

The Churches Privilege and its Obligation

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

What is the purpose for the churches' existence or what is her work on earth? Numerous reasons have been given. Some would say the church exists to transform the culture, some would say it is the churches responsibility to shape the very structures of society through political and social activism; others might say it is to minister to the poor, the sick and the disadvantaged. While still yet there are those who would say its purpose is to promote peace and justice amongst men, to fight against intolerance and exploitation; to bring about a more perfect society. But the truth is, man's greatest need rest in the need of a Savior since all men will one day face a holy and offended God who is angry with the wicked every day. James Boice wrote, man's "greatest need is to escape the fearsome judgment of the wrath of God which hangs over [him]" *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, p. 654).

The purpose of the church is probably best explained in the answer to the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism where it is asked; "What is the chief end of man?" And the answer given is, "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Certainly then if this then is the chief end of man should it not also be the chief end of the church? Or as summed up in our text this morning, "*that you may **proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***"

I believe it can properly be said that the central message of the Church, indeed the message of the Scriptures themselves is that God has met the greatest need of mankind. Paul, as he approached the city of Corinth, a city, that was much like Athens, most religious but given over to pagan idolatries and what did Paul consider his primary message to be? He writes that he was "determined not to know anything among them except **Jesus Christ and Him crucified.**" (1 Cor 2:2) That is, Paul was determined to proclaim nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ. He did not arrive to transform the culture, to shape the structures of society, or to meet the needs of the poor and disadvantaged, nor to fight against intolerance and bring about a more perfect society. His purpose was not about the temporal but regarding things eternal. He was following the concerns of our Lord, what would it profit a man to gain the world and lose his own soul? The churches greatest concern must be the glory of God and the eternal needs of mankind. Paul sums it up thus, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Last Lord's day we noted that the church is a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and a holy nation. In the text this morning Peter in a very simple and forthright manner tells us the purpose of our calling: *that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.* And one other verse I want to keep before you this morning is Isaiah 33:22 *For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.* In other words the only way to proclaim the praises of our Lord is to acknowledge Him as Lawgiver, Judge, King and Savior.

A. We are to proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1. The first duty of the church is to proclaim the greatness of the One who called us.

Isa 43:10-11 "You are My witnesses," says the Lord, "And My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior.

- a. It is our duty to proclaim that God alone is Creator and therefore worthy of glory, honor and praise

Rev 4:11 You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

- b. In a world that despises our Lord it is our duty to proclaim that Jesus is worthy of glory honor and praise

Rev 5:8 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

Rev 5:13 Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, **and to the Lamb**, forever and ever!"

John 5:23 That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. **He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

2. In a world of pluralistic thinking the church must be a faithful witness to the God of Holy Scripture who alone is infinite, eternal and unchangeable

Isa 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.

- a. We must proclaim that all men therefore are under obligation to worship Him and Him alone
- b. Man is not at liberty to make up his own god or gods

Ex 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

3. That He is the Creator of all things and therefore all men are subject to Him as their Maker

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

- a. We must proclaim that any teaching or theory that denies God as Creator is blasphemy against the Most High God
- b. The church must take a stand on the truth that Genesis one says what it says and means what it says.
- c. Sadly the church today, because of what seems to be out of a fear of modern day science, have begun to question the authority of Scripture regarding creation.

Rom 1:21-23 Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

4. God alone is the Lawgiver

James 4:12 There is **one Lawgiver**, who is able to save and to destroy.

- a. Man therefore is not free to be a law to himself but is duty bound to keep the law of His Creator
- b. The church must proclaim that one is obligated to keep the whole law perfectly

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

- c. The church then must point out that all men are therefore guilty before God and worthy of condemnation

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

5. That God alone is the only Savior of mankind

Isa 45:22 Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

- a. That outside of repentance before God and faith in Jesus Christ there is no salvation
- b. Christ alone is that means whereby we are called out of darkness into His marvelous light

Conclusion

The Churches greatest privilege is to give all praise to God for its deliverance from the bondage of darkness and its transportation into the kingdom of His marvelous light

The Churches greatest obligation is to lift up Christ before the world as their only hope of deliverance out of the bondage of darkness and means of entering the kingdom of His marvelous light