

Radical #6

Radical Ministry

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This morning, we read I Peter 2:2-9. This was written by Peter, an apostle, and you can read his story in the Gospels and Acts. Peter wrote I and II Peter but most likely he *dictated* the first and *wrote* the second himself. The reason for that is that I Peter is a piece of beautiful literature and II Peter is just about the worst! This is an interesting sidenote.

I Peter 2:2 says

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

This is based on chapter 1 which is about what Jesus has offered us: it's powerful. Then he says,

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

We are supposed to push aside a darker way of living and move towards Jesus like little babies craving milk and this will help us grow up in our salvation. When you grow up in your salvation, you will begin to see the signs of God and not the symptoms of your life (symptoms are things that aren't going the way you want). Growing up in Christ is beginning to see the signs of God.

What is it like to taste the Lord is good.? For me:

1. When I read scripture about Jesus: his kindness, grace, sacrifice, refuge, I find out who Jesus is. I hear His promises.
2. Also, I taste this in the way people interact with me over time. For example, when I was rescued from bullying as a child, I tasted this. When people gave us rent money when I was a child, I tasted God was good. When we first started this church, I once lied and I had to confess this: I tasted Jesus when I was forgiven, loved, and restored into community. When I have been lonely, sad, depressed, and prayed over, I have tasted God's goodness. I have also tasted that God is good in the midst of joy. One of my favorite memories is when I was in college complaining to my mentor about how life wasn't working for me and he looked at me and said "stop whining and go get a job." This was a moment when I tasted that God was good and used someone to move me towards what is good and right.

In this series, there will be 14 weeks of Radical sermons! *Radical* means really extreme or the essence of something. This definition is what Jesus says to his followers: you will have to deny yourself and follow me. You cannot do this if you haven't tasted the goodness of God. God's goodness motives us to do this! We give up our agendas and God gives us life and he is good! He shows up in our lives: this is what inspires us to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow him.

You are in one of two places here today: You have tasted or you haven't tasted but you want to.

Who are you with?

Along with that, the question is “**Who are you with?**” If you are here with your husband, you must be a wife. Who you are with often defines who we are. Being WITH someone is different than being FOR someone. *Being WITH Jesus vs. FOR Jesus*. I suspect that often we are for Jesus, doing things for Him, and we think we are with Him but we are really trying to figure out how to get things to be way we want. We see him as a comic father in the sky; *we aren't with him*. Being with him doesn't have anything to do with what I do. It has more to do with the implications of what is on your identity.

If you are with Jesus, a natural identity is that you are a **very important pastor**. Yes, this is another identity sermon to tell you who you are! This drives us to know how to act and what to do or how to believe.

If you remember nothing else, know that **YOU ARE A VERY IMPORTANT PASTOR (VIP)** If you are a student, you go to class and you know that you are are VIP: you look at the other students in the class and know that they are your flock. If you go to work, you look at your co-worker, you know that you are a VIP: this person is your flock. When you go home to your family, you are a VIP: they are your flock.

If someone asks you what Eric talked about today, tell them “He said I’m a very important pastor and I’m trying to figure out what that means.” This is anyone called to serve with Jesus.

Radical Ministry: **Ministry means the way you serve**. The people serving the children, that's their ministry. The people who are playing music or cooking or listening, that's their ministry: any way you serve people in the name of Jesus.

I Peter 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— **5** you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Let's talk through what this looks like in I Peter 2:4-5:

1. First we are being built into a spiritual house, both here and in the gigantic church through time. It is about both the physical and the spiritual world. What we say and do has power: this is a spiritual house that is a holy priesthood. Holy means set apart.
2. Holy Priesthood means you are a very important pastor: when you go to buy cucumbers at the grocery store, that is secondary to what you're REALLY doing which is to care for others and to bring some kind of spiritual awareness to those I am with at Albertson's. I'm not just buying pickles: I'm there to bring potential transformation to those around me. Have this picture: As you pay for your pickles, all of your church family is standing behind you and hoping you will reach the person in front of you. Wherever we go, we are death and resurrection people, set apart to speak into the spiritual world. We must change our mindset!

Let's jump to verse 9:

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Your identity has expanded: you are a chosen people. Let's avoid being caught up in the chosen part: I say to my wife that I chose her. I'm not saying that there was a list of girls and I went down the list and chose Sue. I am talking about a choice that reflects intimacy: hear the intimacy here! This is Jewish thinking: the elect people and chosen people.

But he goes on to say you are a royal priesthood. This means you are a priest of the king. You carry his authority! You aren't just set apart: you have authority given by the One who crafted the universe. Also, you are a holy nation. And you are God's special possession. This is what he paid a price to get: He bought you with a cost. A while ago, we had these little bunnies and people who came to our house would hold them as if they were a special possession. Little girls especially liked to hold them as if it were a great honor. God feels this way about us: He is excited about our role in this world.

We make it clear to others that we have come out of darkness and come into the light...but actually this is not the role of a priest. A royal priest is supposed to declare the praises of excellencies of the one who called you out of darkness, actually to bring to light something new about Jesus,. We are supposed to say "Look at Jesus, look at this thing that brought me out of the darkness to Jesus." The way I encountered him, the way Jesus talked to me, the way those people loved me, the things that compelled me to get out of the darkness. Part of my role is to declare

this to you! We are called to make a spiritual offering by inviting people to meet Jesus and by declaring the unique way we met Jesus.

To be a very important pastor, we need to be anchored to who we are with. We cannot call people into the Light unless we know him. In **John 6**, Jesus asks Peter “Are you going to leave me?” Peter says “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” You will be more anchored if you realize this in your life: *there is no other place to go*. You cannot go to Jordan Peterson or Brene Brown: they are nice people but they are not Jesus. They could become substitutes for Jesus to us and cause us to lose our place before Jesus. Therefore, we must anchor ourselves with Jesus.

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.

As someone who is a pastor, a very important pastor just like you, I have learned that God’s MERCY calls me out of darkness. When I do stupid things, He continually invites me back into relationship with him. When you are connected to Jesus, you can do this for others. You have to anchor yourself to JESUS and grab hold that you are given.

Pastors are in charge of liturgies. These are practices that we do together: we have a list of things we do every Sunday. Many of us have lazy liturgies. For example, at 8 p.m I like to get a snack

and look at the TV (my big idol) who tells me stories about who I am. I don’t think much about these stories or what they are doing or what my snack is doing. Nevertheless, it is my ritual and an icon that shows me who I am. As a pastor, you have to examine your liturgies and how they are shaping you, either good or bad. You have to move towards one that will

move you towards Jesus. Your liturgies can shape others if you are willing to do them and invite others into them. This is part of being a VIP.

What does it look like to do radical ministry? I have six categories.

Radical Ministry: darkness & light

1. Physical Health
2. Emotional Health
3. Spiritual Health
4. Environmental Health
5. Mental Health
6. Relational Health



When pastoring you, often I ask you questions about

these categories so I know better how to best care for you. You should ask these of yourself and others as well. I don't ask these directly.

For example,

1. How you eat and sleep are important: how do you take care of your body; this is very important.
2. Emotional health: we talk about this a lot: Are you caught up into anxiety and fear in your stories? Is this how I narrate my life or is this how the person next to me is narrating his life? Darkness can linger in these places and we need to invite others out of these.
3. Our spiritual health of attending church, fasting, and praying is important. What spiritual habits are happening?
4. Your environmental health is important: where you live and work. We don't realize how Where you live helps to determine what you think about yourself. When you go home, ask how you feel in that place. Is your house messy? Do you like the colors? Is it noisy? These are good questions to ask people. For example, if a person's roof is leaking, that would create a lot of anxiety! Part of moving from darkness to light involves these categories. We have to recognize what we are experiencing in this area.
5. Mental Health issues are also important: we all have mental health issues; therefore, we can all offer compassion to others our of our disabilities. We offer this to yourself and to others: it's really hard to have your brain not do what you want it to do and to have thoughts that you don't want to deal with. It's REALLY hard to be motivated to come out of this darkness. As pastors, we can offer compassion.
6. Relational health is another area to spend a lot of time considering. The world is full of relationships and how we feel about ourselves has to do with my connections with others: do I feel connected to others, my parents, my spouse? We can ask questions about this to others? We can build data and pinpoint darkness in others' lives, places we can invite Jesus into. We can offer how Jesus has met us in these places of darkness in our life.

Remember you are a VERY IMPORTANT PASTOR with a very important ministry. Who you are with tell you who you are. It is transformative to be with someone.

Question:

Matthew: How do you do the things on this list? -Go back to the ***Holy Priesthood***, not a Holy Priest: you must have others in your life to help you. Being willing to say "I need help."

Ermy: Team Priesthood: The person who does the talking is not the only priest.

Colleen: Every day literary: immerse yourself in the same scripture every day. I chose the one that was the hardest for me to believe. This is very inspirational.

Hannah: I love your heart of this sermon that you began with: Push away the darkness and crave and be nourished.