NOT only in our lives, but among the nations. Or, as our statement reads...

IV. In the joy of all peoples.

1. “We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things, to the glory of God in the joy of all peoples.” Our own joy over what we have found in Jesus should feel incomplete until it is expressed to others. We should not be satisfied in our personal relationship with Christ unless we are actively inviting others to know the joy of forgiving grace that we have found in Him.

2. Again, the words here are chosen carefully “In the joy of all peoples.” Jesus said to His disciples (Jn. 15:11), “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

A. You see, Salvation and joy are often connected in Scripture. Coming into a reconciled relationship with God always produces abundant joy in the heart of the man or woman who exercises faith in Christ.

B. But this joy is not just for a small group of people. It’s not just for Jews, or middle-class western Gentiles. No! When the angel announced Jesus’ birth he said, “behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for (who?)... all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

3. This is the gospel! This is the good news! God has brought joy to sinners who deserve the gloom and terror of a just wrath! And this joy is for all peoples. So, David said in Psalm 67 “Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.”

4. The call of missions is to take the joy we have found in Jesus Christ to all the peoples of the earth. This is our life-long mission. It is our purpose. And it is our great delight.

5. The only question is whether or not we will choose to live the in joyful fulfillment of our calling.

6. This was Paul's commitment in Phil. 1:20-21, "My eager expectation and hope is that Christ will be magnified in my body whether by life or by death because for me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

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V. Application for Calvary Bible Church:

As the elders of Calvary Bible Church see it, God's great purpose for his people should find expression in a practical, strategic plan. So, every year we come up with what we call our Fallible Dependent Plan for turning these propositional truths into action. So, here is a taste of our plan for 2020.

1. We believe Calvary Bible Church should proclaim the excellencies of Christ by planting churches.
 - A. We believe God has called and uniquely equipped us to plant churches in north Texas. It has been 4 years and 8 months since our first church plant in Mansfield, TX. By God's grace Living Hope Bible Church will surpass the five-year mark on June 14 of this year.
 - B. On June 21 (one week after the Living Hope anniversary) Christ Fellowship Bible Church will have their very first public worship service. And all God's people said... AMEN!
 - C. Beloved, that's only (23) weeks away.
 - D. That means in 23 weeks 80+ men women and children are going to disappear. On June 21 when we come for worship it may feel like the Rapture has happened and we've been Left Behind!
 - E. That's going to be hard. Why have we done this? Why do we do this? Why do we plan to do it again? Because we exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ is all things, to

the glory of God in the joy of all peoples.

2. Ministry Training – E4M.

- A. Since we have a long-term vision for planting churches, we desperately need a means of training men to discover and live up to God's call on their lives. We need men who have a deep, rich knowledge of the word; men who can effectively share the gospel with the lost. Men who can lead their families, and small groups. Men who can teach and some who can preach.
- B. So, we are proposing for September to launch a very robust strategy for training men. It will be a three year program that will require three hours every Sunday evening plus a significant – but doable – amount of reading at home.
- C. I can't possibly unpack all the details, but men, get ready! This is going to be great! AND BTW: there will also be a component of that training which will be for the women.

3. New Elders:

- A. We trust the Lord will use the Equipping for Ministry training to raise up a few elders for future ministry, but we can't afford to wait till then.
- B. With that in mind, we want to assure you that though we will be losing two elders to the church plant, we are actively taking steps to replace those dear brothers with other men who qualify and aspire and are available to become elders.

4. New Associate Pastor:

- A. For the last 8 months we have been searching for a man to take Keith's place as Associate Pastor of Calvary Bible Church. We had 15-16 men apply for the position and it was a privilege to get to know all of them. A number of them would have been a really good fit, but at the end of

the day we could choose only one.

- B. So today I would like to introduce to you the new associate pastor of Calvary Bible Church – Randy Barlow along with his wife, Savannah.
- C. Randy is from Blooming Grove, TX. Pop 860
- D. Savannah is from Popularville. Miss.
- E. The two of them met at a Christian college in Arkansas. Randy is currently working of the completion of his ThM at the Master’s Seminary. Before they met Savannah spent two years in China and can speak Manderin (with a southern accent).
- F. Randy and Savannah have two children, daughter Ruby (age 11 months) and Abram and 3 ½.
- G. When we set out to find Keith’s replacement, we knew it would be difficult, and no one can really replace Keith and Kaity. But in the providence of God I have been privileged to get to know Randy and Savanna and have found them to be very humble, gracious, and highly competent servants of Christ. You don’t yet know how blessed you’re going to be to know them, but you will.
- H. We are hoping the Lord will allow them to move to the Fort Worth area in February

5. Mission Trip:

- A. Taking the joy of Jesus to all peoples is a tall order, and we hope the Lord will raise up some spiritually mature, faithful, and gifted men and women to break away from the comforts of the USA to fulfill God’s call on your life to some other people-group who needs to see the gospel lived, and hear the gospel proclaimed.
- B. In order to inspire that kind of thinking, we are planning a trip – probably to Ukraine next year. This year we overlooked Immanuel’s Child, so next year – instead of

sending the stars and the funds we want to go and help those church planters

6. New Counselors:

A. CBC is an official Training Center for the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC). I have often said that our most fruitful evangelistic ministry aside from the pulpit ministry, is the ministry of BC. The problem is, we currently have a 6 month waiting list.

B. We need women counselors (and men as well). So beginning in September, we want to begin offering the training during the Sunday School hour.

7. New Playground and perhaps a shade structure over the patio. More personal ministry happens around the playground after service than perhaps anywhere else.

8. Shepherding a Child's Heart

A. Since we have so many families with young children we want to offer some concentrated attention on Child training.

B. Damon Cupp will lead.

9. Small Group in Weatherford

A. For those of you who have not signed up for a small group, I want to announce a new option. This week we have added a group for those who live in the Weatherford area. If anyone wishes to change their preference over to that group, we welcome that decision.

B. Damon Cupp will lead that group.

10. Christmas service:

A. This will be an event for all three churches.

Why are we committed to making the sacrifices to accomplish these things? It's because we understand that, **"We exist to proclaim the excellencies of Christ in all things, to the glory of God in the joy of all peoples."**