

People for God from Every Nation

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[0 : 00] Recently we finished the book of Exodus.

And so in some ways that makes me a little free to choose to preach from wherever I want to for a few Sundays. And so don't get your hopes up.

My plan is not to try to preach a series through Revelation in a few weeks. But I wanted to go here today and look at really something that comes from a Lord's Supper service in 2013.

It's repeated in 2016. And I really want to expand it out into a full sermon and preach it again just as encouragement to us as a church. And then the plan for the weeks ahead are, Lord willing, in two weeks I'll give a charge to the congregation in preparation for our new pastor.

And then in his insolation, May 5th, I want to preach a charge to Dave that all you guys can witness and hold him to. And then I'll be back one more time to preach a final sermon that's really going to be more missions focused.

[1 : 21] So with the time I have left, I really wanted to focus upon something that's really dear to my heart and that I want to see continue here at Grace Fellowship Church. So Revelation chapter 5, I have 6 through 14 is what I'm preaching through.

Sorry if I wrote that wrong. 6 through 14, but I'm going to start at verse 1. It won't be on the screen until we get to verse 6. But Revelation 5, beginning in verse 1. Then I saw in the right hand of him who is seated on the throne, a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals? And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, Weep no more.

Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

[2 : 47] And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. For you are slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, the voice of many angels numbering myriads and myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them, saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

[4 : 27] And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshiped. Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so very thankful for your word.

Lord, we look at this passage of Revelation, knowing that it does, as the title of the book says, it's revealing something to us.

It's showing us this picture of things going on in heaven. Lord, we pray that you would help us to comprehend. And Lord, that it would not just be something that we would mentally agree with, but Lord, it would be something that changes our lives.

Lord, it would motivate us for the sake of the gospel. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So a little bit of context as we jump into a book we haven't been into.

John here has been given somewhat of a vision into the heavenly realm. He sees this scroll that no one is able to open.

[5 : 34] And I believe the scroll refers to the future or redemptive history, however you want to look at the decree of God. Joel Beakey, I think, does a good job at explaining. He says the scroll of Revelation 5 symbolizes for us God's plan.

It is his purpose for the entire universe and all creatures and all ages unto all eternity. You may have called in verse 1 there, it said that the scroll, a scroll written within and on the back sealed with seven seals.

Now, when I preach, I like to print two-sided sermons, which is convenient for me so I have less papers up here flying around. But writing on the scrolls was typically done on one side.

And now we have a scroll that's written on both sides. And we are saying it's symbolizing the decree of God, God's plan. Why would there be this scroll written on both sides? Well, I think the both sides is meant to symbolize the comprehensiveness of God's decree.

This is all that God has decreed should come to pass. And no one can open. God's plan cannot come to pass until the Lamb who was slain opens it.

[6 : 43] He's worthy to open really the decree of God. He's really worthy to accomplish God's redemptive plan because he was slain. We're going to see some of that in the passage. So no one in all of creation can open the scroll except for Christ.

And when they realize, those who are in heaven realize that, they fall down and they worship Christ. They give him glory. In fact, they sing a new song of worship to him.

And as I said already, Christ is worthy to open the scroll. And again, when no one else was, because he was slain.

Because he died. And we see he ransomed people from every tribe. And as we think about that, the worthiness of Christ to open the scroll is because he died to ransom people from every tribe.

And tongue and nation and people. So it's Jesus' redemptive work that enables him to be able to open the scroll of God's decree.

[7 : 47] To reveal God's purpose in history. In some ways, as we look at this, you think of the mystery of the gospel. That's talking about the New Testament. In the Old Testament, to understand that the Gentiles would be brought in.

And be a part of God's people. And now Christ, because of his redemptive work, is able to open the scroll and reveal or to accomplish God's decree and his purpose in history.

But as you understand that, what's closely tied to God's purpose in history? Really, the verse I want to focus on in our passage today.

Verse 9. And they sing a new song saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. For you were slain. And by your blood you ransomed people for God.

From every tribe and language and people and nation. And so, it's not just a general redemptive work or a death that makes Christ worthy to open the scrolls.

[8 : 51] It's specifically that he's gone and died for people from every people group in all the world. This is God's purpose in history. That Christ is now accomplished.

If we were to relate this to Exodus and what really led to the people being in the country of Egypt. This was a promise, the covenant promise that God made to Abraham.

Listen to Genesis 12, 3. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

And so, the promise to Abraham was that in Christ, all the families of the earth, all the peoples of the earth, shall be blessed.

And so, we're seeing a bit of this blessing. How is it that they're blessed? Because of Jesus' redemptive work to save people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

[9 : 53] So, as we think about that, I want to talk about those for whom Christ died. And really, my title for this point is a diverse people. A diverse people.

A diverse people. A diverse people. A diverse people. As we think about people of the earth, we share one thing in common.

The problem of sin. Sin is a universal problem. Or if I were to put it specifically into the groups that are mentioned here, there is no tribe or nation, no language of people, or people of a language, that have not sinned.

And in this point, I'm really just going to go through and make a logical argument by looking at Scripture. So, we see that, for example, in Romans 3.23.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So, there is no people group that human beings will ever encounter that has not sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

[10:58] There is no righteous or noble tribe somehow disassociated with people that has been worshiping God in some true and right way all this time without sin.

Wherever we go, whatever people we come across, they need the gospel because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. I really got ahead a little bit, but, so, first point, all universal.

Everyone's sinned. Secondly, every people group needs to be reconciled to God. If all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, it's not just the Jews or the Israelites who need salvation.

It's every people group. It's all the Gentiles. All of us, whatever people group we may identify with, we need to be reconciled to God. John 12.32 says, and Jesus speaking, says, And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

And so, all people, all these people groups need reconciliation. This is really the purpose of Christ. When he's lifted up on the cross, the goal is to, the purpose, I won't say the goal, but he will accomplish this, is to draw all people unto himself.

[12:15] How about the proclamation of John the Baptist? You remember when John the Baptist sees Jesus as an adult, and Jesus is about to begin his earthly ministry?

John the Baptist sees him, and he cries out, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And as I was looking at the sermon, thinking about that proclamation from John the Baptist, that would have been huge to all those who were around.

Probably only Israelites standing around. And salvation had been, been almost exclusively within the Jewish people, the Israelites. And John the Baptist comes on the scene, and he says, Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

And this is really what begins Jesus' earthly ministry, that proclamation of who he is. It's really a purpose statement. He's the Lamb, and we understand, the Lamb who will be slain, to ransom people from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people.

To, really to take away the sins of the world. As we think about that, even John's proclamation, I said the Lamb that would be slain, but think about our passage in Revelation that we're looking at today.

[13:40] In between, verse 6, In between the throne and the four living creatures, and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing as though it had been slain. And the Lamb goes and takes the scroll, and they fall down before the Lamb, and they worship.

And it's the Lamb who is worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you are slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God, from every tribe, language, and people, and nation. And so what John the Baptist is declaring at the beginning of Jesus' ministry is what Jesus accomplishes, and that makes him the person who can open the scroll.

Who can reveal God's purposes throughout history. Who can bring or ransom people from every tribe. Alright, so, if we know sin's universal, and therefore redemption needs to go to all people, all people need to be redeemed.

They're all separated from God. And Jesus' purpose was to take away the sins of the world, then we can conclude, I think, that the gospel needs to be preached to all peoples.

Right? It's not as though one people group is the people who need to hear the gospel. Every people group needs to hear the gospel because they've all sinned, and they've all been separated from God, and Jesus' purpose was to take away the sins of the world.

[15:03] I figure I'm going to get on this at some point, but let me go ahead and say, when I look at that and say, Jesus came to take away the sins of the world, this isn't a universal salvation in the sense of every single person.

It is what we see revealed in Revelation. We know that some people will not be saved. Some people will be cast into hell. Some people will pay the price for their sin for all eternity. And when it

says he came to take away the sins of the world, it's saying the same thing that Revelation is saying, of peoples from every place in the world, from every people group, from every language. I don't know what you think about when you think about every people or tribe or language. I saw a study some years ago that was discussing this, and I wish I remembered that number, but it was in the tens of thousands of people.

So when I hear that, I think of all the languages in the world, eh, maybe 200 or so. But even when it says tribes and languages, I'm making this teaching, even those dialects of the same language may not understand each other.

Like me when I first got here from the South. Right? We have that tribe, and we have this tribe. Some of you who are from New York that I didn't understand either when I got here. Right? It's every, that's probably not the best definition, so forgive me.

[16:24] The way I've seen it defined is every people group by which the gospel could not pass to another people group without a translation into a different language. So they cannot comprehend it.

There's no witness of Christ there amongst that people yet. So when it says he came to take away the sins of the world, I really think there's a universal sense of all people groups, but not every specific individual.

So I just want to make that distinction. But that means that the gospel, if that's Jesus' purpose, to save people from every people group, then the gospel needs to go to every people group.

So for example, Luke 24, 46 through 47. Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

And so we see the purpose of God's people after Christ ascends. And what is that purpose? That the gospel should be proclaimed. Forgiveness of sins, repentance should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

[17:38] And so working its way outward, we start where we're at and we work our way outward until there are no people groups that have not yet heard of repentance and salvation in Christ who have not yet heard the gospel.

And that's really just another way of expressing the Great Commission. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I think when we look at that, that may seem really clear, but you remember what a struggle it was for the disciples in the church early on? The Jerusalem Council? The idea that Gentiles could be saved?

And there was this unique evidence of the Holy Spirit being in the Gentiles to testify to the Jews that they too have received the Spirit.

Who are we to say they can't come in if they receive the Spirit? And I'm thinking, what did Jesus say? To all nations, make disciples. And so, we have a responsibility that the gospel go forth to every people group.

[18:54] I think the most recent one I saw was that there were still 1,400 different people groups or tribes or languages that have not yet heard the gospel, unreached. 1,400. 1,400. And so, in 2,000 years, still a lot of work left to be done.

Okay, so the gospel is to be preached to all people groups and we have an assurance that the nations will respond. Right? I love going into something knowing that I'm going to be successful. Right? It's good to know you're going to accomplish what you set out to do when you start the thing. And so, here we're told that the nations will respond. So, just a few examples.

Both of these are from the Old Testament. Psalm 22, 27. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. And all the families of the nations shall worship before you.

And Psalm 67, 4. And so, the nations are going to respond.

[20:05] I didn't have to go to those passages. I could go right to our passage in Revelation 5. We know that Jesus ransomed people from every tribe and nation and language.

And so, we know for a fact that there will be people who will be saved from every people group. And so, even when we think of unreached people groups, going there may not be successful at first.

But ultimately, there will be people saved in that tribe. So, you know that there's going to be a result there. Okay, so the nations will respond.

And then, what I want you to understand, I'm tying this in with some other themes, but continuing on our logical argument then, people from every nation will be saved and their identity will be transformed by their union with Jesus Christ.

So, listen to Romans 10, 12 through 13. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

[21 : 12] For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Now, I'm going to come back to the identity thing in a little bit because I say new status, which really is saying some of the same thing. But for now, just hear that out that there's no distinction between Jew and Greek.

Greek would be Gentiles. That's everybody who's not Jews. And it's saying there's no distinction between the peoples of the earth. The Jews aren't set apart anymore as a unique, special people. Salvation has gone to all people, all people groups, we can say again. For the same Lord is Lord of all. He bestows riches on all who call on him.

And then that quote, For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And so, to put it another way then, there is no people group that we could go to and share the gospel with that would believe and call upon the name of the Lord and God would say no thanks.

Your people group, your nation, your language, you're not worthy to be a part of God's kingdom.

Now, I've said this already, but the elect in heaven will include people from every nation.

[22 : 23] We've already seen that in verse 9, the song that they sing, that he's worthy because by his blood he's ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

But almost the same thing is repeated in Revelation chapter 7, verse 9. After this I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands.

So the picture of eternity, perhaps the new earth even here, around the throne of God are people from every nation. and so again, we know the work will be successful.

And as we come into the kingdom, let me tie this back to our identity, we have new status as Christians. Ephesians 2, 11 through 13. Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, so for a second, instead of thinking of the unreached people groups, let's think of ourselves as Gentiles outside of the political or national people of the Jews.

Remember that one time you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands. Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise.

[23 : 57] What would be the consequence of those things? What tells us? Having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Isn't that glorious? That's true of all of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ. Though we were Gentiles, we were alienated from God, we were ignorant to Christ, separated from God's people, he yet by his blood has brought us into his people.

That we one day will be a part of those large myriads of people from every tribe that will be bowing and worshipping at the throne of God. A little earlier in that same passage, I'm sorry, a little bit, a few verses down the road in Ephesians 2, 19, so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

And so, you've been brought into not just the nation of God's people, which no longer is a political nation at all, but you've been brought into the family of God. We've been made children of God so that now the relationship we have with one another is a familial relationship, brothers and sisters in the Lord.

As we think of that new status again, look at verse 10 of our passage, states it as well, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.

[25 : 31] These people for whom Christ has died, who have been ransomed, brought in from every people and tribe and nation, become priests to God, a holy people set apart for God.

They become a kingdom. We might even say priests and kings because it says and they shall reign on the earth. Priests and kings, that's two of the offices that belong to Christ.

That means that there is no people, no tribe, no language on earth that has not been affected by the death of Christ or will not be affected by the death of Christ.

They may not know it yet, but Christ has died already to pay the price to ransom some from every tribe. All right, our second major point that ought to give us a sense of motivation. What is our motivation then? I love to think about Paul, I think, really understood this, that some of those to whom Paul would go and preach the gospel were those who had been purchased by the blood of Christ already.

[26 : 53] Christ had laid down his life for people from every tribe and tongue. So as Paul goes, really as a pioneer missionary to places where the gospel had never been preached, he'll go into a city and he begins preaching knowing that there are people here that Christ has redeemed that are going to hear the gospel and are going to respond.

The Moravian missionaries, they used to have this phrase or this saying that they would say. They would say, may the lamb that was slain receive the reward of his suffering.

Think about that. May the lamb who was slain receive the reward of his suffering. What are they saying? Christ has died for people from every tribe. We're going as missionaries so that Christ will receive the reward for what he's paid for already.

That they will turn and praise his name. That's a motivation for missions, isn't it? Again, that's the idea. We're not going to fail. It was also the Moravians, when you think about not failing, just comprehend this.

It was also the Moravians who would carry as their suitcase a casket. And I think at one point, the average lifespan of people, I think it was the New Hebrides, the average lifespan of the Moravians and New Hebrides was eight days that they would live on the island before they were cannibalized.

[28 : 15] And they're going, singing, on the ship, may the lamb that was slain receive the reward of his suffering. Or maybe another way of thinking about this is we cannot discover a tribe, somewhere hidden in the Amazon or wherever we might find them, that has, I'm sorry, we cannot discover a tribe or people who do not contain some for whom Christ has died.

Right? We're not going to find a tribe that somehow is going to be overlooked by God. So doesn't that encourage you to share the gospel with people?

Even I think of unreached people, there was a time where you couldn't really talk about unreached people much in our country, but it's becoming more common that people would not understand or have heard the gospel.

We should be encouraged to send and support missionaries to these unreached people, to pray for such missionaries, even to pray like the Moravians that the Lamb would receive the reward for its suffering.

God calls His people to go and make disciples, but the encouraging thing for us is He also goes before us and makes sure that in every people group there will be disciples, that that purpose will be accomplished.

[29 : 41] He is a people chosen before the messengers ever even get there. so because of that we can know because of Christ and His work that missions is destined for success.

It will succeed. It will accomplish God's purpose. The scroll will be opened to reveal the decree of God that people from every nation will be saved. missions will be successful and we see really that in verse 13 and I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

there's a chorus from everyone, every creature singing praise to God. Now, let me explain why I've gone here with our third point which is discussing our community and again this really is an expansion of something we looked at 11 years ago and back then we talked about this and I'll say again that Hazleton has greatly changed its demographics over the last I think two decades or so so that I still haven't seen an update from 2020 so many of you have heard these statistics from me before but what I've seen for the town and I think the township of Hazleton Hazel Township West Hazleton the town city area of Hazleton is somewhere around two-thirds

Spanish-speaking now and of that about two-thirds of those are Dominican and so that gives you an idea of the changing culture that we're in now when I got here not at the church particularly but I've heard people in the community and that was not looked upon as a good thing and that I found to be really sad and one motivation for me wanting to preach this and share this with you not because I think you're failing it at it I think we're doing a really good job these days but to continue to press on and realize we haven't reached it yet we're not there yet keep pressing on but as we think about this idea that God has saved people from every tribe and tongue and nation think about the fact that

God is now in his sovereign purposes his decree he's bringing many of those people groups to us he's giving us that opportunity to share the gospel with them I think our short our memory the memory of many citizens in Hazleton is very short term right they've memory loss for long times and so there was a point in which it was

Italian Irish Slovak Czech people who were moving here now we have many Spanish speakers who are moving in the area we now in our services are translating into French Creole and I think it's the tip of the iceberg right there's many other peoples we haven't yet reached I should include Romanians and Serbians but we are reaching a diverse people but a diverse people are coming to us it's almost the fact that you can do missions without leaving your town and so as the nations come to us how have you responded to that what is your response I think we could be irritated or aggravated because they're not just like us which I know many of you it's probably a good thing they're not just like us right but they're not just like us or you know they may speak a different language than us and maybe that's hard for us to accept we feel like we cannot communicate well with other people maybe even positively we could say and I think this is really true that they've helped to revitalize the community of Hazleton it was a dying coal town and God's brought new people in to buy houses to rebuild downtown it's a blessing and we can look at that and say oh what's a blessing they're here and it only be in a socioeconomic perspective

[34 : 17] I think I've heard I shouldn't say I think I know I've heard people in our community who say that's where all the crime is coming from and the drugs how have you responded to the fact that the culture of Hazleton has changed have you looked upon that and seen that as a gospel opportunity have you had a kingdom perspective what I mean by that is have you had in view that God is expanding his kingdom to the ends of the earth and our goal is to see people from every language come to know him and so have you seen this as opportunity or as an inconvenience listen to Romans 10 13 through 15 for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed and how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone preaching and how are they to preach unless they are sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news is there a moment when you looked upon someone who's different than you here in

Hazleton or elsewhere and said how will they worship our God how will they know of Christ unless someone preaches to them how will they trust in him if they've never heard and thought how can I or how can we as a church be the people to reach them with the gospel that's that kingdom perspective now I said earlier that being a part of God's people changes our identity and I touched on some of that but I want to go a little bit deeper the reality is that when we're saved we become sons and daughters of God and therefore we are siblings in God's family no matter the color of our skin or the language that we speak even our location we may have family members that are there in the middle of the Amazon we do have family members that are there so as we think about distinguishing factors the most important distinguishing factor for us is this are you a child of God or are you not that's it that's the distinction factor the walls of race even of gender which does exist and so does race

I'm not saying they don't exist but those walls have been broken down in Christ listen to Galatians 3 26-29 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek there is neither slave nor free there is neither male nor female and I just want to point out that all of those are comprehensive Jew and Greek is all people slave or free so either or you're one or the other that's all people and whether our society understands or not male and female is comprehensive of all people you're one or the other so no matter what your distinguishing factor may be on this earth it says for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you are Christ then you are Abraham's offspring heirs according to the promise so who are the people of

Israel today who are Abraham's descendants it's not a nation Jesus said to the Pharisees when they said we know who our father is our father is Abraham what was Jesus response you're not of Abraham physically they were he says you're of your father the devil the distinguishing factor that matters more than your ancestry your skin color your language is are you in Christ Jesus as we think about the distinguishing factor how do we look at people those who are a part of the family are our brothers and sisters in the Lord they are just that they're our family and those who are not do we ostracize them no I think we have that Romans 10 perspective they're outside the family of God how will they ever become a part of the family of God unless we preach them unless we take the

gospel to them and

I wondered as I thought about that if that's the major distinguishing factor let me ask are you closer to unbelievers in your life than you are to believers are your maybe friends at work who don't know the Lord closer friends than your family here in the church what is it that determines for you who you're close to you know in Sunday school we've been looking at how to love people who drive you crazy I'm not saying we all have personalities that go well together that's not even true in my own family right my brother and I are complete opposites it's a struggle but we're family even going back what is it that determines who are closest friends are is it just a shared common interest maybe we like the same sports team we're both into music we like hanging out together does it cross our mind that they're not a part of the family or they are is that what we're thinking about are they a brother and sister and how much closer should be that relationship

[40 : 30] I've seen this lived out really well we've traveled places sometimes and had people put us up that we've never known never met before never heard of just get stuck in a house somewhere and they joyfully receive us as brothers and sisters in the Lord that that is beautiful that is beautiful that's something the world just doesn't really understand so are we closer to unbelievers than we are to our own family in the church or we might even say does race or language seem a bigger barrier to us than faith or lack of faith is it easier for you to become friends with someone who speaks your language and likes your sports team than it is for someone who doesn't speak your language but knows the Lord and worships with you just a short application one is I want you to see the response in heaven first John's weeping because no one can open and they tell John one of the elders says don't weep weep no more behold the lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered so that he can open the scroll of the seven seals and so we see that he does this and what is the response verse nine really our main verse for our passage and they sing a new song saying worthy are you to take the seals and to open to take the scroll and to open its seals for you are slain and by your blood you ransom people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation you have made them a kingdom and priest to our God and they shall reign on the earth let's keep reading on to see the response verse 11 then I looked and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing so we now have the angels joining in in the song and then verse 13 and I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever and the four living creatures said amen and the elders fell down and worshipped so what is the response in heaven to this or maybe I can even ask we've read the response what is it that they're responding to it's the lamb who is slain for people from every tribe and nation when it's revealed in heaven that this is what Christ has accomplished on the cross there is one response and one only that of worship we see three songs that are sung in praise and worship we see the four elders fall down and they worship and I think is that our response on earth is our response on earth to people from who are different than us different languages different tribes people being saved do we rejoice do we praise the lamb that was slain do we worship our God second point of application this to me back 11 years ago was one of the things that struck me probably the deepest if we understand this correctly if this is really God's purpose to save people from every tribe and tongue and language if Christ has shed his blood for all

people groups do we find ourselves in opposition to God in our attitude in our fellowship or in our evangelism so what I mean is this if God's purpose is to save people from every tribe and every people and language and we only hang out with people who are just like us and don't go to them and share the gospel with them are we not at least in our attitude opposing the purpose of God God's purpose is to see these people whoever they are come to know him and so race language nation location none of these things should distinguish who it is we go to speak to with the gospel and to realize that if we do that we're opposing the purpose of God and another way of thinking about this is to understand that what I said about our being family realize this that in heaven we will be closer to people from every tribe and language and nation than we are to many in our own family people who physically are part of our family may never trust in God and be cast into hell and there will be people we've never met before who speak a different language who look different than us who God saves and we will be rejoicing with them in heaven as family and so when I say have a

kingdom perspective or an eternal or heavenly perspective part of what I'm saying is now even while we're here begin thinking like we will one day in heaven these are brothers and sisters or even there are people who don't know you yet who need to be brought into the family who I want to be my brother and sister not because they share common interest but because they are a person made in the image of God no matter how different they are from me and Christ has shed his blood to bring people from that nation to him and so if that's the reality if that's God's purpose the goal as a church and again I think we're doing better than we ever have and I want to see us keep pressing on but the goal of us as a church needs to be that we reflect the heavenly reality there are so many churches and it's not just white people there's so many churches in our country that are only one race

I remember in the south we had churches that were all black and churches that were all white not necessarily on purpose it's just that's what would happen they would distinguish themselves in those ways that's who I want to worship with people who are like me that is not what heaven will be like you can almost picture that grumpy old Christian in the corner of heaven somewhere wanting to worship by himself because he's not like anybody else that's not what heaven will be like we will rejoice to worship with people no matter who they are what they're like because Christ has redeemed them it's Christ in them that makes them lovely and so we've said this a couple of ways here at Grace Fellowship Church one is our church should reflect our community our church should reflect our community and so if we're in a community that's two-thirds Hispanic and we're an all-white church something's wrong and praise God

I think we're we're seeing that come to pass that we are like our community now we're diverse I love again that we're translating in two languages now time to start thinking about what's next who else can we bring in to translate Charles is doing so much translation can we bring someone else in maybe it's Chinese or Japanese I don't know what other people group have we not reached here but how can we be a reflection of our community but also a reflection of heaven where we are one body one family joyfully worshiping God together and this isn't in my notes but if I were to say one further point of application that might be that even though I think we've done a good job as a church there's still been great hesitation for people to worship God in the service that isn't their home language their native language their original language and so I want to encourage you again go to our Spanish worship service we have translation it's a great time to build relationship and fellowship with brothers and sisters culturally they're different than you and in some ways that's really good because they really love on you and that's great but I want to encourage you to go do that and I would say the same thing to the Spanish those who attend the Spanish service come to this service we're one body it's a chance to get a second time of worship and preaching in we in many ways have done away with evening worship but part of that was our hope and prayer would be that we would see the second service as a time for us to worship again with God's people and so just me making one last effort to say keep pressing on in this don't lose the focus keep on honoring God don't one day find Grace Fellowship Church to be a church that's in opposition to the purposes of God that we somehow have a different view of the kingdom than Christ does who shed his blood for every people and tribe and tongue and language let's pray dear heavenly father we thank you that you have saved a diverse people and lord we confess in our own hearts it's easy to get along with people who are a lot like us for many of us there's some of us who people like us may rub us their own way but lord we we have people that we naturally tend toward but lord we pray that in Christ that would be our family our Christian brothers and sisters that we would love them that we would build relationships lord that we would be one family one people your people here in Hazleton and lord let us be bold and ambitious in our sharing of the gospel that we would again lord your purpose that we would proclaim the gospel to people of every nation we make disciples from all nations lord may our lethargy not be a reflection of our opposition to you but lord may we have a heart to see people saved may we go lord here in Hazleton but lord we pray that you would raise up missionaries among us people would go to the ends of the earth to people who have never heard the gospel and bring people into your family our family we pray this in Christ's name amen thank you thank you thank you