

**Advance: Our Church in the Next Century**  
***The Church's Call-Part 1***

**Introduction:** Over the past two Sundays, I have mapped out our Church's CHALLENGE as we complete our first 100 years and dream about the next century of ministry until Jesus returns.

**The Challenge We Face-World Upside down**

***"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Isaiah 5:20-21 KJV***

- People reject all authority, especially of a Creator
- NO standard of absolute truth
- World desperately broken
- Yet, the *"local church contains within itself the seeds of a broken world remade."*-Christopher Ash

**The Challenge We Must Embrace**

- Requires courage (to confront and even experience persecution)
- Requires seriousness (Hell is real, the cross is the only power)
- Requires a commitment to Christ-centered-ness
- Requires a crucified life (to the world, to the exclusive message)

Today...we move from the challenge to the CALL

Summarized in verse 9 of our text:

***"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;" I Peter 2:9 NKJV***

**Two Aspects** I find in this text: The Church's Call

1. We must surrender to our IDENTITY
2. We must be immersed in our MESSAGE

Today we will deal with the first: Surrendered to our Identity

Five Simple Statements about the Identity of our Call

I. **We are CORPORATE** (YOU are...)

- A. The “You” here is the plural form (an individual is not being addressed but a corporate body, the Church)
- B. The call of the Church is first and foremost a call to be the presence of Christ (the Body of Christ on the earth and that cannot be accomplished as individuals)
  - 1. Jesus is my personal Savior syndrome has hurt the effectiveness of the church
  - 2. Coupled with the rugged individualism its Jesus and Me (and since HE can't be seen) it becomes ME and what is best for me.
  - 3. Christianity starts to exist for me to have my needs met (people go to church to have their needs met instead of to be a part of a body)
- C. When the focus of the church becomes the individual, almost no energy is used to reach the lost because all energy is spent on body maintenance rather than body work and ministry.

(ILL) When the physical body breaks down and many parts need attention, then the person spends time in therapy, and medical visits, and often goes on disability and can not do the work for which it was made.

When the church focuses its attention on individual parts all the time, it becomes disabled and cannot perform that which it was created for...to reach the world. The church today is for the most part disabled.

D. Our identity as corporate implies several things

- 1. We all serve
- 2. We all pray
- 3. We all give
- 4. We all care
- 5. We work for unity and participate together in the ministry to which He has called us

Our Identity is Corporate

II. **We are CHOSEN**-(YOU (plural) are a CHOSEN generation)

- A. Chosen=eklektos (means chosen for a purpose)
  - 1. When we elect people we do so for a purpose
  - 2. They are to do something, they have a responsibility
  - 3. It is not chosen for privilege, pampering, prosperity

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4. It is chosen to do something
- B. What is the purpose for which we have been chosen (two very specific things)
  1. **To be the presence of Christ to a lost world** (already addressed in point #1)

***“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,” Colossians 1:24 NKJV***

- a. To reflect Christ’s character
- b. Sutton/Grissom...1<sup>st</sup> Choice, Muncie Mission
- c. To every young person that walks on this campus
- d. Develop ministries to youth and children
- e. Reach Dunkirk
- f. To carry the Gospel to all the world and be His presence there

**2. To be the guardian of truth in a world that is rejecting truth**

***“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” I Timothy 3:14-15 NKJV***

- a. This is the developing biblically sound believers part of what we do
- b. Missions is so crucial...people do not know Jesus...they must be told

***“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:14-15 NKJV***

- c. It’s why we receive Missions offerings, STL, BGMC
- d. It’s why we ask people to consider the call to Missions
- e. **We are CHOSEN for a purpose** (Elected to serve)
- f. To hold up the truth and present the life of Christ to the world

**III. We are ROYALTY (You are a chosen generation, a ROYAL priesthood)**

- A. Not unusual for a king to have his own priests
- B. They alone were given access to Him and His presence
- C. We have been given that access (we can come boldly to His throne)
- D. But, the priests were not given this access for their own pleasure
- E. They were representatives (of people to God and of God to the people)

1. They went before the King to intercede on behalf of the people (Esther did that at risk of her own peril)
  - a. They would offer sacrifices
  - b. They would speak on people's behalf
  - c. Giving and interceding is our responsibility...our identity...our call
2. They went to the people on behalf of the king
  - a. Warn them
  - b. Promise them
  - c. Assure them

(ILL) Privileged for responsibility-the GT story of 100 years of blessing, the property, the windows, the nails, but they were faithful to their privilege. We must be in the next century. We have youth not being reached and 40% of world unreached and biblical illiterate Christians. Will we surrender to our identity? **A Royal Priesthood!**

IV. **We are HOLY** (You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation)

- A. Holy is to be set apart...why? To shine in darkness
- B. To be holy is to stay untainted by the world
- C. It is important that when people's lives crash and burn that there is a holy people to whom they can turn
- D. People, no matter how sinful they have been, turn to those in whom they see a difference  
(ILL) You want a doctor who has scrubbed in before he does surgery
- E. Must be ready always to give a reason for our hope

***"Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it." 1 Peter 3:15 NLT***

1. The importance of holiness
2. Shine as lights in darkness

***"Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people." Philippians 2:14-15 NLT***

V. **We are a PECULIAR (SPECIAL) People** (You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people)

- A. Peculiar (means created for His pleasure and owned by Him)
- B. Literally a purchased, possessed, owned property (we are His)

(ILL) Little boat twice owned

C. Twice owned by Him

***“Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NLT***

1. If WE are His
2. So is EVERYTHING we have
3. Our talents
4. Our resources
5. Our family

**Conclusion:** Are we willing to surrender to our identity?

**In the next century as a church: Our Call? Surrender to our identity**

1. We are a body, corporate...chosen (elected) for a purpose
2. We have a privileged place of influence (royal) but for responsibility to be priests for the people and for God
3. We are to be holy...shine in darkness
4. We are not our own...surrender all to Him
5. Extravagant call...will take that for us to fulfill our call

Pauline phrase, “you were bought with a price.” It renders a hammer-blow to our constant notions of personal rights and privileges and reminds us quite forcefully that we belong to Christ and not to ourselves.

You were bought with a price, and this purchase has implications.

In 1 Corinthians 6:20, Paul makes this the capstone of his exhortation to sexual purity: “***For you were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.***” And in his very next paragraph, he again appeals to this redemptive reality as one basis for his exhortation to be content with your earthly status and position: “***You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called***” (1 Corinthians 7:23-24).

The fact that we have been **bought** has powerful implications.

When God purchased you from the slave market of sin, His goal:

- Not minor tweaking and slight adjustments
- Absolute transformation and His absolute ownership
- He bought you...He owns you
- No fine print or exceptions...you belong to Him

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The implications of being owned by another are huge and far-reaching. But, Paul seems to be g  
Eating at something even more profound and deeper still. You were bought with a PRICE!

Why add this phrase? Why not just “you were bought?” Doesn’t being bought imply a cost?

- Were Corinthians so dumb that they didn’t know that to be bought means that a price was paid?
- However, Paul was not talking about just any price. He was talking about the cross, about the Son.

“You were bought – and look at what it cost.” “You were bought – do not forget the price that was paid.” Or, from God’s perspective: “I bought you – and I paid dearly.”

On how much He paid!

- Christ on the cross and forsaken by His Father so that we could be forgiven, sanctified, glorified, and adopted.
- See the Father turning His back on the heaving, suffocating, agonized Son for the first time in eternity and time.
- My God, My God, why....
- Same one of who He said, I am well pleased, the prophet said it pleased the Father to crush Him
- You were not just bought...you were bought with a price

How many things have been bought and sold and bartered in the history of the world? The number is almost infinite.

- There has never been a purchase like this purchase.
- There has never been a price like this price.
- This is why we must surrender to our identity and accept the call on our lives
- We are chosen, royal, holy, peculiar (owned by Him)
- Will you surrender today?