

If you have your Bibles turn to **1 Peter 2:9-12** as we continue in our study entitled **GLOW**. When something **glows** it *emits* a steady radiance of light. In 1st Peter, we learn as Christians, we're called to **GLOW** by emitting the radiance of Christ in us to the world around us. But let's be honest – this is no easy task. In a world that seemingly seeks to deny the Savior and extinguish the truth of the Gospel, sometimes it'd be easier to hide our light than to let it shine – and yet Peter challenges us that when the going gets tough, when it's most critical – the spiritually tough get shining.

We live in a day of corporate mergers – savvy investors are always looking to discover the next big merger. I have a few possible mergers to look for w/in the next year:

- FedEx may merge w/ their competitor UPS. The new company will be called Fed-Up.
- Zippo may merge w/ Audi Motors, Dofasco and Dakota Mining. The new company will be ZipAudiDoDa.
- 3M Corporation may merge w/ Goodyear to start a restaurant chain called MMM Good.
- Hale Bus. Systems may merge w/ Mary Kay Cosmetics, Fuller Brush Co. and W.R. Grace. The new company will be called Hale, Mary, Fuller, Grace.
- Polygram Records might buy Warner Bros. and Zesta Crackers forming Polly, Warner, Cracker.

Speaking of mergers, in our text today, Peter refers to a takeover bid that's being accomplished in you. In salvation, the Creator of the Universe has tendered an enormous price to take over your life – but it's not a hostile takeover, but a loving offer. At the Cross, Jesus paid the necessary price to purchase your life so you could be merged into His Kingdom. If you'll accept His offer by giving Him controlling interest in your life, then you'll find His blessing.

The result of this merger is we've become something special in God endowed w/ a tremendous/necessary responsibility. **And how we live is equally important as who we are.**

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may **declare** the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world to **abstain** from sinful desires that war against your soul. **Live** such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1 Pt. 2:9-12*

While I am going to focus on the back half of this text, let me remind us who we are as a result of this faith transaction.

Once we've received Christ by grace thru faith – an amazing transaction takes place and we become a new creation w/ a new purpose. As Pastor Art taught us last week, once we come to Christ, we become a *chosen* generation, a *royal* priesthood, a *holy* nation, a people *belonging* to God. While there's an amazing truth in each of these statements – I think Peter's focus isn't so much on **who** we are as to **what** we're to do – *that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

I think this phrase is one of the few foundational truths in the N.T. In the margins of one of my oldest Bibles I have written beside this verse – “Why we exist!”

declare (*exaggello*) to proclaim w/ words and actions – *to advertise*. In other words, b/c of who we are in Christ and b/c of what He has done to secure our faith – we should walk the walk and talk the talk to declare to everyone that God is good and His love endures forever.

praises (*arête*) refers to making known the excellent, true qualities and nature of another – in this case God.

In his book, *The Hallelujah Factor*, Jack Taylor explains this idea well – Praise is always active, assertive, demonstrative, and open. It's not passive, presumptuous, undemonstrative or secretive. Whenever it's mentioned in the Bible, movement, action, sounds and songs are seen and heard.

Meaning *praise* is an expressive demonstration of the excellencies of who God is and what He has done.

This is priority of a Christian – we live to help others to discover a vibrant relationship w/ God thru our declaration of His character and actions. After all, what good is faith if it is misplaced or misunderstood? What good is faith if it misses the point of relationship and gets stuck in religion?

I was reminded of this truth last week in Israel. Scene at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher – I was 50 ft. from the place where Jesus was likely crucified/buried/resurrected as I watched people crawl on the ground to kiss the places, as Hasidic Jews stood by in arrogance, and as a Muslim call to prayer was sounding – I couldn't help but think... this is not what God had in mind when Jesus gave His life on Calvary.

What is necessary to live this life of praise? (3) Essentials

I urge you (*parakaleo*) to call beside to inspire/encourage – b/c Peter knows we're in a great physical/spiritual battle, he urges/calls us to live relentlessly resolved lives. It's a call to continuously remember who you are, what's happening around you, and what is at stake. So whether one is 6, 16, or 66, Peter is exhorting us to fight the good fight, to finish the race, and to keep the faith.

He begins this encouragement w/ a critical reminder...

I Be REMINDED

...as aliens and strangers in the world...

Peter begins by saying – *never forget who you are, where you are, and what you're called to do*. He says, “Remember as a Christian, this earth is not your home; you're just passing thru; but while you're here – live for Me.”

aliens (*paroikous*) strangers (*parapidemous*) refers to a person living in a foreign land alongside of the nationals but who is not a citizen – it's a foreigner who's settled down.

I get this. When I lived in Norway, I was living among the Norwegians, but I was an (*utlendinger*) outsider. I didn't know their customs or speak their language. I wasn't a citizen yet I was living there w/ a purpose. I was a foreigner who had settled down for the sake of the Gospel.

Why is this important? Should we ever get comfortable w/ the world we live in, then we're likely to forget our mission and become like the world around us. **Lest we forget, it was when Lot stopped being a sojourner and became a resident of Sodom that he became inoculated and given to sin – losing not only his way but His testimony.** Our calling is to never forget that we too are just passing thru.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:15-17

II Stand RESOLVED

...abstain from sinful desires that war against your soul.

Peter exhorts us to relentlessly refrain from engaging in the desires of the flesh – to distance ourselves from sin.

abstain (*apechomai*) to continually put distance b/w. The idea is to stay away not subjecting yourself to the temptation. Instead of seeing how close you can get to sin and not sin – see how far away you can get from it and keep your distance – b/c nothing good will come from tempting temptation.

Let's go back to Lot. In *Gen. 13-14*, instead of keeping his distance from Sodom, Lot moved into Sodom – and Sodom moved into him. But Abraham kept his distance. He set up camp away from Sodom and God blessed him richly.

In the same way, Peter charges us to live in the world but not to become like the world. He calls us to distance ourselves from the desires of the world as we seek intimacy w/ God.

III Live RESPECTABLY

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Peter charges that we should live such exceptionally helpful God-honoring lives that it points others to God. **He infers that there should be nothing in our lives that might give unbelievers ammunition to attack Christ and the Gospel.**

There is only one way we can live such lives – only if we live under the influence of God’s Spirit in accordance w/ His Word. To live in any other manner is to live in our power instead of in His abiding presence.

5 Ways to Create Distance from Sin to Live for God

1 Draw NEAR to God – Spend Time w/ God – *Jm. 4:7-8*

Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.

2 HIDE God’s Word in Your Heart – *Ps. 119:11*

Your Word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you.

3 **ENGAGE** in the Fellowship of the Church – *Hb. 10:25*

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

4 **DEVELOP** a Heart of Worship – *Ps. 100:2-4*

Worship the LORD w/ gladness; come before him w/ joyful songs. Know the LORD is God. It is He who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates w/ thanksgiving and his courts w/ praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

5 **FOCUS** on Godly Truth – *Ph. 4:8-9*

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be w/ you.

Wrap Up