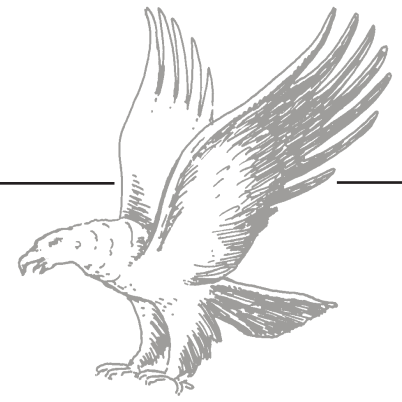


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



April 30, 2017

A Proclaiming People

By our very nature as the people of God, our purpose in life is to project an image of God that attracts others to Him. Evangelism, in other words, is the duty of every Christian.

“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” (1 Pet. 2:9).



Peter uses several expressions here to describe the unique identity of God’s people. We are “a chosen generation” (hand-picked by virtue of our faith, not our talent), “a royal priesthood” (clergy born of a kingly bloodline), “a holy nation” (citizens of a heavenly empire), and “His own special people” (or, “God’s special possession” [NIV], bought and paid for by the Creator Himself). All of which is another way of saying that being a Christian is a special honor unlike any other—and we’d better act like it.

Throughout this epistle Peter articulates the noble conduct that should characterize these people, but we’ll pass over those details to focus, in this verse, on the only obligation that he attaches directly to our identity: “that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called

you.” In other words, our job in life is to make known to the rest of humanity the glory of the God whom we serve.

There is a place in God’s kingdom for apostles, ministers, evangelists, and teachers, people with a special gift for broadcasting God’s message. But God’s design is for *every one* of His people to be engaged in that work in one way or another. Elsewhere Peter describes the influence we can have on unbelievers through the godly lives we live (2:12; 3:1). Our model behavior can be the trigger that sparks discussion, as others “ask you a reason for the hope that is in you” (3:15). Our duty, of course, is to “be ready to give a defense” to people who ask those questions.

Sharing our faith does not require eloquence nor scholarly erudition. This is illustrated in the story of a young pagan in the second century A.D. who was engaged in a search for answers to the deeper questions of life. He explored all the popular philosophies of his day: Stoicism, Pythagoreanism, Platonism. But one by one, they all fell short of satisfying his inquisitive mind. One day as

he was walking along the seashore, he encountered an old man who struck up a conversation with him. The elderly gentleman listened politely as his new friend recounted his frustration in trying to find answers to his questions. Finally, the old man offered a simple alternative: “Read the Bible.” The young philosopher took him up on that challenge, and it changed his life forever. Today we know that young truth-seeker as Justin Martyr, one of the earliest and most powerful apologists for the Christian faith.

The identity of the elderly Christian who pointed Justin toward God is lost to history. But his willingness to calmly share his faith with a stranger still impacts our world today. All of us have the capacity—and opportunities—to perform a similar service as we navigate the pathways of life. We must never be ashamed of what we believe, nor shrink away from a chance to point others to God and His word.

God created us to be a proclaiming people. If our faith means anything, we had best get on with that work.

– David King