



Our Mission: The Glory of God

1 Peter 2:9-10

Pastor David Sunday

August 7, 2011

Hear our prayer, Lord. Let us come to know more of the glory and wonder of Your cross as we turn to Your Word this morning. We ask this in the name of our Redeemer, great Son of God, our living Lord Jesus, Amen.

Please open your Bibles to the book of 1 Peter that you'll find in your New Testament, toward the end of the Bible, after Hebrews and James. People have been asking me after our long series in 1 Corinthians and our shorter series in Jonah, "What book of the Bible will we be studying next as a church?" My answer has been, "Every book of the Bible." Beginning in September, Lord willing, we're planning to start a series of sermons that will last for about 14.5 months called "Behold Our God." The focus of the series will be to look at the great passages of Scripture where God is revealing Himself as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. We'll look at His progressive revelation of Himself beginning in Genesis and going all the way through to the Book of Revelation. We'll be looking at almost all the books of the Bible during that process and seeing how God unfolds the glory of who He is: our Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

Along with that series, beginning the first week of September, we're going to be doing a Bible reading initiative together as a church, where we're going to read through the Bible chronologically over the course of 14 months. That will form the basis of many discussions in our care groups and in our Bible studies. We'll even be having Sunday School classes in the fall that are designed to aid us in that process. So it's called Reading the Bible for Life and in the next few weeks we'll be unfolding more of the details of that starting September 4th - Behold Our God.

This month we're going to look at the mission statement of New Covenant Bible Church. You'll see it there at the front of your bulletin. Our mission is:

***To bring glory to God
through
Spirit-transformed lives
by the
Beauty and power
of the
Gospel of Jesus Christ***

This morning I want to preach about bringing glory to God. Next Sunday I won't be here; I'm going to be preaching at Hope Fellowship in Lombard where John and Jenn Trott are serving as associate pastors and my good friend Jeff Brewer is the pastor. We are wanting to forge a strong partnership with that church so I'll be there next week and Pastor DeHaan will be preaching on Spirit-transformed lives. On August 21st, Justin Taylor will be preaching on the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ. On August 28th we're having just one service together and after that service we're going to have our church picnic at Leroy Oakes Forest Preserve. I'll be preaching that Sunday on the power of the gospel.

This morning we'll look at what it means to bring glory to God? If you know the Hebrew word for glory, you understand this word basically means "weighty" or "heavy" or "impressive" or "striking." We bring glory to God when we show through our lives and through our church the weightiness of God, the striking impressiveness of God to a world that through sin has been blinded to His glory, whose senses have been dulled to the glory of God. The glory of God is the very opposite of the commonplace. Someone has said, "The glory of God is the difference between what we would naturally be or do, and what we are enabled to do by God's grace." Do you get that? What we could naturally be or do in our own strength and wisdom and ingenuity, and what we are enabled to do by God's grace, that's the glory of God. When it's clear to the world that what God is doing in that group of people can have no possible human explanation. It must be God at work in their midst.

I think if you have traced the formation of our church over the last 20 months or so, you would agree that clearly God has done this. Clearly God has brought New Covenant Bible Church together. He orchestrated this in a way that we never could have. He brought our lives together; He joined our lives together and He did that not so we could just maintain status quo. He did that so our church can reflect, in ever new and fresh ways, to a watching world the magnificence, the splendor, the striking impressiveness of God in our midst. So the world can say, "Whatever is happening at New Covenant Bible Church, there's no possible way it could be because of those people. It must be God at work."

So as a church, we always have to go back to this true north—to this point on the compass that redirects and reorients us to our purpose: Why are we here? Why has God joined our lives together? So that He could be magnified! So as a people, we need to always be attempting more than just the ordinary.

I read about an elder in a successful suburban church. It was a church that he loved, a church that he was glad to be part of. But someone asked him, "How is your church doing?" He had a hard time answering that question. Finally he said, "To be honest, there is nothing driving us to attempt much beyond the ordinary. We've kind of gotten comfortable with just doing what we can do, what we can plan, what we can orchestrate and we're not really attempting much beyond the ordinary."

We don't want that at New Covenant. We have to recognize that we're always in danger of just sliding back into that comfortable place of just doing church. But we exist for a reason higher than that: to show forth the glory of God.

Here in 1 Peter 2 we have a magnificent text. I'm only going to read verses nine and ten because it's so rich and I want us to just hone in our thoughts on these two verses because these verse are going to help us remember our calling as a church to bring glory to God. They're going to give us some helpful teaching on how to keep that focus. So let's read together beginning at verse nine of 1 Peter 2. He's speaking to the church as a whole; he's speaking to us as a people, a collective unit here. God's Word says,

"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. 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." This is God's Word.

Now what we're going to do this morning is look at two main ways these verses help us with our mission to bring glory to God. The first way is that these verses help us to get our identity straight. The second way is that these verses help us to keep our purpose clear.

1. Getting Our Identity Straight

Let's just look at that **first** point. I'm going to try to not belabor the point here; let's just get our identity straight. Let's refocus on who we are as a church and the first words we read in verse nine are "*But you...*" In other words, there's a contrast going on here between the people Peter is talking about in verses eight and nine who stumble over Christ. They don't believe in Christ. They disobey the word of Christ as they were destined to do, as Peter says in verse eight. But you are different. You're not like that. Peter describes the people in the church in verse four as people who are coming to Jesus again and again and again. Not just once in the past but continually coming to Jesus like we sang this morning, "O Lamb of God, I come, I come." We're continually attracted to

Jesus. We are a people who see that Jesus is precious. We do not reject Christ. We esteem Christ as precious and we are being built as living stones, verse five says, to be a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. That is who we are. We're different from the people in the world. We're coming to Jesus.

We're being built together into a house in which the glory of God dwells. This means that if you want to experience the glory of God at full velocity, you've got to join yourself with other Christians. You can't experience the full velocity of the glory of God by being off on your own someplace else. You've got to be a living stone. If a stone is just thrown off over here on its own, it can't become part of the house. It's got to be connected to the other stones. It's got to be joined. And as we're joined together—coming to Jesus together—we experience God's *shekina* glory in our midst, just like in the Old Testament in 1 Kings 8 when Solomon dedicated the temple and the glory of God filled the temple so that the priests fell on their faces before God. What Peter is saying is, "You're that house now. You, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you come to Jesus together, God's glory is coming in your midst. You're different than the world."

The **second** thing Peter says in verse nine is, "*you are a chosen race.*" "*But you...*", you're different from the world. Who are you? Secondly, "*...you are a chosen race...*" God chose you. If you're a Christian, this should comfort you. Jesus did not stumble upon you like, "Aw, nuts. How did I end up with them?" It's not like Jacob and Leah, where he woke up the next morning and had the wrong wife. Jesus doesn't feel that way about His church. We are a chosen race, like Israel in the Old Testament, God's chosen people. Now men and women from every tribe, tongue, language and nation, every conceivable ethnicity, are being gathered together as the chosen race, chosen by God. That's not some elitist term like we were a cut above—God chose the very best when He chose us. It doesn't say you are a choice people. If it said that it would make us think, "Hey. There is something special about us; we are choice; that's why God chose us." No, He chose us not because of any intelligence in us; not because of any ingenuity in us; not because of any wisdom in us; not because of our nationality or our ethnicity or our wealth. He chose us because He loved us—because He chose to love us. Not because of anything in us. You are a chosen race. That humbles us and comforts us and amazes us. We say to the Lord, "My Lord, I did not choose You for that could never be. My heart would still refuse You had You not chosen me. You took the sins that stain me. You love me. You made me

new. You cleansed me. Of old, You have ordained me that I should live in You. And I know that if I love You, Lord, You must have loved me first.” You are a chosen race.

Thirdly, you are “...*a royal priesthood*...” We’re getting our identity straight here. So we’re chosen by God and we are acceptable to God. A royal priesthood. A priest had the privilege of being able to enter into the place where sacrifices were offered to be able to go into God’s presence. While the people stood in the outer courts, the priests could enter in and offer spiritual sacrifices that were acceptable to God. But now, God’s Word says to us that all of us who are in Christ are able to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ; that’s in verse five. Jesus has cleansed us and clothed us in His righteousness so that we can now enter into the holy presence of God. There are no back row seats here. We all have first-class worship rights to go into God’s presence; to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God; to serve Him in the Holy of Holies. Under the old covenant, the word was always, “Do not come any closer. Don’t get any closer, because if you touch the mountain where God is meeting with Moses, you’re going to die. Don’t even let your animals get close: they’ll die. Do not come any closer to the holy presence of God.” But now in the New Testament, we are a royal priesthood. We are children of the King. We have authority to enter into God’s presence through Jesus Christ at any time. “Come near to Me. Come boldly to Me.” This is our identity.

The **fourth** thing we see is that we are “...*a holy nation*...” (verse nine). We are a holy nation. We’re chosen by God; we’re acceptable to God; we are set apart for God. That’s what it means to be holy. It’s when God sets something apart for His service. As a holy nation, we are the people God has set apart to serve Him; to stand in His presence; to represent Him to a watching world. We are holy. We are holy in the sight of God. I know if you look at many of your fellow Christians you’re thinking, “Really? Is he holy? Is she holy?” The truth is there’s still a lot of imperfection and impurity in us. There are still a lot of sins that need to be confessed. There’s still a work in progress. But God is so committed to the completion of that work—and indeed He did complete at Calvary—that in Christ we are now holy. God’s holy people.

We are **fifthly**, “...*a people for God’s own possession*...” We are a people for His own possession, verse nine says. What this means is that we’re God’s precious treasure; we are His prized possession. God prizes His church. Now you might think that the

church is obsolete. You might think God is going to get His work done in the world without His church. You might think the church is always moving slowly and always off track and that any real work of God that's going to get done must get done apart from the church. That's not the way God sees it. God looks at His church, He looks at those who are coming to Jesus, prizing Jesus, loving Jesus, and He says, "That's My house. That's where I'm going to dwell. Those are the people who belong to Me. They are my prized possession. They are My treasure. They're My body."

Any work that God is getting done in the world today for His glory, He is doing through this living body, this building, this house, this people that He calls His church. And the church belongs to God. It doesn't belong to any individual. Whenever you find yourself starting to feel like, "You know what, I own this place. This is my church. I want it my way," remind yourself: No, we are a people for His own possession. We're not here because of how great we are but because He chose us. It's our job not to live for ourselves and to serve our own interests, but to be a royal priesthood serving God, offering ourselves up to God.

The way we are to reflect His glory in this world is by being a community, a nation, a group of people who are bonded together who reflect our Father's holy character, so that when people look at our church, they see something of God's striking, impressive, radiant glory in our midst. That's who we are.

- A chosen race—chosen by God
- A royal priesthood—acceptable to God
- A holy nation—set apart by God
- A people for His own possession—treasured by God

That's who we are. It's really amazing the way Peter is speaking here. I want you to see one passage in the Old Testament. This is in Exodus 19. Keep your finger in 1 Peter and turn to the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. The people of Israel are standing here at the foot of Mount Sinai where Moses is going up to receive the Law, the Ten Commandments. Now, how did they get to Mount Sinai? Well, they were redeemed from bondage in Egypt. They were groaning to God in their slavery in Egypt and God saw their affliction, He heard their cry, He remembered His covenant and He knew their need. And God says, "I am going to let My people go. I'm going to bring them out of Egypt." So He does these amazing plagues, then He parts the Red Sea and they are brought through on dry ground. And now here they are at the foot of Mount Sinai and God says, "I just want

to remind you how you got here and I want to tell you who you are.” We read these words in Exodus 19:4: God says to His people, “*You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.*”

In other words, “You didn’t get out of bondage in Egypt because of how hard you worked. You didn’t work your way out of slavery. You didn’t walk out of Egypt on your own two feet. You didn’t carry yourself out of Egypt. I carried you. I was like a great eagle who swooped down and picked you up on My wings and I flew you out of Egypt. I carried you on eagle’s wings and I brought you to Myself. In other words, you’re here as My people because of My grace, because of what I’ve done for you, not because of what you’ve done for yourselves.”

Then in verses five and six He says, “*Now therefore [after I’ve done all this for you], if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant [in relationship with God and with one another], you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.*”

Peter sees those words in Exodus and he says to Gentile believers now, “That’s who you are. Just like God brought His people out of Egypt and carried them on eagles’ wings, and it was all by God’s grace, likewise by God’s grace, you are God’s chosen people. And you are His treasured possession and you are His kingdom of priests and you are His holy nation. The New Testament church is now the recipient of the identity of Old Testament Israel and God is saying, “You belong to Me. You belong to Me. It’s by My grace that you are My people and it’s because of My grace in your life that I am now asking you to obey Me. Notice, salvation and deliverance come before the giving of the Law. Before God asks His people to obey His commandments, God demonstrates His saving power and delivers His people. So that’s who we are. That’s a great description of our identity in Christ.

Now let’s turn back to 1 Peter 2. We got our identity straight. Who are we? We are chosen by God. We’re acceptable to God. We’re set apart for God. We’re God’s treasured people, belonging to Him. That’s our identity. We have to keep that straight and now, why?

2. Keeping Our Purpose Clear

The second main point is keeping our purpose clear. Why are we here? Why are we in this position? Why are we, New Covenant Bible Church, united together by God’s grace at this time, in this place? Why did God create us? Why did God form us? We need

to keep our purpose clear. Look at verse nine: it's very emphatic why God has done this. He doesn't just say, "*you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,*" and by the way, why don't you tell some other people about how great God is once in a while. He doesn't say that. He doesn't say, "Oh yes, as a result, you *'should proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness.'*" No, the word is much more emphatic when it says, "*...that you may proclaim...*" It's saying God has done all this for you in order that you may declare His excellent greatness to all the world. God has done this for you so that you may declare to a watching world the greatness of who He is and what He has done. Keeping our purpose clear.

I love how John Piper summarizes this verse with a very good, crisp sentence here. He says, "God made us who we are so that we can make known who He is." That's really the main point of this verse. God made us who we are so we can make known who He is. That's the reason for our existence as a church. He made us who we are so we can make known who He is. We're not here just to keep a religious organization going. We are here "*that [we] may proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" That's our purpose. That's why our mission statement starts with those all important words, to bring glory to God. Our identity is for the sake of making known God's identity. That's what we're all about.

Now, I want to make four application statements for us as we think about our church's mission; as we think about keeping our purpose clear. Why are we here? The first is a theological application, then a personal application, then a missional application and then one other application.

A) A theological application of this truth. You can wrap your mind around this a little bit. I want you to chew on this concept. It's helping me. I don't feel like I've got it sunken quite enough yet but I'm going to say it anyway and then you can let it sink in. Every believer is a prophet, priest and king. I want you to chew on that. Every believer. You—believer—you who are coming to Jesus, esteeming Him as precious, being built up with your other believers into this spiritual house, you are a prophet, a priest and a king. Now, you're sitting there, some of you, and you're thinking, "Get real. I'm not that. I'm just struggling. I'm just worn out. I don't even really know what I'm doing." No, if you are in Christ, you are a prophet, priest and king.

Now, those were the three offices that God gave to his old covenant people Israel. The prophet was to declare God's Word to the people, the priest was to offer sacrifices on

behalf of the people and the king was to order or rule the lives of God's people under God's gracious and wise rule. Prophet, priest, and king. In the Old Testament, you know that no one could have all three of those offices. In fact, one of the reasons Saul the king got in big trouble is because he usurped for himself the role of the priest. That was not his role. So in the Old Testament, in order to experience God's glory, you had to come in to Israel. You had to go to Zion. You had to worship at the temple. You had to come in and see the glory of God. You couldn't experience the prophetic word ministry of God, the priestly sacrificial ministry of God, the kingly rule of God, unless you came together in the place where God dwelt in Israel.

However, in the new covenant, Jesus our Lord and Savior is all three of these things. He is our Prophet. We read about Him in our call to worship, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" He's the One who declares God's Word to us. He is our Priest who lays down His life as the sacrifice for our sins. And He is our King who reorders us as a new creation to live under God's wise and gracious rule. And you know what? If you are in Christ, you're all three of those things as well. You see that right here in 1 Peter 2. You see that we are to be prophets who proclaim, declare the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness. You see that we are priests and we are kings, as a royal priesthood.

So that means as a church, every one of us needs to embrace this as our role. It is my job as a Christian to declare the mighty works of God to a watching world. It's not just the preacher's job. It's the job of every one of us. We are all prophets. Going to our colleagues, our friends, our neighbors and to the nations, declaring the excellencies of Him who called us. In order to fulfill that prophetic ministry, I need to get to know the Word of God, which is one of the reasons why we're going to read it together this year. I need to be constantly saturating myself in the Word so that I'm familiar with the character of God and His excellent works so that I can make them known to others. I'm a prophet.

I'm also a priest. I'm called to sacrificially lay down my life as a living sacrifice unto God and for the good of others. Laying down my life so that I can represent other people before God and show God to them. And I'm a king—I'm a child of the King. I have an inheritance that's royal. I have wealth in God's heavenly kingdom, and as a king, it's my job to represent God's rule in the world that I live in. As a church to show the world what a fun and beautiful life it is to live under the royal authority of our sovereign King. This is something that the U.S. government cannot create—a community, a holy nation, living under the sovereign rule of the all-wise, all-good Creator.

That's who we are: we're prophets, priests, and kings. And the people of the world don't need to come in here to experience this. We are called to go to them and to demonstrate God's glory to them so that through the grace of God they will be gathered in as living stones as well. So that's the theological application. I would just encourage you to think on that truth.

B) The personal application. Remember we're talking about keeping our purpose clear. What's our purpose? "*That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" Secondly, here's a personal application. In order to fulfill this calling, you must be converted. You must be converted. In order to declare the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, you must be someone who's been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light. How can you declare the excellencies of Him who has done that if He hasn't done that for you? A Christian is someone who has been called out of darkness into wonderful light. And that's how we think of what God has done in our lives.

How many of you have been to the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, and seen the museum? Where you walk through and there's this great story of the gospel and then you come into this one area and it's just this bright, light-filled room and they play the Halleluiahs Chorus. After Christ has risen from the dead. It's a great pictorial symbol of what God has done for believers. We've been called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

I heard Tim Keller say, this is one of the ways you can really discern whether you've been converted. Because a person who's just religious and just moral and just nice, if you were to ask them, "Why do you go to church? Why do you pray? Why do you read your Bible? Why do you do these religious things?" They'd probably say, "Well, I'm not perfect but I'm just trying hard to be a good person. Going to church helps me. Reading the Bible helps me. I'm trying hard." That's the way a religious person speaks. They speak in the grey zone. For a person who's not converted, but religious, everything's kind of grey. There's no darkness, there's no light, there's no glory, there's no wonder. There's just this kind of religious life, trying to be good.

For a person who's been converted, you've come to see something about yourself. You've come to see that you have a heart of darkness. That even your best deeds have been tainted and polluted by sin and you desperately need to be rescued from your dark

heart. Then you come to see Jesus as the light—the Savior—who rescues you. You sing songs like, “I once was lost in darkest night, and did not know the way.” Or you sing,

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

That's the truth about yourself and you see this remarkable transformation has taken place. There's glory in that to you. There's something beautiful about that to you. There's something excellent about that to you. That's what conversion does. That's what Jesus does when He converts you. He transfers you from the dominion of darkness, in the heart of darkness, into His glorious light, into His kingdom. You're filled with glory because of that.

C) That brings me to the third application. **This is the missional application or the application that applies to our church's mission.** Let me put it this way: If our purpose is to declare the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, the key to effective evangelism is wonder, astonishment, awe, amazement. That's the key. Don't get me wrong, I'm not against training courses and techniques and all those kinds of things, but in the book of Acts they didn't need that. They didn't need to be trained on how to do evangelism because they were filled with wonder. They were lost in wonder, love and praise. God had transferred them from the kingdom of darkness into His light and they were so attracted to Jesus they just couldn't help but go tell others about Him. They were amazed at God's grace. His light is marvelous, to be marveled at, wonderful, full of wonder.

The most important element to an effective evangelist—to telling other people about Jesus—is that you're filled with wonder at what He has done for you. You're attracted to Him. You see His grace transforming you. So you don't come to people with the attitude, “I'm right, you're wrong, and I love to tell you about it.” You know, looking down on other people. Instead you come to people with an attitude of amazement at your Savior. You long to proclaim His excellencies. There's an excellent aspect of God's attributes that need to be proclaimed. There's a beauty to God that needs to be put on

display. There's a glory to His holy character that attracts you and as you are attracted to Him, you become attractive for others to come to Him as well. So the key is to be filled with wonder at His excellencies and you declare that and tell that to others.

D) And then finally, the last application—a **practical application**. How do you get this wonder? How do you get it? How do you get filled with wonder again and again and again so that you can "*proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*"? Is there anything that can so fill your heart with wonder that you're going to be amazed for the rest of your life, even when you're in your nineties? Is there anything like that? Ravi Zacharias says, "The older you get, the more it takes to fill your heart with wonder."

Do you know the difference between bringing a five-year-old to the zoo and a 25-year-old? To the five-year-old, everything is jaw-dropping amazing as he sees animals for the first time. He's in awe. But for a 25-year-old, he's just thinking, "We're in a zoo. What's the big deal?" There is no wonder. He has seen this all.

What can fill your heart with wonder all your days? It's in verse ten: "*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.*"

You know your Old Testament. This is referring to the book of Hosea, where God said to His prophet, "Go, take for yourself a wife of unfaithfulness. She's going to be unfaithful to you, Hosea." In obedience to God, he goes and marries this woman named Gomer. It starts out pretty good in chapter one of Hosea. She bears a son and it says that she bore him to Hosea. It was his son. They named him Jezreel. But then it starts unraveling. More children come but it doesn't say anymore that she bore him to Hosea, or she bore her to Hosea because these were not Hosea's children. These were children of whoredom, the Bible says. This is an unfaithful wife. And as these children are coming, God is saying, "Name them certain names." And here are the names that God gave to these children of unfaithfulness: Lo-Ammi, which means 'not my people.' And Lo-Ruhamah, which means 'not pitied.'

As this whole drama is unfolding in Hosea's life, God is saying, "I am like Hosea. My people have become an unfaithful bride. Our relationship has been broken as a result. They're no longer my people." But as Gomer's unfaithfulness continues to unravel, and she goes from man to man, and some of them start abusing her and beating her, finally she's sold into slavery by one of these men. Then God says to Hosea, "I want you to go to

the marketplace and I want you to buy her back. Win back your wife of unfaithfulness.” With the purchase of great price, Hosea goes and obeys and wins her back. God says in Hosea, “That’s what I’m going to do for My people. I’m going to say to ‘Not-My-People,’ you are My people. I’m going to say to ‘Not-Pitied,’ I pity you. I have mercy on you. I’m going to go into the slave market of this world and I’m going to pay a ransom price that’s going to win My unfaithful bride back to My heart.”

Peter says that’s exactly what God has done for us in Christ. Look at chapter one, verse 18. Peter says, “...*knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*”

Peter is saying that’s what God has done for us, His church. He’s paid the highest price. He’s made the greatest investment He could possibly make. He’s taken the blood of His Son—the blood of the lamb without spot or blemish—and He has paid that price to make you who were not—His people. His people! To make you who had not received mercy, the objects of His eternal love and mercy. That’s what He’s done for you. And that’s what you are called to proclaim. “*The excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” That’s what will fill you with wonder all your days. Remember who you were, where you came from, what you would have been were it not for grace and remember what He has done for you in Christ. Tell that to others and that will bring glory to God. Let’s pray.

Lord, thank You for the cross. For the price You paid, bearing all our sin and shame to give us amazing grace. God, work this gospel truth deep into our hearts that we would be lost in wonder, love and praise. That we would be a people who say, ‘Oh, thank You for bringing me out of darkness into this wonderful light.’ And move us, Lord, to proclaim Your excellencies, to tell others what You have done for sinners like us, so You will get the glory through this church, more and more and more, Lord. Not to us, but to Your name alone, be the glory. Lord help us be a church that always and increasingly demonstrates Your glorious grace to a watching world. We pray, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

New Covenant Bible Church

4N780 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60175 ♦ (630) 584-2611 ♦ www.newcbc.org

All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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