

VBC
Pastor Mike Reid
1 Peter 2:9-12
June 12-13, 2004

Is Jesus Relevant in Washington County?

IS Jesus Relevant in Washington Co. today?

Well, He must be.

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12

1 Peter 2:9-12, NIV

⁹But 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. ¹⁰Once 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.

¹¹Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. ¹²Live 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.

One Bible translation puts it as, “you are a peculiar people, strangers in the world”
Which brings me to a recollection of Hamilton Baptist Church in Northern Virginia.

Intro. – Hamilton Baptist Church

For 2.5 years we lived in the Wash DC area,

A high-powered, fast-moving, affluent, unfriendly culture

After some weeks, we were desperate for a church to call home, for somebody to just be nice to us.

Every week a new church, same disappointing result.

The weeks turned into months and the months turned into despair

Then we visited Hamilton Baptist.

They were nice, really good people. Good-hearted, loving.

But they were odd, “corny.”

As a whole they were quite “churchy,” kind of corny, and seemed out of context with the culture around them.

One choir member had a Beanie Baby which poked its head over her hymnal and “sang.”

The fellow who gave announcements started by declaring he was “in a great mood today. I feel like just giving the Lord a big Amen. Let’s give Him a big Amen!” And everyone bellowed “Amen” together.

Then he asked if “we got any new people here today? Please stand up.”

Many guests like to remain anonymous and choose when ready to be recognized.

The Reid’s all agreed in silent unison to remain seated.

That is, until Beanie Baby lady leaned forward, tapped him on the shoulder,
and pointed straight at us.

“Well, that’s some!” He hollered. “Folks, stand up!”

For all their corniness, they meant well and were really good-hearted. And they were, in
their own weird way, kind to us.

We were so desperate for a family, we went back the next week

They were just as corny.

Jan wanted to go back after that

Her heart was dying out there for the need of a friend.

but I told her, ‘I don’t want our kids to grow up and think this is what Christianity is
supposed to be like.’”

Let’s face it. Sometimes Christians just plain act strange.

We can have our own vocabulary, unique behaviors and a strange sub-culture.

To the unchurched, Christians sometimes must seem like nut cases.

Peter in this passage is not suggesting we be cultural oddballs.

We are God’s people, and what flows out of that is this watershed statement:

Live transformed lives in a watching world.

Be the real deal.

The world is watching us.

Live transformed lives in A WATCHING WORLD

Not only watching, it is critical of us.

We live in an adversarial society

“though they accuse you of doing wrong”

There is a powerful cultural prejudice against followers of Jesus today.

The liberal Media and ultra-liberal individuals hate Christianity.

A survey by the Barna Research Group, concluded:

In a national survey the image of "evangelicals" rated tenth out of eleven groups
evaluated, beating out only prostitutes.... This is most likely a result of the
thrashing that evangelicals receive in the media.

It seems that millions of non-Christians have negative impressions of evangelicals,
even though they cannot:

- define what an evangelical is,
- identify the perspectives of the group,
- or identify some they’ve know personally.

Their dislike is based more on caricatures and myths
than on personal experience.

But part of their negative opinion is due to seeing
the real struggle some believers have handling their “sinful desires.”

Unfortunately, Christians are

- just as likely to have a divorce
- as likely to have an abortion.
- There are high profile Christians who have fallen publicly.

A popular bumper sticker in the '80's,
“Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven.”

Well, yeah, nice statement about grace; inadequate about behavior
Because the world needs to SEE PROOF reflected in our lives
Unbelievers are watching and expecting a higher standard.

To the society around us, the eye, not the ear, is the decisive organ.

It wants to see real, genuine, authentic, proof.

Where is the transforming power of Christ?

Where are the changed lives?

The selfless living?

The good works?

Often times, while the world is waiting to see it in their communities, the church is preoccupied with talking about it in their sanctuaries.

Live transformed lives IN a watching world

The operative word in Peter's statement is the word “in”

A small word with a big whollap

Be “among” unbelievers

Be engaged in our culture

In a separate survey Barna concluded,

Most Christians are hard-pressed to convert their beliefs into action.

While ... “the ultimate aim of belief in Jesus is not simply to have a theological faith but to become a transformed person....

Their study revealed that “a significant number of people who rely on Jesus Christ for their eternal destiny have problems translating their religious beliefs into action beyond Sunday mornings.”

Peter says “Live such good lives” in the community

He's talking about what we call **Radical connections**

Which is the big idea here at Village.

being out there – not cloistered in here

So they might see our good deeds and glorify our Father

Vs. 12 is all about cleaning up our tarnished reputation out in the community

Village is making some progress in this arena

Show the poster of thanks from Head Start/Community Action
We have an open door to all community groups

“Thank you so much for all your help. We love this place.”

“Thank you. We are SO fortunate to have Village Baptist in our community.”

“Community Action and Village Baptist – same mission.”

Is Jesus Relevant in Washington County?

Of course.

Real need—yes; felt need—sometimes.

Would Beaverton miss us Village we weren't here?

Yes, sorta', but not nearly what we want it to be.

To quote Monte Python, “it's getting betta”

Make a note of two summer dates:

Red Cross Blood Drive – Friday, July 16

Serve Our Schools Day

(Meadow Park) – Saturday, August 21.

Part of our vision statement reads:

“By reaching out into the community and filling specific needs, we build a bridge over which to carry God's love”

Real stories teach better than mere words.

Steve Maxwell – he is mentoring men on the road to recovered lives at Portland Rescue Mission.

Stella Shotts – she is caring for and introducing individuals to Jesus in their twilight years – by leading Bible Studies and “story times” at two assisted living facilities.

Pamela Robinson – she is an introverted individual with an extroverted drive to reach out to her neighbors with the long-range purpose of telling them about Jesus.

There is a final point in this passage, and in it is the KEY.

LIVE TRANSFORMED LIVES in a watching world.

Services comes from overflow.

Good works flow out of our lives as result of receiving his grace.

It's not about digging deeper to do more or be more

It's about deep relationship with Him which translates into overflow

e.g. Ruby Tuesday's salad bar – my heaping it up until it rolls over the edge

God putting so much in our lives that it just overflows to others

Vs. 10

“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.”

Overflow.

You cannot impart what you don't possess
Jn. 15:5 Apart from me, you can do nothing.
What's in the well comes up in the bucket. - Dean

Seek God; be anchored in Him

Consider your relationship with Him as we prepare for Communion.
It's not about doing good works,
rather it's about Jesus being so in our lives that He overflows to others.

He wants to so fill our hearts
that His presence in our lives cannot be missed
And our light will so shine amongst unbelievers
that they observe our good works and glorify Him.

Re: Communion

Traditional -(thanks for mercy, pray for intimacy, mention each element)
Contemporary – close in prayer; communion later