

**Advance: Our Church in the Next Century**  
***The Church's Call-Part 2***

*Introduce each missionary and tell where they are from.*

**Introduction:**

Over the last three weeks, we have been exploring the future of this church in our next century or 100 years. In just a few weeks, we will kick off our 100<sup>th</sup> year as a church when we break ground for our new SMC Sunday September 23. We will also ask everyone to invest in the next century by committing to the Advance Fund Initiative that will help us build this and other projects, plant churches, and expand our world missions activity. Next year's anniversary year will culminate with a great celebration the first weekend of October of 2019.

Theme: *Advance: Our Church in the Next Century*

**Commitment:** Building on the VALUES of our PAST while pursuing the VISION of our FUTURE.

This series:

- Our Church's Challenge
- Our Church's Call
- Our Church's Future
- Our Church's Opportunity

Our Challenge is a Serious One

World Upside Down:

Challenge we Face

***“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!” Isaiah 5:20-21 NKJV***

Challenge we must Embrace

Yet...we want to be like the Early Church (turned their world upside down...or right side up-Acts 17:1-6)

- Courage
- Seriousness
- Christ-centered
- Crucified

The Church's CALL

***“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

Last Week-The Church's Call—We Must surrender ourselves to our identity.

- We are Corporate-YOU are a chosen generation
- We are Chosen-elected for a purpose (You are a chosen generation)
- We are Royalty-a royal priesthood (privileged for responsibility)
- We are Holy-a holy people (called out to shine out)
- We are Peculiar (special...a peculiar people)-owned by Him (bought with a price)

Will we surrender to that identity? (Bought with a GREAT price)

- How much he paid
- Never a purchase like this one
- Called to surrender to that identity.

In the first part of 1 Peter 2:9, Peter sets forth our corporate identity. In the second part, he unveils the church's message. Our call is to immerse ourself in that message.

What is that message in which we must be immersed?

It is three-fold!

I. **Our Message is to Declare the Excellencies of Christ** (“that you may proclaim the praises of Him.”)

A. **Announce the glorious deeds of Christ (praises=arete)**

1. Virtue, moral excellence
2. Philippians 4:8 (if there be any virtue=arete)
3. **Our very calling comes from His excellent nature and glory**

***“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.” 2 Peter 1:3 NLT***

B. What are the parameters of His excellencies that we are to proclaim?

1. His activity in Creation

***“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.” Revelation 4:11 NLT***

- a. His creation is no accident
- b. We were not just a cosmic experiment
- c. Created with a purpose for His pleasure and with the *Imago Dei*
- d. This message must be sounded by the Church

(ILL) When we go to Grissom, overseas, support First Choice, we are declaring the excellencies of Christ...His activity and purpose in Creation, especially in the creation of the crown jewel of His creation...humanity

2. His activity in redemption

***“And they sang a new song with these words: “You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” Revelation 5:9 NLT***

- a. The power of the cross
- b. The price of the blood
- c. No respecter of persons (unreached must hear)

3. The reality of the coming judgment

***“And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: “Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed.” Revelation 15:3-4 NLT***

- a. All nations
- b. Judgment will be righteous
- c. Every knee will bow
- d. Cannot be silent...all must hear

***“And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:14 NLT***

Our call is to immerse ourselves in this message: *-proclaim the praises of Him (excellencies)*

- Christ is Creator
- Christ is Redeemer
- Christ is coming back to judge (and it is for here and for the nations)

### Discussion with Missions Panel

1. When we give to missions we are sending you to declare the excellencies of Christ to a lost world, many who have never heard, that Christ has as Creator given us a purpose for life, that He has redeemed us at Calvary, that He is returning. What part of that message most resonates with those where you are called and what does proclaiming His praises look like in your context?
2. How is that message received? What are the roadblocks to that message?

## II. Our Message is that there is an end to confusion and dissatisfaction (who has called us out of darkness)

A. Implied here is that our proclamation of the Gospel (the praises or excellencies of Christ) happens because we have been called out of darkness

1. Freely received now freely give (Matthew 10:8)
2. To who much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48)
3. We cannot help but share the Gospel because we have been made free

B. Also implied is that lostness is darkness or spiritual blindness

1. Certainly the conversion of Saul was darkness to light
2. Life forever changed and he proclaimed the excellencies of Christ

C. Our church's call is to immerse myself in the message and proclaim the message that God brings people out of darkness

### Discussion with Missions Panel

1. Spiritual darkness in some ways is all the same, spiritual eyes blinded to the truth of the Gospel. But, every context has its own forms or at least causes of spiritual darkness. Describe for us the darkness of your place of calling, what it looks like, how it was established, and what is being done to combat it.

**III. Our Message is that there is the hope of experiencing the light and glory of Christ**  
(into His marvelous light)

A. Marvelous=thaumastos (thow-moss-toss)

1. Causing amazement
2. Beyond human comprehension
3. The very reality that God would love us while yet sinners is reason for amazement and beyond comprehension

B. Our message is not just a way out of darkness...there is a way into marvelous light

**Discussion with Missions Panel**

1. Can you share with us a story or two of someone in darkness coming into the light in your culture?
2. What is the effect of that where you minister and how might that be different from here in the US in the way we respond or the way people come into relationship with Christ?

**Prayer:** Joseph Avia

**Offering:**