

**The Method of Missions
1 Peter 2:9-10**

That is true. It is great to be here and have a chance to be still and get away from the typical weekly and daily activities, to turn our attention to the word of God. That is a joy, and hopefully, it's a refreshment for you too. It's refreshing. You're longing for this already. You're hungering and thirsting for this right now. So, we're just excited to be able to look into His Word. Well, I've been up here a couple times, and there's been a theme when I do get the opportunity to come up here and teach and that's been the theme of missions.

So, I just want to remind you of a couple key things that we've hit on already, just to make sure we're all up to speed, and we understand when we talk about the word missions, hopefully, we're all thinking of the same thing. First of all, that is that missions does not necessarily mean going out of the country of the United States of America and going to another country and being a missionary. That is a part of missions, but hopefully, if you remember the words of Jesus and the Great Commission, He made it pretty simple for us when He said "...make disciples of all the nations..." Well, make disciples is simple enough, and I think that is something you're qualified to do, and so am I. It is not something that needs to happen beyond the borders of where we live. It is something that can happen right here. So, we understood from Jesus's words, missions really is - comes down to - the mission, the mission that we're hopefully all engaged in and we're all about doing. So, that's something we talked about the first time we looked at the great commission; what Jesus had to say.

And then we looked at Psalms 67, and talked about the motive of missions; you know, what's the heart behind this? Why do we do this? Why do we care about this and this process and reaching out and making disciples? Well hopefully, it's worship. Because we ourselves have experienced, and are experiencing currently, a relationship with Jesus Christ that we love, and that we are making good on every day, and we know that there's people that are not. There are people that are not praising God. So, as Psalm 67 said and plead multiple times; "Let the nations be glad [let them shout] and sing for joy..." And so, that was the plea of the Psalmist; he wanted people to worship the one true God. Hopefully, that's our heart too. Why do we engage in making disciples? Because we want people to worship. We want

people to know that there is satisfactory pleasure and enjoyment in the one true God, in worshipping Him. So, the reason why missions exists is because worship doesn't; if there's not worship taking place somewhere, then we're on a mission. We're on a mission to make it so that worship is taking place in the hearts and the lives of those people who don't know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So, that's kind of where we've been just to bring you up to speed, right? This idea of missions.

And so today we're going to look at the method of missions, and so you might think of that, also, as a procedure or how we go about this. And the idea, you know, you might be thinking in your mind already, well, he might have a ten-step plan for us. That's kind of nice - sometimes having a ten-step plan to follow, right, if you like following instructions. If you don't like following instructions, then, yeah, you would hate that, right? But a ten-step plan or a five-step-this or whatever it might be or a procedure of some sort to follow. And in a sense, yeah, we do have that, but it's really simple. I'm thankful to tell you that it's not ten-steps or even five. It's really simple, and that's what we're going to see in 1 Peter chapter 2. All right. So, 1 Peter 2:9-10 will be the two verses we look where we can wrap our minds around the method of missions and the procedure for how we go about this. So hopefully, you're there in your Bibles, 1 Peter chapter 2, and I'll read verses 9-10 for us - says this, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Well, as is custom sometimes, when we jump into books like this and into passages in the middle of a book or in the middle of a letter or in the middle of a speech, things can get taken out of context. So, it might be nice to get a running flow here and just to bring you up to speed with what's going on in 1 Peter. As you can tell, the author is Peter, the apostle Peter, and he is writing. If you look back in verse 1 of chapter 1, you might have to turn a page or just look to the left a little bit, he says, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen..." So, there you have the author and the audience. Right. Peter writing to these people and what you would say is northern Asia Minor or modern day Turkey. Right. There's these people that are there, and they are scattered there, more than likely

Jewish Christians, right, more than likely Jewish Christians. You might think, well, where did these Jewish Christians come from? Well, there was a lot of persecution going on at times, and so the Jews were forced to scatter from the land of Israel, and many of them were all over the place. And the way you can see that the best is in Acts chapter 2. In Acts chapter 2, and it's called the Day of Pentecost, and that is when Peter delivers that first sermon that kind of inaugurates the church; and the Holy Spirit comes out on thousands of people that day and they get saved. Well, you find out in that passage that there's people there, when Peter gives that sermon, that are from all over the world and some of these places that are mentioned in first Peter 1:1.

So, Peter is writing to this audience that was probably there at Pentecost. They were there that day when Peter preached a sermon. They were there when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they got to experience the power in the beginning there of the church. It's also interesting because we don't know a whole lot more about this audience aside from that because Paul, when he is on his missionary journeys in the book of Acts, he actually doesn't go to this place. In fact, the Holy Spirit prevents Paul from going to these locations. It's really interesting. So instead, the Holy Spirit had other plans for Paul to visit other locations. So Peter gets the privilege of writing to these Jewish Christians and perhaps some Gentiles as well. Also, it's interesting to note just the style of how Peter writes; it's important.

Every author of Scripture has a different style, and they like to say things a different way, right? If you read Paul, he basically... he likes to split his letter in half, right? The first half of his letter is a lot about the riches that we have and our theology and understanding of God and who we are in sin; and he kind of gets into this deep doctrine and teaching. And then, he makes a transition somewhere in his letter, whether it's like three chapters in, sometimes eleven chapters in. Somewhere in his letter, he'll make this big transition, and he'll say in light of all this truth, in light of all this meaty doctrine, therefore do this. And he'll start talking very practical. Live this way. Love one another. Be at peace with all men. And he'll get very practical. Paul almost separates every letter like that. He starts with the doctrine and the teaching, and then, he moves to the application, and what you should do about it.

Well, Peter not so much. Peter's a different kind of writer. Peter doesn't really go that way. He likes to kind of just bounce back and forth as he pleases. Peter will talk about some rich doctrine, and then he'll bounce right into practical application, and then he'll talk more about some rich amazing truths, and then he'll talk about what you should do about it. And he'll just do that; he'll bounce back and forth throughout his whole letter. He enjoys writing that way. If you were just to scan even chapter 1 of 1 Peter, you'd see this. For example, in verses 3 and 4, you start to see and learn about this amazing inheritance we have which he describes as "...imperishable..." ... "...undefiled..." unfading, and "...reserved in heaven for you." Right? An amazing, amazing deep truths about our inheritance, and this hope of salvation that we have. And then as you go down to verse 6 and 7, you see the response should be joy, faith in trials. Right? He goes right into the amazing depth of our riches of salvation that's kept in heaven for us and how that should make us respond in joy and faith. Right. So, he likes to do this, and as you keep scanning through chapter 1, you see this happen more and more. Right?

In verse 10, he starts to talk about the amazing nature of the fact that we know our salvation. It's been revealed. We're on the other side of Jesus coming. We can look back and see the amazing things that the prophets prophesied about, now revealed in Jesus. And then, what should that produce in us? Verse 13 - preparing our minds for action, setting our hope on Him, being obedient, being holy. Right. So, there's this constant reflection on truth, and then a call to do something about it, a call to act. In verse 18, we see that we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the precious blood, like an unblemished and spotless lamb. What should we do about it? He goes on to say that we should love one another - should love one another deeply. In verse 23 of chapter 1, he says we have been born again by the Word of God. That is how our salvation came about. The very Word of God that is an imperishable seed has caused us to be born again. And what should we do about it? Chapter 2:1-2 - we should long for the Word of God. Since we were born again by the Word of God, we should crave God's Word. Like a newborn infant, like a baby longing for milk, we should be longing for the Word of God. So, you see this constantly taking place, and to be honest with you, that's exactly what we have in the two verses we're looking at this morning.

The style is no different; that is exactly what we got going on in verses 9 and 10. We have deep truth that we're going to look at first, and then we have a call to action, some practical response to the deep truth. So, the first thing we see as we look at verse 9 again is the deep truth, or you could also say our profound privileges. This is where the doctrine part is, our profound privileges. I'll read this verse for us again; "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession..." Some deep things there. There's about four things there, so it should be good to take some time to look at each of these things, in order to get the doctrine, the depth of this teaching, correct and understand that, and then we'll have hopefully the right response.

So, the first thing we see is we are described as a chosen race, right? A chosen race. So, a first thing that catches your attention is, really, the adjective; not only are we a race, we are a chosen race - chosen. This idea of chosen, and that is a pretty understandable term, but just in case you might be wondering, it is a term that indicates divine initiative. God doing it, right? Not you earning it or doing something on your own, but God, God himself, initiating and causing this to happen. So, we have no ability to boast in ourselves. Right? I mean Peter mentions this in other places, too. If you just go back to verse 1 again of chapter 1, remember when he talked about this audience, those who are scattered abroad in all those locations? And what he says at the very end of verse 1 of chapter 1 is those who are chosen - those who are chosen. Right. And this is not only in the book of 1 Peter, this is all throughout the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of Paul and the rest of the New Testament. In fact, it's all the way back in the Old Testament. Right. It's in the Old Testament when God was talking about Israel and how He saw Israel, and how He treated Israel. Listen to some of these descriptions from the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 4:37; "Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power..." Deuteronomy 7:6-7; "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples..." And then Deuteronomy 10:15; "Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day." So, there's a chosen nature of who we are as a church; we have been selected by God. That's

exciting. That's deep. That's profound. Right? This is not something that you think you just reached out and earned all by yourself; this is God Himself orchestrating and doing this.

What else do we see? That we are a chosen... a chosen race, or you could also say a heritage or an ethnicity even, an ancestry. Right. It's kind of fun to think about - maybe you do - some of, you know, your lineage a little bit. You can look back and see where you're from, and you can see where some of your long ago relatives came from, and that's kind of a fun thing to do. It's a fun exercise sometimes. And so, as Christians, we also have a heritage actually. Right? It's exciting to think about. It's really God our Father who causes us to be born again by the work of the Holy Spirit. Right? We can trace back our heritage to the Holy Spirit working in us, and God the Father causing us to be born again. Listen to the very beginning of this letter once again. Chapter 1 verse 3; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." So, we've had this rebirth, right? We've been born again, and the emphasis here is not on the physical being born again, it's on the spiritual. We have been reborn. As Jesus talks to Nicodemus about this concept, even Nicodemus has a hard time understanding it. He's saying I can't go back into my mother and come out again. What do you mean by being born again? Right? And Jesus says it's of the Holy Spirit. It's of the Spirit's work. And so, we as a church, we know that we are chosen by God, and that is specifically because our heritage, right, comes from the Holy Spirit causing us to be born again. And isn't that also how we're described when we hear and we read other places in Scripture where we're talked about as, really, adopted into the family of God? All right. We are His sons and daughters. We are adopted. We are brothers and sisters now in Christ. This is who we are, selected by God into the family of God, a chosen race. That's profound, and that's just the first thing that Peter says.

There's more - a royal priesthood - a royal priesthood. You're a chosen race, and you are a royal priesthood. If you look at some of these descriptions we're looking at, all four of them, really, are drawn on from the Old Testament. Peter is using the Old Testament to kind of help and bring some similar imagery there with God and Israel; and showing how it applies even now with us joining in that plan, and the church being a part of that plan of God working through Israel and now through the church as well. So, this is

the idea of going all the way back to Exodus 19, a story and a place where the Israelites were quite frankly terrified. They're terrified because here comes God and His presence down on Mount Sinai. There's clouds. There's fire. There's thunder. There's lightning. And the people are scared. They're trembling, and they tell Moses you go talk to God. We can't handle this. This's too much, just way too much. Moses, you go talk to Him, and tell us what He has to say. And it's in that setting that Moses gets the Ten Commandments and the Law, as you and I know, and we can read that because we have it all recorded for us in the Old Testament.

But it's interesting because before God gives the Law, He makes this statement to the nation of Israel, "...you [are to] be to Me a kingdom of priests..." You are going to be "...a kingdom of priests..." And we might wonder what that significance is. What does it mean to be "...a kingdom of priests," and how does this look? How does this function? Well, for Israel, within the nation itself of Israel, they had many different tribes. Right? So, you could be from different tribes - tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Zebulun, and there's a tribe of Levi; and within the tribe of Levi, you had the priests. And the priests were the ones that kind of had the bloody job. You know, they'd be at the tabernacle. They'd be at the temple. They'd be the one helping the people and offering the sacrifices, slaughtering the animals, pouring out the blood, making atonement for the sins of the people of Israel. So, that's what the priests did; so the priests were the mediators. Right? They were the intercessors, the in-between, between God and the people of Israel. That's what they did. They were the mediators between the people of Israel and God. Well, in the same way, God expands that out now in Exodus 19. He says to Israel, so you guys are, really, as a whole, the whole entire nation, you're going to be priests to the world, to all the Gentiles, to the entire world. So, if you were an Israelite, you technically were a priest in a sense. You had a priest-like calling. You had a priest-like function; that is, you were to mediate between the lost world, the Gentiles, and the one true God, Yahweh.

So, Peter draws on this imagery. This is great imagery. First of all, that you would be described... that we would be described as a kingdom. All right. For Israel, this's a big deal when they heard this, because what were they before this? They were slaves in Egypt. They were nobodies. They were slaves in Egypt wondering if God even remembered who they were, wondering if, really, the stories about Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were

even true. They were just wondering, because they're slaves in Egypt, just waiting and wondering if God's still there. And He calls them out in a dramatic fashion, and now He's going to give them the Law, and He's calling them a kingdom. That's special. All right. That would have been a big deal for the Israelites who hear this from Moses on behalf of God; and not just that they are now a kingdom – they are somebody - but that they have a function. They have a purpose. They're supposed to act in this priest-like fashion, right, to be mediators between the people of the world and the one true God. That's a high calling, and Peter draws on that and says so for you and I, the church, we have this high calling. We are a part of this kingdom. We are all, really, we all have been given this priest-like function and responsibility, this occupation. And, you know, some facts about priests - they were divinely chosen. It was God who chose them. They represented; they interceded, mediated, and they would do that through the offering of sacrifices. So here we are, and we have the one true message, the one true sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and we offer that to the world. We are priest-like in offering this truth about Jesus Christ to the world - the one true sacrifice for the sin of mankind.

And it's just an interesting thing because this is a wonderful combination. I don't know if you... it needs a little Old Testament understanding to see that the combination of being royal or kingly and bringing and being priest-like is a peculiar combination. In fact, in the Old Testament, that was a bad combination. If you were a king, you could not function like a priest. If you were a priest, you better not function like the king. They were mutually exclusive. You couldn't have them bleeding over into each other. In fact, when it does happen, people are punished for it. In 2 Chronicles 26, if you read about King Uzziah, he starts off as a really great king. He does a lot of great decisions. In fact, he's even inventing military weapons that are amazing. And really, it's a time of expansion for the southern kingdom. And it's really great, and then, he goes into the temple, and he tries to offer incense on the altar of incense in the temple. That's a priest's job, not a king's job. So, a bunch of the priests come in, they confront Uzziah, and they tell him that's not your job. You shouldn't be doing this. And to prove it, God strikes King Uzziah with leprosy. He gets leprosy, and he remains leprous until the day he dies; a sad ending to what was a good beginning of a good king.

And so, there's this unique - unique - thing to think about, this combination of being a kingdom of priests. And you go, so how is this possible then, that we can combine those things if they were not allowed to become combined in the Old Testament? Well, it's through Christ. Through the help of other books in the New Testament, if we think about the book of Hebrews, for example, all right, we learn that Christ is our great high priest. But what else? He's the King. He is the King of Kings. In fact, He's the prophet too, to speak on behalf of God. Christ fulfills all those offices in Himself. And what does that leave you and I? Well, we are in Christ, so through our relationship in Christ, incorporated into Him, we too take on that royal kind of identity, and we take on that priest-like function through Christ, not because of us, not because of anything we've done, but because of God's calling. So this is unique.

And if you do just think about it, some people try and argue, well this is only for a future day. The idea of us being a kingdom of priests or a royal priesthood, that's a future day; that's when Christ comes back on this earth, and that's when the millennial kingdom will happen and the thousand years of reign, and then we'll act like that but not right now. Well, that doesn't seem to be the case, not just because of this passage. Maybe you can turn a couple pages to the right, and go to Revelation chapter 1 - Revelation chapter 1. We'll just check this out for one second, then turn right back to 1 Peter 2. Well, Revelation 1 - a different apostle, the apostle John, seems to agree with this priest-like function that we have, not just a future look at us being a kingdom of priests but an even present function. So, I'll start from verse 4 in Revelation 1; "John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood —" Now verse 6; "and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." This is something that John saw currently taking place. This is part of our identity now; this is not something we're waiting to realize. This is part of our identity now.

And this ties in even better when we go back to first Peter 2, and we see how Peter uses this identity into what the practical action should be. So not only do we have this amazing divine initiative in our life where God has called us

and chosen us. Not only are we in His family, a chosen race, not only are we royalty-part of the kingdom, and not only do we have this priest-like function, there's more. We are a holy nation. We're a holy nation. Back in first Peter 2, he goes on to state this. A nation could be defined as, maybe, a people group that's held together by common laws or a common charter or a ruler; and we would have to say we would qualify as that sense because our common law and charter is simply the Bible and the Word of God. We have it. We bow down to one true monarchy, Christ, the King of Kings. He is our Lord. He is our Sovereign, and we serve Him alone, not a democracy. He rules and reigns, and we are glad to bow down to Him; thus we are a nation, a nation committed to Christ. And it kind of reminds us of what Paul says in Philippians 3:20. Our citizenship is not of this earth; it's in heaven. All right? Our citizenship is not of this country we live in, or where ever city we might be, but is in heaven. And notice also, that we're described as holy, a holy nation. Holy can have two kinds of meanings. It can mean that which is ethically right, to be holy, to do what is upright and moral and true, or it can also have a meaning of setting apart, being consecrated unto a purpose or a task. So sort of like, if you remember, some of the utensils and the different things that made up the tabernacle and temple. These different utensils, like the alter and the ephod and the sensors and the things that the priests used, they were all holy. They were consecrated. They were set apart for the task of God and His work at the temple. Well, in the same way, this term, this understanding of being set apart, is now used for the church. The church is set apart. We are a nation that has been set apart for God to do His work with.

And there's still a fourth one in this profound privilege that we have as a church; we see that we are a people for God's own possession - a people for God's own possession. He describes the church as, really, God's private possession, and if you think about it, this is absolutely true just based on what 1 Peter says in chapter 1. In verses 18 and 19, he reminds us, "...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." You've been bought. 1 Corinthians 6 talks about how you have been bought with a price. Right. It costs something. It was not cheap grace. It was costly that God would sacrifice His one and only Son to purchase us for His own possession. That's remarkable. That's profound. That's profound that God would do that. What a cost for ordinary people like you and I. I know I'm

nothing special. I'm sure we could all echo that. In and of ourselves, we're not bringing anything amazing to the table, saying God purchased me; you know, I'm worth it. We know we are, really, worthless in and of ourselves; yet He chose to purchase us at a great cost of His one and only Son. I mean, it's an interesting thing that we would have such value now, when before it was just worthless.

I mean you kind of think about museums. Sometimes you've visited museums, and you know, there are remarkable museums with incredible art in them. Then there's also just museums that are dedicated to pretty simple things. When I was in Israel, I visited a few museums where it was, you know, Ben Guerin's museum or, you know, some of these Israeli politicians that are old or gone, and you kind of go through their house, and their house is a museum. So, it's interesting, you know, like, okay, we'll check this out. And you walk through the house, and you're thinking, well, what're we going to find? This is going to be really interesting. And you walk into one room and this is his study. This is where he sat down and read books. All right, there's a book. There's a desk. Cool. All right. And then, this is the dining room. That's where they ate their food, you know, and that's the table. Those're the chairs, okay, and, you know, and this is supposedly the last pencil he used, you know, before he... you know, and you just kind of walk through this house, and there's nothing impressive. It's mundane things; isn't it? But all of a sudden, the tour guide convinces you that this is the most amazing artifact you'll see in probably your whole life, right, a pencil. This is it. This book, right here. It's still open from when he was reading it. And it's just an ordinary book. It's just a pencil. It's just a desk. It's just a table. Right? These are just ordinary things. And so, in the same way, here you and I are just ordinary people, but all of a sudden, there's some meaning here. There's some significance in you and in my life because God has purchased us by the blood of His Son. That makes all the difference all of a sudden. Right? That makes all the difference. That's a game changer right there. God sacrificing His own Son to purchase you and now possess you; that's amazing. That's profound. That is a profound privilege that we have. Now there's a sense of meaning in our life. There actually is significance for what we do and why we do it because we're God's. We're not our own. He's purchased us, and it was a big deal for Him to purchase us.

So, these are profound privileges. All right? Just looking back over them. We are a chosen race into His family. We are royal priesthood. We have a function, an occupation that's royal, a holy nation, a people set apart unto Him; and we are His own possession. He has earned us, and He has bought us by the blood of His Son, but it doesn't stop there. All right? There's a purpose for all of this. There's a purpose, and that is to proclaim - our purpose to proclaim - our purpose to proclaim. So, as we continue reading the verse, after we read those four profound privileges, we see this phrase "...so that..." That should, hopefully, alert your mind. Anytime you see that in Scripture, it's kind of an important phrase; "...so that..." What's the purpose? "...so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..." This is it. Proclamation is the expected response to our identity. This is the procedure. This is the method of missions. Here it is. It's simple. You understand your identity in Christ. You understand what He has called you to be, and then you act by proclaiming. That's it. It's simple. All right? And it doesn't require you to leave the state. It's simple; you proclaim. You understand who you are and what God has done and these profound privileges you have, and then, you respond and proclaim. You proclaim who God is. Proclaim is a simple word. I hope we understand what that word means. Right? This is a unique word in the Greek. It's not the typical word for proclaim, but it's still pretty much means the same thing. It means to declare abroad, to publish, to advertise. So I think we get the point, definitely getting it out there.

Some of these things can almost be in your face to a fault sometimes, but the point is this, hopefully we realize - and this is where we really need to let this sink in - in how this relates to the mission. The church is not an exclusive club. We do not show up on Sunday mornings and lock our doors. Right? This is not a members-only business and deal. That's not what we're to be about. I mean, because we have some amazing privileges, don't get me wrong, but if we leave it there, we've missed the boat. We've missed the foundational and fundamental purpose for our calling and the church itself. It is so imperative that we understand that the reason why we're blessed is to proclaim. If we don't get that, then we've missed it. We've missed it completely. In fact, you can look around at different churches that emphasize different things, and some are healthy, some are not so healthy, but if you show me a church that's reaching out to the lost, show me a church that's proclaiming the good news about Christ, and I'll show you a church that understands their identity. That's a church that understands their

privileges, a church that understands who they are. Their identity in Christ will be, inevitably, proclaiming it. And you might be thinking to yourself, whoa, hold on, man, you're making a big deal out of this. Because it is. It's the main verb of the passage, and I want you to walk away with it. Right? Proclaim. Please get that. That is a huge deal. This is where the method of missions comes out. But you might be thinking, are you overdoing it here? I mean evangelism, yeah, it's important, reaching out to the lost. I understand. We should be doing that, but aren't there other things that are important? I'd say, yeah, there are. There are other things that are important, but if we don't evangelize, we've totally missed our purpose. We have no purpose. If we're not evangelizing, we've missed our purpose. I think that's a big deal, and I think God thinks that's a big deal.

Well, once again you might be sitting there going okay, okay, I'll give you that; evangelism is important; it's our purpose. But I have some valid reasons why I don't. I have valid reasons why I don't proclaim. You might be thinking that. And notice I say valid reasons instead of excuses. I'm trying to give you the benefit of the doubt. Okay. All right. Valid reasons, okay, we'll call them that. We'll see if they're still valid after we go through them for a second here. So, first you might be thinking, well, okay, evangelism, reaching out, isn't that the pastor's job? Isn't that the pastor's job and the leadership of the church? Isn't that what they're all about? They kind of take care of that, right? And I show up. I do my part. I'm here. I'm sitting in the seat, right? You're doing a good job. Well, let me just ask you for a second, where do you get from this passage that it's referring to pastors only? Is this passage referring to pastors only? If you can convince me of that, then maybe I'll listen, but if you can't, then I think it applies to all of us, and this command to proclaim is really something that I'm required to do as well as you.

You might go, okay, I got more, though. Hold on a second. All right. I let my actions do all the talking. I do proclaim; it's through my actions. Well, I would love to ask you the question what do you think the word proclaim means? Do you think the word proclaim literally means be really good and have lots of good deeds, and that'll really get people's attention, and that'll save them? In fact, the rest of the teaching of Scripture tells us pretty clearly that's not how it works. Good deeds are important, don't get me wrong. Just read verses 11 and 12. Good deeds are important; however, they don't save people. The saving comes from the message of the gospel, the message of

Christ. So, you let your actions do all the talking. I think that doesn't really qualify for what proclaiming means. You say, well, hold on, I got some theology here I want to bring to your attention. I think I have some good understanding of theology. God is a sovereign God. You said it yourself; He's chosen people. God is a sovereign God, so if He's chosen them, then I can kind of just chill. I can sit back, and He'll bring them in. Yeah, that's the theology, right? I'm bringing that one down. Okay, well, let me ask you why is the command here? Why is it then that we're commanded to proclaim? If God is literally doing all of it, and we simply just sit here, then why are we commanded to proclaim? It would make absolutely no sense.

Well, let me just take this a little bit further. Why are you still on the earth? Why are you still alive? If you are a born again Christian, and you've experienced these privileges, then why are you alive if not to tell people who are lost about Christ? Right? It's pretty simple. You think, okay, hold on a second. I know you've had some answers for some of these things, but I just am a unique person. I don't get opportunities; they just don't come to me. People don't just walk up to me and say, hey, what must I do to be saved? So, if people don't do that, what am I supposed to do? How can I proclaim? Okay, well, that's nice. That's still not sufficient. Does this passage indicate passive waiting? Is there anything in this passage that indicates you sit there and wait for people to walk up to you, maybe knock on your door, right, and ask you the biggest question of their life? I don't think that's the way it works. Plus, this passage is not teaching that. And then you might say okay, well, hold on a second. I do proclaim. Sunday mornings, here we are. We're proclaiming. I'm here. I'm proclaiming. I'm a part of this. We're singing. We're learning about the Word. We're encouraging each other. We're proclaiming the truth. Amen. Is that it? Is Sunday sufficient? Is Sunday sufficient for this command that we've been given? If you think it is sufficient, then I would warn you because you're potentially going down a path of hypocrisy, where you live like a Christian. You act like a Christian when it's time to on a Sunday morning, but then the rest of the week you're off on your own business doing whatever you want. That's not sufficient. So hopefully you understand the point. The verse is simple. That's what I'm trying to get at. Please don't try and weasel out of this. Just let the verse speak. All right? Just let it be clear.

You have been blessed tremendously in Christ. What should you do about it? Proclaim. Proclaim. That's the method of missions; understand our

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blessings and then respond appropriately by proclaiming, opening your mouth, speaking. You might not know what to speak. Well, Peter tells us what to speak. Right? "...that you may proclaim..." What? "...the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..." ... "...excellencies..." People talk about what this word means. Some people say, I think it's talking about God's attributes, who God is. Other people say, ahh, I think it's talking about what God does, His actions. I would say it's both. All right. Because it seems pretty clear that you learn who God is by what He does, and what God does proves who He is. Right? So, they're kind of inextricably... they're linked. They need to be. So, when we're talking about proclaiming "...the excellencies..." of God, we're talking about proclaiming who our God is and what He's done. It's both. It's both, and it's with that that I'm excited to say here's where adult Sunday school, growth group, and all these other things come in and are so important because you grow in your knowledge and understanding of God. You grow in your understanding of the Word. You grow in theology. Right? You grow in theology and you think that's not just to puff your brain up and get a really big head. This growth in theology, it channels right into you proclaiming these things to people. It channels right into you having something to say when you open your mouth. Now when you open your mouth you know the God you're talking about. You know what He does. You know what He's like, and you're excited to tell people about that because you've grown in your understanding of who God is, and what He does, these "... excellencies..." of our God.

So, are we growing? Hopefully, we are. Hopefully, we're growing in "...the excellencies..." and our knowledge of who God is. Then we have something to say. And if you're sitting there going, wow, I really just have not taken a theology course. I'm just not there. I don't have the full broad-base of knowledge of "...the excellencies..." of who God is. Well, Peter helps you out. He says here's one for starters. What does he say? "...that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..." Isn't that true that a very fundamental understanding of God is that He saves? I hope so. If we know God, then hopefully we know this to be true about Him. He's a God who saves. In fact, hopefully you can look in your own life. You can look into your own story, your testimony of how God took you at one point in time when you were lost and hopeless in the dark; He yanked you out of that, and He brought you into His marvelous light. If you are a Christian, you have that story, all right? It looks

different for everybody, but you have that story. You have a story of how you were in darkness and now you are in light. So Peter says, why don't you start there? Why don't you open your mouth and start right there by proclaiming that? Right? You don't have to know the theology of everything and every book of the Bible before you can speak. You can speak simply because you know what God has done in your own life.

I mean, this is even what Jesus does with certain people. Right? The Samaritan women when He speaks with her after she comes to believe in Christ, she goes back and shares with the entire town. There's the demoniac, the guy that's demon possessed. Jesus cast the demons out of him, and the guy wants to follow Jesus and keep going with Jesus into the boat and across the Sea of Galilee and follow Him in His ministry, and Jesus says, no, don't come with me. And you might think, wow, Jesus, that's messed up. That's real cold. And He says, no, I want you to go back to your town, and I want you to tell everyone about what I've done for you. It was simple. The guy didn't need a theology lesson. He knew enough to know that he was completely lost and hopeless and demon possessed, and now he's not; he's encountered the Savior of the world. So speak that. Speak that to your town. Speak that to your city. So, this is beautiful. Peter does such a great job. He leaves us without excuse, and he propels us into the method of how we go about it. We look at what God has done for us and we open our mouth, and that's missions. That's the mission. That's what we do. We can't help but tell people about how good our God is and what He's done for us. So we have a lot there.

And as we go on to the last point, it really serves as a reminder for us when we look at our past versus our present. This is the reminder that we have, our past versus our present. Peter goes on in verse 10. He says, "...for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." ...said let me just remind you. This is so hard for you. Do you just take a second to look at where you were? You were a nobody. You were an absolute nobody, and then God choose to be kind to you, and now you are His people, an amazing blessing. Sometimes the writers of Scripture think this is important. They want you to be reminded of where we were, not to mope and to kind of, you know, be kind of depressed all the time, but to be reminded of how I was lost; but because of God's grace, now I am where I am. This is exactly what we see in Titus 3:3; "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient,

deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.” Paul reflects; this is who he used to be. But the kindness and mercy and love of God our Savior, He intervenes. Right? This is an important thing for us to do, reflect on where we were and where God has brought us to now. Peter goes on to say, “...you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” You were not mercied. Someone hadn’t mercied you yet. You were just kind of hopeless sitting there, and then someone just dumped a bucket of mercy on you. They mercied you, right, in a good way. That’s what happened. You then received mercy.

This is exactly what has happened, hopefully, for all of us; and if you just take a moment to reflect on that, I think you’ll be motivated. I think you’ll be excited to open your mouth and proclaim this message to other people. Paul reflects on this in 1 Timothy 1:13 when he says, you know what I was; I was a persecutor of the church. I was hating Christians, and then what happened? God in His kindness blinded me on the road to Damascus, and now, by His mercy, I actually have a mission; I am going and delivering this gospel message to the Gentiles. So he saw this great privilege that he had, this amazing grace and blessing of God, and he responded in proclaiming. So hopefully you understand. This is it. This is the method. It’s not a ten-step plan. It’s not a five-step plan. It’s simple. Look at what God has done for you - open your mouth - tell someone about it. That’s it. That’s a mission. People, we’re going to do that in Japan, we’re going to do that in Mexico, and we’re going to do that in Lancaster. That’s what we’re going to do. That is our method. It’s no secret, and it’s awesome because it’s simple enough that we all can engage, and we all can take part in it.