

Proclaim The Glory Of God

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Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[0 : 00] Amen. Next week, Lord willing, as we've already said, when we gather for worship, we will gather together as Seaweed Bay Baptist Church.

And as we celebrate what God is doing here, I hope that you realize we have this precious opportunity right in front of us to really clarify who it is that we feel like the Lord has called us to be and what it is that we believe the Lord has called us to be about.

And so over the past several weeks, we have been walking through our mission and vision for the church, our mission statement. I'm sure you can just rattle it off by now. Feel free to speak it with me.

Our mission, we exist to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the way that we plan to go about that is threefold is by enjoying him.

As we gather, as we proclaim, as we enjoy and delight in his glory is by equipping the saints to reflect his glory.

[1 : 07] And as we'll see this morning in our passage, it is as we evangelize the lost and proclaim his glory. This morning, we're focusing in on that last part of our vision to proclaim the glory of God.

So if you would, please open up your Bibles this morning to the book of Colossians. We're going to be in the book of Colossians this morning. And our passage is chapter one, verses 28 and 29.

Colossians chapter one, verses 28 and 29. And if you would follow along with me as I read. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Would you pray with me once more? Lord, we thank you for your word and for the privilege that it is to get to open it up and to sit under it with the confidence that you will use it as you see fit.

And we pray that as we hear these words from the Apostle Paul, that we would leave here encouraged and moved to go and proclaim your glory. We pray this in Christ's name.

[2 : 33] Amen. Amen. Amen. But you can tell a lot about a person by the way they read a book. People are strange.

And some of that strangeness, whether you're aware of it or not, comes out in the way that they read a book and their reading habits. So for example, I wonder if you can place yourself in any of these examples.

For example, there are the inaudible word mouthers. They don't know that you see it or maybe they don't care. But as they read over a book, they read over a word.

They mouth the word with their lips. They move their lips. Sometimes a sound comes out.

Sometimes a whisper comes out. Sometimes nothing comes out at all. But it's inaudible.

They mouth the word with their mouths. There's actually a word for this. It's called sub-vocalization.

That may be some of you. There are the page sniffers.

[3 : 35] Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about. Books have a certain smell. You know what that is. When you go into a library, you get that scent of a fresh book. And these are the people that they are just as happy sniffing a page of a book as they are reading the book.

That may be some of you. And there are the multitaskers. These people, they can't just read one book at a time. So they have two or three or four or five or maybe even six books laying around at different places in their home, jumping from book to book, chapter to chapter.

They cannot stay with one book from beginning to end. And I'll be honest with you, this one is me. It drives Amanda crazy. But worse than that, and in my humble opinion, the worst one of them all are the ending spoilers.

This may be some of you. These are the sick type of people who before they even begin reading a book, they take it off of the shelf and they open it up to the very last page, read it. And so now they know what is going to happen at the end of the book. They find out how the book ends. If this is you, I invite you to let it be known. The people need to know what we're dealing with here.

[4 : 54] This is, in my opinion, completely unacceptable. But those who do this, they say that it lets them know whether or not the book is worth reading.

It prepares them for any would-be surprises before they get there. But church, I cannot simply just get on board with this because even if they do decide to start reading the book, they know the end. Now they know the beginning. But they have no idea how the author plans to get them from point A to point B. As ridiculous as this is, church, this is how many Christians approach this book.

The Word of God. And I'll admit, this is the one book where we should take joy in knowing the end of the story. Right? We know the ending, that God has made it clear to us one day Christ will return. And as we've been studying in Sunday school in the book of Revelation, we know at the end a great multitude that no one can number. From every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages will stand before the throne of God and magnify His glory.

[6 : 12] Saying, blessing and glory and wisdom and honor and thanksgiving and power and might be to our God forever and ever. And this group of the redeemed will enjoy eternity in the presence of God.

That's the end of the story. And we know the beginning of the story, don't we? That in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He created man and our first parents. They rebelled against the Lord. They sinned. They brought upon all of creation this curse of sin.

And I hope that we even know the most important part of the story.

The cross of Jesus Christ. That God's plan of redemption is to send His own Son to live and to die and to rise. To purchase forgiveness.

To purchase salvation. Eternal life for all His people. But even still, many Christians are not exactly clear on how God plans to get us from point A to point B.

[7 : 19] But in our passage today, Paul tells us. Paul tells us. God's plan for magnifying His glory for the rest of eternity.

For redeeming what was lost and broken in the fall. His plan for gathering and rescuing and transforming sinners from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

His plan for bringing us from point A to point B to the end of the story is the proclamation of Jesus Christ.

This is what we call evangelism. Evangelism. It's sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. And it is for every Christian.

In other words, we're not meant to just read this book passively. We're meant to share it actively. God has written us into this story.

[8 : 20] We have a role to play in bringing it to its end. And so this morning, as we seek to understand this great task, we're going to see three aspects of the task of evangelism.

Three aspects of the task of evangelism. This is our outline this morning. If you're taking notes, I invite you to follow along with this outline. Three aspects of the task of evangelism.

First, we see our role in evangelism. We see our role in evangelism. I don't want to overcomplicate this.

And so here it is. Look here to verse 28. This is our role. Paul says, Him we proclaim. Him we proclaim.

The plan of God for the spread of the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth is summed up right here in just three words. Do you see it?

[9 : 22] Him we proclaim. This is our role in evangelism. We, all those who have been redeemed, not just a few of us, but all of us in Christ.

We are called to proclaim, that is to speak, to herald, to announce, to communicate verbally. We're to go around talking about something.

And the content of our proclamation is Him. It's Christ Jesus. Him we proclaim. You see, the mission of the church, before it is anything else, is a mission of proclamation.

Proclamation. And this is a mission for all of us. I've heard some of you say, several of you say, that evangelism is somewhat intimidating for you.

Maybe a lot intimidating for you. You don't know what to expect. You don't know where to start. And I want you to know that I can relate to that. Okay?

[10:24] You are not alone in that struggle. And it's so easy, isn't it, to overcomplicate what evangelism is. It's so easy to make it more complicated than it is.

But at its most basic level, evangelism is simply sharing. It's speaking. It's proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

It is proclaiming Him. And I want you to see, that's exactly what Paul has already been doing here in the book of Colossians. If you look back to verse 15 of chapter 1.

Excuse me. Verse 15 of chapter 1. Paul says, He is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of all creation.

For by Him, by Christ, all things were created in heaven and on earth. Visible and invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

[11:22] All things were created through Him and for Him. And He, Christ, is before all things. And in Him, in Christ, all things hold together.

And He, Christ, is the head of the body, the church. Christ, He is the beginning. The firstborn from the dead. That in everything, Christ might be preeminent.

For in Him, in Christ, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through Christ, to reconcile to Himself all things.

Whether on earth or in heaven. Making peace by the blood of His cross. This is proclamation, isn't it? And He's just gushing over the beauty of Christ.

He's proclaiming Him. And while I doubt that we'll sound exactly like Paul. If you know Christ, you have something to share. If you know Christ, you are capable and ready to proclaim Him.

[12:24] To share how glorious He is. To share how He saved you. To share how Christ alone is your hope and your peace and your joy. Our role, church, is to proclaim Christ.

But sometimes, if you're like me, you might be tempted to put a burden on yourself that's heavier than what God has called you to do. For example, we need to remember our role is to proclaim Christ, not to save sinners.

Our role is to proclaim Christ, not to save sinners. We can save no one.

That's God's work and God's work alone. Our confidence in evangelism is not in our speech. It's not in our persuasiveness. It's not in our presentation or our ability to close a sale.

We simply speak the truth. And God takes that word as it comes fumbling and stumbling out of our mouths. And He plants it into the hearts of His people.

[13:36] And He empowers it with His Spirit so that it bears the fruit of faith and repentance and new life. It is effective to accomplish the purposes for which He sends it.

Our role is to proclaim Christ, not to know exactly who will respond in faith. I wonder if you're ever tempted with this one.

It would be wonderful if I could just look out in a group of people, look out in a crowd, and see with 100% confidence exactly who it is who would come to faith if I would simply share the gospel with them.

I don't have that knowledge. We don't have that ability. God alone knows whom He has appointed to eternal life. God alone knows exactly who will receive that proclaimed word and believe in faith.

We don't. And so our role is simply to scatter seed as freely and as broadly and as widely as possible with the confidence that through our proclamation, the Lord will save His people.

[14:49] How many times do you see that word everyone here in this passage? Warning everyone. Teaching everyone that we might present everyone.

See, church, God knows exactly whom He will effectively call to believe the gospel, but that belief comes through the general call of the gospel, through our proclamation as we proclaim Christ to everyone.

Our role is to proclaim Christ not to be able to answer every possible objection. Now, I know some of y'all deal with this one.

I wonder if some of you feel this hesitancy that I sometimes feel that, well, somebody might say something that might make me look silly. They might say something.

They might ask a question that I don't know the answer to. They might give a rebuttal that I can't respond to. So hear me when I say that, yes, we should be ready to defend the faith.

[15:54] Yes, we should be aware of the potential objections that are recirculated every several years, but you could spend the rest of your life studying and preparing and training to answer every possible objection and still not feel ready if that's your measure for readiness.

But if you know the gospel, church, you are ready to share it. And that foolishness to the world, the wisdom of God will always be foolish in the eyes of the world.

But that foolish gospel is the power of God for salvation to any who believe it. But how are they to believe in him of whom they've never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? Church, our role is simply to proclaim the risen Lord Jesus Christ who alone can save sinners.

And Paul tells us what that looks like in two ways here, doesn't he? Two ways. Warning and teaching. We proclaim Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone.

[17:07] And we have to have both here, don't we? We have to have both. You see, if our message is all teaching with no warning, we may educate a lot of people on the way to hell.

Now, to be saved, you must first understand the bad news of the gospel. The bad news that you have sinned against a holy God, that you are separated from him, that you are under the curse of sin, that you are hell-bound apart from the grace of God.

This is not a popular message, church. I remember when I lived in Charlotte, we lived in this apartment complex, and before too long, word got out that I was training to be a pastor, training for the ministry, and so they started calling me Preacher Boy.

But one guy in particular, he told me, just straightforward, he said, Hey, Preacher Boy, you can talk to me about anything you want to talk to me about, but do not talk to me about hell.

Don't bring it up. Don't say it. Don't warn me. And I responded, well, okay. But you know, it's real, and I wonder just why you don't want me to talk.

[18:26] He said, Didn't you hear what I just said? He didn't want to hear it, and most people don't want to hear it. But unless someone warns them clearly, they will not realize their guilt and repent.

See, we have to warn about the dangers of sin. Sin is eternally dangerous, and you are not safe unless you are safe in Christ. But we can't stop there.

So what does Paul say? We also must teach about the glory of Christ. If our message is all warning and no teaching, you might have a bunch of very scared converts, but not mature disciples, right?

They need to be taught, educated, who he is, the glorious son of God, what he's done, how he's come in the flesh, how he's lived perfectly in our place where we've all failed, how he died on the cross in the place of the guilty, in the place of sinners like you and like me, how he rose from the grave to conquer sin and death and the devil, how he stands to offer forgiveness to any who would come to him in faith, how you could be saved this moment if you turn from your sin and trust in him. For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom.

[19:57] That is our role in evangelism, church. But second, the second aspect of evangelism that we see here in this passage is our goal in evangelism.

That's our role. What is our goal? Second, in verse 28, Paul says that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

That's the goal. That we may present everyone mature in Christ. Now, if you're paying attention, you might say, I thought we talked about this last week. Didn't we cover that last week with reflecting the glory of God?

And you would be right. We talked last week about that second part of our vision that we want to equip the saints to reflect, to grow up into the glory of God.

But I want you to see these three parts of this vision are not just separated and distinct. They are all interconnected with the glory of God at the center of them all.

[21:00] As we enjoy Him, as we equip one another, as we evangelize the lost, they are connected. Church, we want to see people converted as we share the gospel, but we do not want to stop at conversion.

Are you tracking with me? We want to see people converted as we proclaim Christ, but we don't want to stop there as if that is job well done.

What do I mean by this? What I mean is that when we as a church see someone come to faith in Christ, we together, collectively, ought to be chomping at the bit to see them grow up in Christ.

The conversion to Christ isn't the finish line. It's the beginning. Our goal in evangelism, as we go and share the good news, is not just to reach some moment of decision and then consider our job well done and then leave them out to dry and to figure it out themselves.

I've heard far too many testimonies, far too many stories that sound something like this. I went to church. Maybe I heard a friend talk about Jesus.

[22 : 15] I was convicted of my sin. I knew I needed Christ. God gave me genuine faith in the Lord. I was saved. Then I had no place to go.

Had no idea how to grow up in my faith in Christ. Nobody there to help me read my Bible. I didn't know how to pray.

No idea how to put sin to death. No idea how to live the Christian life. And so for years and years, I've tried my best on my own. I've been converted, but I've not grown up in maturity in Christ.

Does that sound familiar to any of you? That is not meant to be how the Christian life works. You are not meant to stay in spiritual infancy forever.

And if that has been your story in church up to this point, I want us collectively, together, to change that for you.

[23 : 19] See, the church is meant to be a family of believers who are committed to locking arms together to help one another grow up in Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children, as Paul says in Ephesians chapter 4.

You know, I love being a dad. It's one of the greatest things that's ever happened to me, but I have learned that fatherhood is a lot more than just bringing the baby home from the hospital.

And nobody in their right mind takes a newborn baby home from the hospital, just lays it in the crib and considers the job is done.

They know that's just the beginning. Every parent ought to know that their goal is not just to bring a child home, but to raise a child up in maturity, to raise them to adulthood.

But too many churches consider bringing the child home as the end of their duty. The same is true for us here in evangelism. We want to see new birth.

[24 : 36] We want to bring home spiritual infants as we share the good news and God gives new life. We want to see spiritual babies born into this family. But they should not remain infants.

And those of us who are spiritually further along, more mature, ought to come alongside them as spiritual mothers and spiritual fathers and see to it that that child is fed and clothed and nourished and nurtured and corrected and trained and raised up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. That's our goal in evangelism. And you know, that was Paul's goal as well. You know, sometimes Paul gets a bad rap.

I don't know if you know this. He gets kind of mischaracterized a bit as this church planter who just parachutes in, plants a church, and then zips out so someone else can do all that hard pastoral work.

And can I just say that that is not true at all? I want to defend Paul here for a minute. 1

Thessalonians chapter 2. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 shows us Paul's concern concern for every one of his converts.

[25 : 54] He says this. He says, We had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God. That's proclamation. But verse 7, We were gentle among you like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

Do you hear that? So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves because you had become very dear to us.

For you know, verse 11, how like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Do you hear that? This is not the language of hit and run evangelism, is it? This is language of affection.

This is language of love for God and love for neighbor. Do you see that? You see, evangelism with this goal of maturity in mind is an act of love for our neighbor.

[27 : 10] And when you give yourself, give of your time, give of your resources, give of your prayers, give of whatever knowledge you have to see them grow up into Christ-likeness, not just come to Christ, but to grow, that is an act of love.

Congratulations, you have become a spiritual father, a spiritual mother. But it's also an act of love for God, isn't it? What does Paul say here?

He says, Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Who are we presenting these grown-up, mature disciples to? We're presenting them to God. We're bringing them before the Lord as an offering to say, look what you've done.

Look what you've done, Lord, in taking this sinner, taking this rebel who was so far from you, so deep in his sin, so blind to your glory.

[28 : 16] He was angry. He was addicted. He was blind. And you not only gave him eyes to see, but you raised him up and grew him up so that now he looks like you.

And you used me to do it. Church, the greatest command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength.

And the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself. We do this when we proclaim the glory of Christ so that those who hear might believe and grow up in Christ likeness and be presented to God as trophies of his grace to the glory of God.

That's the goal. But church, there is one final aspect of this task that we must understand.

And I want you to hear me clearly because the task of evangelism is not easy.

[29 : 29] So third, we see the toll of evangelism. We see the toll of evangelism. You see, the Christian life and ministry and this great task of evangelism is not easy.

If you were wanting me to come up here and make evangelism easy for you, I hope that you know by now I love you enough to tell you the truth. The task is very simple, but it is rarely easy.

Look here to what Paul says in verse 29. Paul says here, for this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

See, evangelism evangelism and proclaiming the glory of God is hard work. A commitment to faithful gospel proclamation will require you to toil.

And it may be that the Lord just chooses to radically save someone the moment you open up your mouth and speak the name of Jesus, but more often than not, it will take time, an effort, an intentionality, an sacrifice.

[30 : 48] And I know many of you have been praying and laboring for family members or friends for years. You've been toiling, laboring to faithfully share the gospel with them.

Do not be discouraged. The Lord is pleased with your faithful struggle and toil. He will bring the fruit in His time according to His wisdom.

Continue. The commitment to faithful gospel proclamation is often a struggle. And history will tell us that it is often costly.

Just consider with me for a moment what happened to the disciples of Christ. Christ. This struggle has been experienced in some degree by every faithful evangelist, every faithful proclaimer of the gospel throughout the history of the church.

The apostle Andrew went to take the gospel to what is now modern day Soviet Union and Asia Minor, Turkey, and then ultimately Greece where he was crucified for preaching Christ.

[32 : 02] The apostle Peter was crucified upside down under the emperor Nero in Rome. Tradition has it that Thomas went to India, he proclaimed the gospel there, and he was speared to death.

Philip went to Carthage in North Africa in Asia Minor where he proclaimed the gospel and saw the wife of a Roman proconsul converted which angered the proconsul, got him ultimately arrested and executed.

Matthias proclaimed the gospel in Syria and was burned. James also went to Syria and was beaten and clubbed to death for preaching the gospel. Simon preached Christ in Persia and was murdered for refusing to bow down and worship the sun god there.

Are you encouraged to share the gospel yet? And Paul shares in 2 Corinthians how he suffered imprisonments with countless beatings, often near death.

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked.

[33 : 18] A night and a day I was adrift at sea on frequent dangers and journeys and danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers in toil and hardship through many a sleepless night and hunger and thirst, often without food and cold and exposure.

Paul struggled. He toiled. He suffered. And ultimately, he was beheaded in Rome for the sake of proclaiming the name of Christ.

You and I likely won't suffer in these ways. You might. But probably not. And definitely not if we stay silent. More likely is that we'll suffer rejection, loss of friendship, tension at home, tension at work. Certainly, you'll suffer inconvenience, hardship to your plans and your schedule. But if you hear this and you wonder how any person could possibly do this, how you could possibly risk the humiliation, the toil, the suffering, the exhaustion, even death for the sake of proclaiming the name of Jesus. Remember what Paul says here in verse 29. How can he do this? He struggles with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

[35 : 04] If you hear this and you don't think that you have that in you, you are 100% correct. But if we are committed to the mission of Christ, we can be 100% certain that he is committed to supply us with the energy needed for the mission.

Your task, church, is to proclaim the person of Christ for the good of the people of Christ with all the limitless energy of Christ for the glory of Christ.

That's the task of evangelism. I want to close with these words from Christ himself to his disciples from Matthew chapter 10.

Listen to these words. Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Beware of men for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

[36 : 13] When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour for it is not you who speak but the spirit of your father speaking through you.

Brother will deliver brother over to death and father his child and children will rise against parents and have them put to death and you will be hated by all for my namesake but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in one town flee to the next for truly I say to you you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the son of man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher nor a servant above his master.

It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master if they have called the master of the house Beelzebul how much more will they malign those of the household? So have no fear of them for nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will be not known.

What I tell you in the dark say in the light what you hear whispered proclaim on the housetops and do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

[37 : 37] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father but even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore you are of more value than many sparrows.

So everyone who acknowledges me before men I also will acknowledge before my father who is in heaven but whoever denies me before men I also will deny before my father who is in heaven.

How do you read this book? You can tell a lot about a person and you can tell a lot about a church by the way they read this book.

This is not meant to just be read passively from the outside but to be lived actively to be proclaimed faithfully.

What a joy it is to know that God has written us into his story of redemption not just to receive it but to proclaim it so that not only do we get to see God's plan unfold in real time but we get to play a part in bringing it to completion.

[39 : 00] We get to bear witness to the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Do you want to know the grand plans that we have for the growth of this church?

What the grand strategy is that Treg and I have been cooking up for months and months and months you want to know what it is? Him we proclaim. Him we proclaim.

If this church is to be known for anything in the days and weeks and years to come let it not be for the good we do. Let it not be for the programs that we offer.

